

State of North Dakota



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan

for the period of
July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020
Effective: July 1 2016

Jack Dalrymple
Governor

Disclaimer: This draft version of North Dakota's Unified State Plan is not to be considered final. All content herein is subject to change.

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Deadline to submit comments is February 8, 2016.

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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.*

North Dakota is submitting a Unified State Plan.

DRAFT

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.

North Dakota has continued to experience economic growth from the recession of 2009 through 2014 with a slowdown from 2014 to 2015. From the recession of 2009 through 2014 the labor force and number of people employed in the state has continued to increase while the number of unemployed individuals and the unemployment rate have decreased. The number of employed increased by 14.5% from 2009 to 2014 while the labor force increased 12.9% over the same time period. While many states' economies were devastated by the recession, North Dakota fared better. After a slight dip in 2009, the labor force and number of employed individuals increased by at least 2.2% each year and both statistics rebounded to higher than pre-recession levels by the next year, 2010.

Similarly, the number of unemployed individuals in North Dakota decreased 24.4% from 2009 to 2014. Likewise, the unemployment rate has also fallen; from a high of 4.1% in 2009 to 2.8% in 2014. Overall, these numbers indicate a strong recovery from the recession of 2009. This has all happened while the population has increased 11.3% over the same time period.

The fact that the total population has increased while the labor force as well as the number of employed have both increased would indicate there has been an increase in the number of jobs in the state. This idea is supported by looking at the labor force participation rate. The labor force participation rate has dipped slightly from the high in 2008 of 74.4% but it has continued to fluctuate around 73% through 2014; well above the national rate which has experienced a steady decrease since 2006 when the labor force participation rate was 66.2%. The idea that there has been an increase in the total number of jobs in the state is further supported with data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program. QCEW indicates there has been a 27.2% increase in average annual employment from 2009 to 2014. Over the same time period, average weekly wages increased 41.3% which indicates the jobs being added are good paying jobs.

Despite the economic growth into 2014, North Dakota has more recently experienced an economic slowdown. Since the recession of 2009 ended, North Dakota experienced decreasing numbers of unemployed individuals through 2014. From January 2010 through December 2014, when comparing the current month to the previous year, there was a

decrease in the number of unemployed individuals 73.3% of the time; 44 of the 60 months over the 5 year timeframe. However, from January 2015 through November 2015 (the most recent data available) there has been an increase in the number of unemployed individuals when compared to the previous year for every month.

This trend is further illustrated when looking at QCEW data for 2015. Employment decrease 4.3% from fourth quarter 2014 to first quarter 2015. Some of this decrease can be explained by seasonality factors, but the number of employers decreased by 0.5% over the same time period. The seasonality claim is supported by the fact that comparing first quarter 2014 to first quarter 2015 illustrates an increase in both employment and number of establishments, 2.7% each. However, some of that optimism is dashed by the decrease of 0.7% in employment by comparing the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2014. Of particular note was the decrease of 19% in the industry groups 'Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction' and 'Transportation and Warehousing'; two industrial groups tied to oil and gas exploration.

It is widely accepted that North Dakota was able to avoid many of the ill effects of the recession due to the fortuitous timing of experiencing an increase in oil and gas exploration activities while the rest of the nation was in the throes of a downward economic spiral. While much of the nation was experiencing a housing crisis caused by crashing home prices and over expansion. North Dakota was experiencing a housing crisis of a different kind; too few houses and skyrocketing prices. Due to the influx of out-of-state workers coming to North Dakota for high paying jobs, there was a shortage of available housing which lead to a host of problems including increased rent; overcrowding in apartments, hotels, and campgrounds; and eventually the creation of "man camps" or temporary housing units built to handle the influx of oil field workers.

Prior to 2015 oil prices had fluctuated between \$75-\$90/barrel; the most recent peak was in May 2014 when the price was nearly \$100/barrel and over the next 9 months fell to a price of less than \$40/barrel. When the price dropped so did the number of rigs drilling in North Dakota. After 3 months of declining prices, the rig count started to decline; in August 2014, the rig count was nearly 200. By March 2015, the rig count was less than 100. As of Oct 2015, the total rig count for the entire state of North Dakota was 66. The declining price of oil caused the declining number of rigs, which coincides with the increase in the number of unemployed individuals as well as the decrease in employment (specifically in the industry groups 'Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction' and 'Transportation and Warehousing') and the decreased number of employers. It remains to be seen if the price of oil will rebound and how the economy of North Dakota will fare if it doesn't.

(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 includes:

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

There is existing demand in a wide variety of occupations. The two-year average of monthly online job openings illustrates this point. There was at least one occupation from 20 of the 22 two-digit occupation groups in the top 100 of this list (excluding not classified or unidentified occupations). The largest occupation group was Office and Administrative Support with 11, followed by management (9), construction and extraction (8), and food preparation and serving related (8). Using the same list of the two year average online job openings, the top 100 occupations accounted for 11,845 openings; slightly more than 63% of the total.

There is some continuity in terms of in-demand occupations. In comparing the average monthly online job openings numbers from 2014 to 2015 some interesting facts emerge. Of the top 100 occupations in 2015, 89 occupations were in the top 100 of 2014. Along the same vein, 99 of the top 100 occupations from 2015 were in the top 150 in 2014. Logically, 89 of the top 100 occupations in 2014 were in the top 100 of 2015. The fact that there were only 94 of the top 100 occupations from 2014 in the top 150 in 2015 indicates there may be some changes in the in-demand occupations.

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

Comparing the average monthly online job openings of 2014 to 2015 indicates some interesting facts. Three of the top five occupations in terms of increase from 2014 to 2015 were in the Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupation group; specifically Registered Nurses (29-1141), Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061), and Physicians and Surgeons, All Other (29-1069). Together, these three occupations accounted for 331 more openings in 2015 than in 2014. These increases could be a result of changes in hospital ownership, hospital expansion, new hospitals being built, or a retiring/aging workforce. Regardless, the numbers are supported by conversations with administrators and individuals in human resources who are trying to hire for these positions. There was also an increase in the Food Preparation and Serving Related occupational group; specifically Waiters and Waitresses (35-3031) and Cooks, Restaurant (35-2014). These two occupations accounted for an increase of 109 openings from 2014 to 2015.

The flip side to emerging demand is decreasing demand. The same analysis from above indicated there are several occupations that experienced a decrease in demand from 2014 to 2015. Three of the top five occupations in terms of decrease from 2014 to 2015 were in the Transportation and Material Moving occupation group; specifically Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032), Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (53-7062) and Transportation and Material Moving (53-0000). Together, these three occupations accounted for a decrease of 495 average monthly online job openings from

2014 to 2015. These decreases are most likely tied to the decrease in oil exploration activity which has been tied to the decrease in the price of oil. It should be noted that despite the large drop from 2014 to 2015, all three of the above mentioned occupations are still in the top 20 in 2015 and accounted for 855 average monthly online job openings. Part of the reason for the large drop was that the demand in 2014 was so high. In fact, of the occupations with the largest drop from 2014 to 2015, none of the top 10 were out of the top 100 in terms of number of openings in 2015 and only 1 was out of the top 50; Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators (47-2073) and it was ranked 52 with 71 average monthly openings in 2015.

The above analysis of emerging occupations is based on the average monthly online job openings from employers for 2014 and 2015. This analysis is limited to job ads posted online, is focused on occupational data, and cannot project into the future. For a detailed analysis of projected demand for both industrial and occupational data please refer to the projection data publications which can be found at:

<https://www.ndworkforceintelligence.com/vosnet/gsipub/documentview.aspx?enc=y+kP I+EQ3scsVhx25Mtxg==>

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

Employers have many needs when it comes to knowledge, skills, and abilities. Anecdotal conversations with employers and individuals involved in human resources have yielded surprising results. Many of these individuals indicate the largest deficiency of employees has been “soft skills” such as showing up to work, being on-time, cleanliness, etc. These skills, they claim, would be universal for nearly every occupation. If true, this would indicate a portion of the labor force is essentially unemployable in any occupation. That being said, these skills and abilities are relatively easy to improve upon and once the undesirable behaviors are correctly, gainful employment should be possible.

Anecdotal conversations with prospective employees indicates a frustration with job offerings. Many “entry-level” jobs require 3-5 years of experience to be considered. Many prospective employees have been discouraged by this and have left North Dakota to find employment elsewhere. This, combined with an aging workforce while the economy is simultaneously adding more jobs than there are workers to fill has created another employment need; available bodies. Many open and available jobs require no prerequisite knowledge, skills, or abilities but rather just need people willing to do the job. In the current economy where there are more open and available jobs than there are individuals actively seeking employment, the “less-desirable” jobs are going unfilled. Essentially, it is a lack of desire rather than a lack of knowledge, skills, or abilities.

A third way to look at the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers need is to look to O*Net online. O*Net lists the more applicable knowledge, skills, and abilities based on

occupation. By comparing the top 10 occupations in terms of 2 year average monthly online job openings some basic knowledge, skills, and abilities appear to be most lacking. In terms of knowledge ‘English Language’ and ‘Customer and Personal Service’ were the most common each being listed for seven of the top ten occupations. The two next most prevalent were ‘Mathematics’ and ‘Public Safety and Security’. In terms of skills ‘Active Listening’ was the most prevalent being listed in 7 of the top ten occupations. The next most prevalent were ‘Service Orientation’ (6), ‘Speaking’ (5), and ‘Coordination’ (4). In terms of abilities, the top three abilities were each listed for six of the top ten occupations ‘Near Vision’, ‘Oral Comprehension’, and ‘Oral Expression’.

In terms of the in-demand occupations, there are certain licenses and degrees that are required to gain access to employment. For example, a heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver could require a Commercial Drivers License, a specialized degree is required to be a registered nurse. There are some occupations that simply cannot (or at least through common practice, are not) learned through on-the-job training and require specialized training to even be considered for employment.

(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 WIOA⁴. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups⁵ in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: —

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

See Supporting Data document

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

See Supporting Data document

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

The education attainment of North Dakota is slightly higher than the nation as a whole. In North Dakota 63.9% of the population 25 years and older has some college experience

⁴ 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.

⁵ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

compared to 58.4% of the nation. Similarly, 40.3% of the population in North Dakota has at least an associate's degree compared to 37.2% of the nation and 19.6% of North Dakotans 25 year or older have a bachelor's degree compared to 18.3% of the nation. The lone category where North Dakota falls behind the nation is in Graduate or professional degrees; 7.7% of North Dakotans 25 years or older have one compared to 11.0% of the nation. Overall, these numbers indicate a well-educated workforce in North Dakota.

In addition to the already high levels of higher educational attainment, there has been a steady increase in the number of program completers in North Dakota institutions of higher learning. Totaling all institutions (2-year, 4-year, Tribal, and Other Institutions) there has been an increase of 29% from 2004 to 2014; or 2,822 program completers. The largest increase in terms of number of program completers was at 4-year institutions with an increase of 2,032 program completers, an increase of 29.4%. The total number of program completers in 2014 was 12,565 with the largest share coming from 4-year institutions; 8,949 program completers.

The educational attainment of North Dakota's workforce, in addition to being relatively high, is diversified. Of the 12,565 program completers in 2014, approximately 17.5% were in health, 16.8% were in business, 12.2% were in Industrial Arts and Consumer Service. The smallest groups of program completers were in Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies at approximately 0.8% or 97 completers followed by Physical Sciences with 107 program completers (0.9%), all of Physical Sciences program completers were either bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees.

In addition to the workforce of North Dakota tending to be higher overall when compared to the nation, the fact that it lagged behind the nation in terms of graduate or professional degrees might be decreasing. From 2004 to 2014, the number of advanced degree program completers increased by 1,025; an increase of approximately 75.2%. That increase was second only to the number of bachelor's degree completers which increased 1,175; approximately 21.6%.

(iv) Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

The above discussion of the advanced and varied level of educational attainment suggests a very capable, competent, and skilled workforce. While North Dakota has a quality workforce of capable, competent, and skilled individuals, there appears to be a shortage of available workers. Most recent numbers (December 2015) indicate there are 0.6 unemployed individuals in North Dakota per online job opening. Likewise, most recent numbers also indicate there are 0.6 online resumes per online job opening in North Dakota.

All these facts combined indicate that while there has been a recent economic slowdown in North Dakota tied to a decrease in the price of oil, there is still an abundance of jobs; more jobs than there are individuals to work them. This implies that there might not be a skill gap in the traditional sense, but rather a lack of eligible employees. In this type of economy employers might have to be more flexible in their hiring requirements in order to get

employees in the door and improve their skills with on-the-job training or improve the attractiveness of their job offers with increased wages or improved benefits. That being said, Job Service relies heavily on the Business Services staff in the local offices to work with employers in determining what their needs are for recruiting and retaining employees. They work closely with employers, schools, and the State Higher Education system to remain up to date on the most timely and pertinent needs and programs. This is done in an effort to develop programs designed to help job seekers and employers attain the tools and education they need to address skills needed in the workforce.

(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 (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) 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 required⁶ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.⁷

The North Dakota Workforce System is a relationship of agencies and functions that includes those formal and informal education and training activities. The training provides current and potential workers with new or enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful employment for in-demand occupations being created by North Dakota employers.

North Dakota is adapting service delivery in response to a variety of workforce needs. Western North Dakota is responding to the results of the lower oil prices and is adjusting from the influx of out-of-state job seekers to meet the previous rapid expansion of job opportunities as a result of the petroleum related activity in the Bakken Shale formation to assistance with unemployment

⁶ Required one-stop partners: Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community 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.

⁷ Mandatory one-stop partners: Each local area must have one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners. In addition to the core programs, for individuals with multiple needs to access the services, 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), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, and YouthBuild. TANF is now a required partner, unless the Governor takes special action to make TANF an optional one-stop partner.

⁷ 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.

insurance claim filing and reemployment. At the same time when North Dakota has seen the highest numbers of unemployment insurance claims filed, employment opportunities remain available. Employers continue to experience a lack of workforce for skilled positions.

As a result of rapid innovation and introduction of new technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems, the workforce system and the education and training system must respond. The availability of qualitative and quantitative economic and workforce intelligence will allow the workforce system partners to rapidly respond to the talent needs of North Dakota business and industry. The Workforce Education Advisory Council and the Workforce Development Council are an important connections between workforce agencies, education and business. Opportunities to access life-long learning in basic and job specific skill training for all citizens, is a goal for the system. Education and training opportunities need to be available, accessible, affordable and flexible in order to address the needs of the North Dakota workforce.

North Dakota's Talent Initiative goals to expand, attract, and retain talent to meet the state's workforce needs is the foundation for all education and training activities. Core programs all work together to best achieve that goal for their participants. These efforts combined with additional funding support from the private sector and WIOA required partners will continue

Focus will be placed on preparing or retraining individuals for in-demand occupations in the Governor's target industries (advanced manufacturing, energy, technology-based business, tourism and value-added agriculture), as well as in support industries, such as transportation and health care. Analysis of the current and future job market using labor market information, employer reports to determine skill gaps, and ensuring the necessary training to meet those gaps will be a priority in implementing WIOA Title I programs, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Trade Act and SCSEP funds to serve North Dakota. The strong connection with UI claimants will provide the impetus for serving increased numbers of individuals and for rapid reemployment results.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development developed and implements a system of performance and accountability measures for the state around workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. Each workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction partner cooperates in providing the data necessary to implement these measures. The results and analysis of the data will be shared and utilized to develop system improvements between the core and required partners.

(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), directly above.

One of the greatest assets of North Dakota's workforce system is a culture of strong communication and partnership between agencies and programs. The Workforce Leadership team entities, Job Service ND, Adult Education, Career & Technical Education, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Commerce Workforce Division and Higher Education meet monthly to strengthen and continually analyze the State's workforce development activities. The Team identifies and develops strategies to address North Dakota's current and

emerging workforce needs and work collaboratively to develop and implement strategic, goal-oriented action plans that strengthen the state's workforce and reduce duplication of effort within workforce programs.

The level of support from economic development, education, and business leaders for Workforce programs has been consistently strong. There is a healthy partnership at the state-level between the core programs, with strengthening interest from our non-core partners to collaborate, leverage resources and improve outcomes across all programs. Professional staff work tirelessly to remove barriers and maximize resources to improve services to the customer, both the employer and the worker.

WIA Title I funds in North Dakota have a long history of funding training for the targeted industries that drive the state's economy. For the last six previous program years, 90% or more of WIA Title I funds have supported training in the Governor's targeted industries. This approach to funding in-demand occupations transitions perfectly to the intent of WIOA.

North Dakota strives to build partnerships for future workforce needs and opportunities. WIOA core and required programs will enhance linkages between employers, students, parents and schools for shared understanding of workforce needs and opportunities. Efforts will include identifying working situations between education entities and industry to showcase relationships in career training.

In order to assess and analyze gaps between labor supply and demand to provide programmatic offerings, partnerships with economic development leaders will be strengthened to further understand local workforce. Untapped labor pools such as Native Americans, New Americans, Individuals with Disabilities and workers pursuing a second career will be promoted. Efforts will be made to expand training and work-based learning opportunities for the mentioned populations through Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education Centers, Job Service ND, TrainND and the state's public, private and tribal colleges and universities. Strengthening the use and availability of registered apprenticeships with co-enrollments by all core and required partners will fill a workforce need in the state which has been underutilized.

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

North Dakota's capacity to provide workforce development activities is strong. The ND Workforce Leadership Team has been in existence for over four years and spent many hours assessing the state of North Dakota's education and training system to come up with a Strategic Plan. The Team includes representation from Department of Commerce, Career and Technical Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service ND, Adult Education, Higher Education and Workforce Training.

The agencies responsible for the WIOA core and required program in North Dakota include:

- Job Service ND (which has responsibility for the majority of the WIOA core and required programs, such as WIOA Title I, Wagner Peyser, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance

Programs and Unemployment Compensation Programs

- The Department of Human services (which has responsibility for Vocational Rehabilitation, SCSEP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- The Department of Commerce (Community Services Block Grant)
- The Department of Public Instruction (Adult Education), and
- Motivation, Education and Training (National Farmworker Jobs Program)

(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

GOVERNOR'S VISION

"Ladies and gentlemen, two years ago I stood before you and reported that the state of our state was strong. Today, I am pleased to tell you that we've made great progress since then, and that North Dakota is stronger than ever."

Governor Jack Dalrymple, State of the State Address, January 2015

The Unified State Plan provides focus on integrating the Governor's vision for job creation for emerging careers in the fossil fuels and renewable energy sector, healthcare sectors, advanced manufacturing sector, transportation and information technology sector. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will support training opportunities for public assistance clients, low income individuals, veterans, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and American Indians.

"For more than a decade, we have focused our economic development efforts on creating jobs and growing our targeted industries. Now, we must take that mission to the next level by focusing on building a workforce for the future and capitalizing on emerging industries and innovations."

Governor Jack Dalrymple, Executive Budget Address, December 2014

Governor Dalrymple and his administration are committed to "Excellence in Education" as one of the pillars supporting his economic development and workforce agenda.

"Education is the foundation upon which we continue to build our future."

"Our colleges and universities do an outstanding job of enriching student's lives and preparing them for a lifetime of success."

Governor Jack Dalrymple, State of the State Address, January 2015

Education is the bedrock on which North Dakota will build for the future. Excellence in education will enable us to achieve our greatest potential, as individuals and as a state. Schools produce the human wealth on which our progress depends.

As a result of rapid innovation and introduction of new technologies, the workforce system and the education and training system must be market driven. The availability of qualitative and quantitative economic and labor market information will allow the system partners to rapidly respond to the talent needs of North Dakota business and industry. Opportunities to access life-long learning in basic and job specific skill training for all citizens is a goal for the system and will allow the workforce to stay competitive and prepared for the opportunities being created by North Dakota employers. Education and training opportunities need to be available, accessible, affordable and flexible in order to address the needs of the North Dakota workforce. This is a focus of the Dalrymple administration.

GOVERNOR'S VISION FOR THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Governor Dalrymple has been proactive in his efforts to help drive the North Dakota economy by ensuring that North Dakota has both a favorable business climate and workforce climate that is ready and able to respond to the changing needs of the citizens and business and industry in the state. As mentioned in his 2015 State of the State address, Governor Dalrymple states:

“North Dakota’s growth in personal incomes is fueled by our state’s robust economy. Over the past 10 years, North Dakota’s economy has averaged an annual growth rate of 10.3 percent, nearly three times that of the nation’s economy. We also continue to have the nation’s lowest unemployment rate at just 2.4 percent, and our growing commercial activity has created more than 106,000 new jobs in the past 10 years.”

This great success is attributed to three essential strategies for continued economic growth in addition to the five targeted industries. This holistic approach is intended to create jobs across all industries and sectors.

1. Sustaining a positive business climate.
2. Investing in research and development in the private sector and the university system.
3. Building on our success in the global marketplace by linking North Dakota businesses with foreign buyers.

The North Dakota Talent Initiative took a look at workforce development for economic development in 2008. It was determined that the role of the workforce development and workforce training system in North Dakota is to prepare the workforce. Workforce intelligence was identified as an essential component to the success of the Talent Initiative. Major outcomes for the effort included:

- Increase the quantity and quality of North Dakota's workforce.
- Transition from a workforce to a talent force through a workforce improvement focus.
- Reduce Unemployment in counties and areas of the state with current unemployment above the state average.

The Governor identifies the targeted industries of advanced manufacturing, value-added agriculture, energy, technology-based business and tourism as the drivers of the North Dakota economy.

The Governor's vision of bringing together all key players is illustrated through his leadership in working with key industries in the State and effectively addressing specific workforce issues. An example is the Governor's role in The EmPower Commission which was formed and began the complex task of developing North Dakota's comprehensive energy policy for the state's diverse and growing energy industry. The 2014 future vision of the Empower Commission states North Dakota's future is one where many of the energy sectors have the potential to not only grow, but also develop new economies based on value-added opportunities related to energy resources. In order to move forward, the state needs to address several key areas crucial to the expansion of energy production and extraction. North Dakota needs to work with the industry to begin exploring ways to capture opportunities to develop raw resources into new products, including petrochemicals, plastics, nanofibers, manufactured products or materials yet to be discovered.

The EmPower North Dakota Commission has identified five critical components for continuing to grow energy production and new energy-related industries:

- 1. Infrastructure** – Up-to-date infrastructure is the foundation for continuing existing development and expanding into new areas.
- 2. Workforce** – As the energy industry expands, the workforce must be available to meet the demands.
- 3. Research and Development** – Research and development serves as the bridge for industry to move from concepts to new development and commercialization.
- 4. Regulatory Environment** – A regulatory environment, at both the federal and state levels, that encourages economic growth while ensuring environmentally-responsible development of natural resources is essential.
- 5. Energy Growth Incentives** – New and continued incentives are needed to capitalize on development opportunities across North Dakota's energy sectors.

North Dakota continues to take steps to insure that education, workforce and economic development efforts are fully integrated and working toward the same goals by being the first State in the nation to require development of a Single Biennial State Strategic Plan for all of workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction.

This concept was further strengthened by legislation which sets the requirement that annually, the State Board of Higher Education, the Department of Career and Technical Education, the Department of Commerce, and Job Service North Dakota, submit a report to the Workforce Development Council relating to their respective current workforce initiatives and activities and their plan for future workforce initiatives and activities.

(2) Goals. Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This should—

(A) Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁸ and other populations.⁹

(B) Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

GOALS

The North Dakota Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development developed and implements a system of performance and accountability measures for the state around workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. Each workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction partner cooperates in providing the data necessary to implement these measures as pursuant to NDCC 54-60-19. The Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development shall consider these reports in preparing the Consolidated Biennial Statewide Strategic Plan for the state's system for workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. In addition, before November first of each even-numbered year, the Department of Career and Technical Education, Job Service North Dakota, the Department of Commerce, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Board of Higher Education shall present their agencies' workforce-related budget initiatives for the upcoming biennium, including alignment of their initiatives with the Consolidated Biennial Statewide Strategic Plan, to the North Dakota Workforce Development Council. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council members shall consider potential areas for collaboration.

The 2015 Consolidated Biennial Statewide Strategic Plan for Workforce Development vision and goals include:

Vision:

An enterprising workforce that drives North Dakota's global competitiveness, has regional access to exemplary skill development, embraces lifelong learning and contributes to individual, community and state.

GOAL 1: Create Transparency in Workforce Image and Development Activities

Strategy 1: Inventory and analyze existing workforce development services, programs and challenges.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

- Compile, publish and market existing workforce programs, such as scholarships, tax incentives and other workforce initiatives.
- Analyze existing workforce development services and challenges and provide policy recommendations.
- Improve Performance Accountability reporting by utilizing the North Dakota State Longitudinal Data System to evaluate workforce program effectiveness.

GOAL 2: Prepare Our Future Workforce

Strategy 1: Engage students, parents, educators, schools, and businesses in a comprehensive career planning process.

- Expand the use of RUPrepareND.com – an online computer-based career development system – and a statewide grade 7-12 career planning curriculum.
- Seek out and review best practices studies of innovative and emerging methodology in the fields of education and training for the future workforce, pre-K through university students. Present findings to stakeholders where recommendations will be made regarding skill gaps, policy, and funding.
- Engage k-12 educators by expanding Educators in Industry Program.
- Expand available Career and Technical Education program options to high schools to meet workforce demands and increase school completion rates.

Strategy 2: Increase stakeholder promotion of and employer use of work based learning.

- Expand work-based learning through a core resource for information, promotion and assistance for internships and cooperative work experience activities.
- Promote and provide resources for events and opportunities to showcase experiences that are available for stakeholders; private, public and tribal college and university students, chambers of commerce, economic development and employers.

GOAL 3: Meet State's Workforce-Needs by Connecting Employers with A Skilled Candidate Pool

Strategy1: Build partnerships for future workforce needs and opportunities.

- Enhance linkages between employers, students, parents and schools for shared understanding of workforce needs and opportunities.
- Identify working situations between education entities and industry to showcase relationships in career training.

Strategy 2: Enhance North Dakota's image in order to attract out of state job seekers.

- Develop and distribute a community and employer recruitment toolkit.
- Partner with communities to further promote local recruitment initiatives.
- Facilitate collaboration between recruitment professionals.

GOAL 4: Expand and Retain our Workforce

Strategy 1: Ensure the continuing competitiveness of North Dakota’s employers by enhancing the knowledge and skills of current workers.

- Offer frequent opportunities to communicate with employers regarding existing training, training needs and the return on investment resulting from training.

Strategy 2: Assess and analyze gaps between labor supply and demand to provide programmatic offerings.

- Partner with economic development to further understand local workforce.
- Identify and promote untapped labor pools such as Native Americans, New Americans, Individuals with Disabilities and workers pursuing a second career. Further provide training opportunities for above mentioned populations through Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education Centers, TrainND and the state’s public, private and tribal colleges and universities.
- Expand the use and availability of registered apprenticeships.
- Promote and develop workforce skills that meet the requirements of high demand, high wage careers.

GOVERNOR’S VISION FOR YOUTH

Governor Dalrymple envisions excellence in education as the foundation upon which we continue to build our future. North Dakota has one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country. Governor Dalrymple has supported increased funding for K-12 and higher education in the State. His 2015-2017 biennial budget included funding to provide increased merit-based and needs-based scholarships and capital projects.

North Dakota is partnering with the nonprofit National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). NMSI’s mission is to improve student performance in the critical subjects of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). NMSI’s programs transform teaching, transform schools and are transforming education in the United States. Informational sessions on the programs -- College Readiness and Laying the Foundation -- will be offered to state educators and administrators. The state’s partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative will give elementary, middle school and high school teachers the intensive training they need to improve math, science and English instruction and aims to boost AP courses in the state.

Governor Dalrymple also recognizes the need to provide alternatives to help connect those youth who are disconnected or at risk of dropping out of school. The Governor supports pathways to education and training through general education diplomas. The college and career readiness standards exemplify the workforce needs of business and industry. The Bank of North Dakota is a valuable partner in the support of students’ educational goals by providing financial support to out of school youth for the first and final GED test fees. Adult education also receives support from WIOA title 1 and title IV partner core programs.

The Hess Corporation, a global energy company, donated more than \$25 million to fund “Succeed 2020,” a statewide education project aimed at helping North Dakota students become better prepared for college and careers.

“Hess Corporation’s donation gives us a tremendous opportunity to improve the quality of education for North Dakota students and to ensure they are ready for both college and the workplace,” Governor Dalrymple said.

Through Succeed 2020, Regional Education Associations (REA) convene local education and workforce development organizations and postsecondary institutions to assess how to help all students in the region be better prepared for college and careers.

REAs’ Succeed 2020 programs incorporate three strategies. These include:

- Ongoing college and career counseling and planning
- Access to and success in rigorous academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
- Targeted and coordinated supports

Succeed 2020 programs support career pathways through:

- Expanded college and career counseling, including resources Roads to Success curriculum;
- Professional development for teachers, counselors, and school administrators;
- Distance learning to expand access to a wider range of academic and career and technical education courses;
- Tutoring and other services to help students successfully complete high school and transition into postsecondary education and the workforce; and
- Other programs or approaches that address specific regional objectives.

Succeed 2020 is designed for middle and high school students, providing a variety of career pathways to better prepare for their college and career goals. More than 2,500 students from 66 schools districts have participated in eight college and career fairs. In 2014-2015, more than 1,200 students gained hands-on experience in STEM activities such as summer camps and robotics competitions. Nearly 1800, students prepared for college and careers through Roads to Success lessons. During the 2012-13 school year, more than 2,300 teachers, nearly 220 administrators, and 150 counselors and career advisors received professional development, support, and guidance from Succeed 2020. More than 300 businesses supported students through career fairs, job shadows, and internships. Businesses also hosted teacher tours and advised program development.

North Dakota ranks among the top in the country of high school students graduating, however, there are young people who drop out of school or do not continue on to higher education. Governor Dalrymple’s vision is to identify and reach these out of school youth as early as possible to assist them with reconnecting to education and careers.

Higher education also is a key to our state’s future. Out of school youth are encouraged to seek advanced education to become more productive, higher-earning individuals for the rest of their lives. In recent years, North Dakota has taken significant steps forward in making post-secondary education more affordable for all of our young people. In 2015 the legislative assembly appropriated \$25 million for needs-based scholarships and instituted merit scholarships totaling \$14 million for students, including students earning a GED, who achieve a 3.0 grade-

point average, an ACT score of 24 or three “5’s” on the WorkKeys Assessments. Increasing the skills of North Dakota’s youth aligns with the Governor’s vision for a highly skilled workforce to support the State’s economic growth and increases per-capita income.

Incorporating a model of career information and career promotion will insure that students, parents, educators, and other career influencers are aware of the career opportunities which are being created by North Dakota business and industry and the requirements for those opportunities. Two industry awareness efforts, energy and information technology, <http://www.discoverndit.com/>, are in place to inform secondary school youth, parents and teachers of employment opportunities. Both industry awareness efforts started with Governor’s state set-aside funds and due to the success, have been sustained. Career and Technical Education provides funding and enables the continuation of the provision of this career information. This effort supports the State’s vision by insuring that youth and others have information on careers specific to North Dakota and their region at their disposal. This will assist them in making career choices which will lead to employment in North Dakota.

The Career Outlook is a publication of the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education’s Career Resource Network. The publication includes a multitude of information that assists youth to research and plan for their career. Youth can complete a self-assessment, a career clusters interest inventory, research occupations, explore options to finance education, military opportunities and employment. The Career Outlook has details about Job Corps and apprenticeship, post-secondary programs and costs. Information is included on WIOA core programs and partners and is beneficial to all individuals engaged in career exploration and the workforce professionals who assist them. <https://www.nd.gov/cte/crn/docs/CareerOutlook.pdf>

RURReadyND.com is a software program that the Bank of ND and Student Loans of ND provide to all North Dakota public and private middle schools and high schools. The program allows access to career exploration, education planning, and ACT test preparation tools. It features sections for students and parents. Youth can explore career and education options, complete an interest profile and a skills survey, and plan for high school and college. A portfolio is created and can be revisited as students make decisions throughout their school years.

“Providing internship opportunities to youth in North Dakota addresses two important challenges”, Commerce Commissioner Al Anderson said. “First, it provides businesses with another great source of employees in what is a very tight labor market. Second, it builds connections between our young people and North Dakota employers. We hope these connections will ultimately result in more young talent pursuing careers in North Dakota after college. Operation Intern is a wonderful opportunity for businesses and students to develop relationships while helping to retain young people in our state. Students will benefit through exposure and hands-on experience while businesses will benefit by demonstrating the potential of career opportunities with their company.”

The state funded Operation Intern program, <http://operationintern.com/v1/>, offers private businesses up to \$30,000 every two years to fund internships in their companies. The Governor in his 2015-2017 Biennial Budget request proposed \$1,500,000 for the continuation of Operation Intern as a way to expand Internship and work experience opportunities for North Dakota Higher

Education and Secondary students with North Dakota employers. The North Dakota Legislature approved \$1,500,000 in funding for this program.

Governor Dalrymple created an executive order establishing the North Dakota Commission on Education Improvement to recommend ways to improve the current system of delivering and financing elementary and secondary education, including the equitable distribution of state education dollars. The Commission recognized the need to increase the amount of time available to students for career planning. The relatively high ratio of students to counselors (450 to 1) was reduced to 300 to 1. To help meet that lower ratio a Career Advisor position was created to work under the direction of a school counselor and can be counted for 30% of a counseling programs time. A Career Advisor has received in-depth training in the areas of career development and incorporates career development information or skills in his/her work with students, parents, or school staff. There are 42 trained Career Advisors in schools across the state. There are another 30 trained individuals working in a variety of venues including colleges, both public and tribal, and REAs.

School districts utilized career advisors to provide sequential career development activities, current career information, and related career exploration opportunities to students in grades seven through twelve. A career advisor will use computer-assisted career guidance systems and provide career information to students, staff and parents. Other activities include facilitated classroom career exploration activities, maintained student career portfolios, coordinated job shadows, career fairs, college visits, job interviews, administration and interpretation of interest assessments and student preparation with employment-seeking skills. Student benefits from career development activities include a sense of achievement, greater ownership, a sense of direction and purpose, and development of a lifelong skill.

The 2015-2017 legislature invested \$50,000 in Education in Industries. This initiative provides funding for teacher externships. A teacher externship is a paid temporary position that provides teachers direct experience in an industry work environment. By exposing teachers to the real-life applications of what they teach, the externship enables them to develop curriculum suited for project-based learning and that reflects the world of work in the classroom. Externships take place during the summer months, typically lasting 3-6 weeks. Teachers are paired with a mentor within the organization who guides and oversees their work. This unique combination of experiences enmeshes the teacher to a depth of knowledge and understanding of career development that is then applied to students in the classroom. This educational situation enables the classroom teacher to recognize talents in students and be able to discuss and encourage the student to pursue an appropriate career pathway. Participating teachers earns a \$2000 stipend for completing an externships with \$1000 coming from the Department of Commerce and \$1000 paid by the employer. Graduate credits are earned for participation in courses through NDSU that requires the teacher to demonstrate how their experience will be incorporating into their classroom curriculum.

ADDITIONAL STATE GOALS AND STRATEGY

Moving to a demand driven delivery model insures the focus on target industries' needs and other in-demand industries' needs for talent. These are the identified industries that are and will in the future drive North Dakota's economic growth. This will support the State's vision of

focusing on target industries and in-demand and high-wage occupations where there are career opportunities and which will drive the future of North Dakota's economic growth.

A statewide list of in-demand and emerging occupations has been created. This list will be utilized by higher education, career and technical education, the Department of Commerce, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core program partners, the State Legislature and secondary education. In-demand and emerging occupations will provide the focus for developing sector strategies and career pathways in North Dakota.

Providing timely, customized workforce training to meet business demands will insure that our investments in training capacity meet business needs and include business and industry in the planning and evaluation process. This supports the State's vision by insuring that the workforce system is responding to the needs of North Dakota business and industry and that citizens have access to the training which will lead to career employment in the State. TrainND is the State's most comprehensive and inclusive training network comprised of the largest network of training specialists in the state. Courses and training areas are as diverse as the individuals and organizations that are served from industry-specific programs to training that applies to all fields. TrainND works to provide training for virtually every industry, in every corner of North Dakota providing businesses in each region with a single point of contact for all their training needs.

The Tribal College Grant program was established during the 2013 Legislative Session. The legislature continued their support in 2015 with funding to the five tribally controlled community colleges for workforce training and entrepreneurial assistance. This is done through curriculum development, equipment and technology purchase, and faculty training and student recruitment. Facility renovation to develop, expand, or redesign a program. The funded projects enhance curriculum offerings and support the programs that are included on the state's in-demand occupations list.

Find the Good Life in North Dakota is a workforce recruitment campaign started by the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation. <http://www.experience.nd.gov/>. It is a private/public sector funded program designed to help solve the greatest challenge facing our business community: workforce development, recruitment and retention. The campaign uses a variety of traditional, digital and non-traditional marketing tactics to reach target audiences identified as:

- Job seekers in states with an available workforce with the skill sets we need in North Dakota and those with high under- and unemployment.
- Out-of-state people in S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and math) related careers.
- Veterans and current military members who will soon be transitioning out of the military.
- College/trade school students.
- North Dakota residents who could recruit their friends and family to move here.
- Current in-state workers who may consider themselves temporary.
- Access to qualitative and quantitative labor market information and using this as the basis for all decisions will insure that the workforce delivery system is both responsive to the employers of the state and to the citizens of the state. The system can make decisions on

prioritizations and use of scarce resources. Business and industry will have information on their talent pipeline and workers and youth will have information on which occupations and industries are high-growth and expanding in the state. This will support the state's vision by insuring that the system partners are focusing on delivery of services that support skill development which will lead to employment.

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

See Appendix I

Note - North Dakota will complete that section after receipt and review of final regulations. An additional public comment period will be provided prior to the submission of the Unified Plan to the Departments of Education and Labor.

(4) Assessment. Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment 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 North Dakota Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development developed and implements a system of performance and accountability measures for the state around workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. Each workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction partner cooperates in providing the data necessary to implement these measures.

The Division of Workforce Development consults with partners in the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction, including the Department of Career and Technical education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Job Service North Dakota, the State Board of Higher Education, the Department of Human Services, and other Divisions of the Department of Commerce.

The measures are continuously reviewed to identify and implement improvements to the State's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction. Division of Workforce Development develops linkages between partners of the State's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction, to assure coordination and non-duplication of programs and services provided in the state.

(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 Section (a).

(1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including sector strategies 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).

North Dakota will continue to strive for a strong comprehensive workforce system that enables individuals to move easily between employment and skill improvement to advance their careers, achieve their occupational goals, and contribute to a growing economy. The workforce system includes partners in delivery of labor exchange services funded by Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, labor market information, workplace training, skills development and education, along with partners in business, industry and economic development.

Collaboration among partners for comprehensive delivery of services will include identification of skill needs and training gaps, and addressing training needs for in-demand occupations. The Governor's five target industries, as well as in-demand occupations in support industries, will be the primary focus of skill development strategies for the State. Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult education and WIOA Youth funds will be used to help targeted youth populations access jobs and occupational training opportunities that will keep them connected with their communities and North Dakota's labor market. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides services to youth which will assist them with identifying appropriate career goals and make the adjustment from school to employment. Pre-employment transition services are offered to high school students age 14-21. Services include job exploration, work based learning opportunities, counseling on enrollment in post-secondary education, workplace readiness and self-advocacy. Adult education enabling youth to acquire the basic skills necessary to function in today's society so that they can benefit from the completion of secondary school, enhanced family life, attaining citizenship and participating in job training programs.

The North Dakota workforce development and training system receives Federal and State funding support, and in many cases matching funds are also provided by the private sector. WIOA Title I funds are used to help leverage other Federal fund sources such as Pell Grants and student loans. In addition, WIOA funds are used to help leverage state and private sector funds available to address workforce training needs. North Dakota has a strong collaboration among state workforce partners to increase the employment of North Dakotan's with disabilities. The core program partners are represented as members of the State's Workforce Leadership team. Staff from local offices of DVR, Job Service North Dakota and Adult Basic Education collaborate in joint planning and service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

Core program staff collaborate to best achieve that goal for their participants. These efforts combined with additional funding support from the private sector and WIOA required partners will continue to be coordinated to support North Dakota's Talent Initiative goals to expand, attract, and retain talent to meet the state's workforce needs.

Sector strategies

Focus will be placed on preparing or retraining individuals for in-demand and emerging occupations in the Governor's target industries (advanced manufacturing, energy, technology-based business, tourism and value-added agriculture), as well as in support industries, such as transportation and health care. Analysis of the current and future job market using labor market information, determination of skill gaps, and ensuring the necessary training to meet those gaps will be a priority in deploying WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funds to serve North Dakota. The strong connection with UI claimants will provide the impetus for serving increased numbers of individuals and for rapid reemployment results.

Sector strategies will be expanded to continue enhancing and strengthening economic vitality through addressing employer and job-seeker talent requirements. Sector partnerships implement effective coordinated responses and integrate resources to develop the talent and workforce needs of key industries of a regional labor market.

Labor market information will be used as the basis to map and assess current sector activities to identify successes and challenges along with emerging market areas. This data will be used to understand the skills required for the current and future workforce and prioritize target industries.

Efforts will be tailored after the sector strategies that exist under the current TAACCCT grants that target energy and precision agriculture.

Through the EmPower North Dakota Commission, leaders from all major energy industries in North Dakota meet regularly with one common goal: to be critical thinkers for the development of the state's energy resources. The strategic partnerships between North Dakota's long-standing and emerging energy industries enable all sectors of the industry to work together as they meet our state's and country's energy needs. North Dakota is proactive and aggressive in addressing energy development and serves as a model for America in fostering innovative, long-term energy strategies to meet our nation's growing energy demand and need for energy security in an environmentally responsible manner.

Collaboration among higher education, Tribal leadership, Career and Technical Education, industry and the workforce system will be directed at development of training opportunities that provide core partner participants with flexible, short term training, resulting in industry recognized credentials.

North Dakota has received two Health Profession Opportunity Grants through the Administration for Children and Families. The grant recipients are both tribal colleges. These grants will support training for the healthcare industry and collaborates with

employers in need of healthcare professions by providing training and industry credentials to Native American students to meet the unique employment needs on the North Dakota reservations. A Memorandum of Understanding with the Workforce Development Council addresses coordination and collaboration in the provision of services for Native Americans interested in entering the healthcare workforce.

The connection of skill development and identified employer skill needs supports Governor Dalrymple's goal for economic development, which includes workforce development. Partnerships among federal, state, and local governments will produce a highly skilled workforce that strengthens businesses and the economy of the State. Increased sector partnerships meets the demands of employers, improves the workforce system and improves North Dakota's economy.

Career Pathways

WIOA provides an extraordinary opportunity to improve job and career options for North Dakota workers and job seekers through an integrated, job-driven, public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work. The workforce system includes three focus areas: the needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions; American Job Centers provide customer service to jobseekers and employers and the workforce system supports strong economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

Career and Technical Education, Adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners collaborate to establish career pathways systems that make it easier for all individuals to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in North Dakota.

Career pathway systems offer an effective approach to the development of a skilled workforce by increasing the number of workers in the North Dakota who gain industry-recognized and academic credentials necessary to work in jobs that are in-demand. Core partners will align educational offerings with business needs, career pathways systems engage business in the development of educational programs up front. Career pathways systems transform the role of employers from a customer to a partner and a co-leader and co-investor in the development of the workforce. Employers have a high stake in the development of career pathways that lead to an increase in their pipeline of qualified workers. The North Dakota career pathways system will offer a more efficient and customer-centered approach to workforce development by structuring connections among employers, adult basic education, support service providers, occupational training, and postsecondary education programs.

Career pathway programs make it easier for people to earn industry-recognized credentials through avenues that are more relevant; to provide opportunities for more flexible education and training; and to attain market identifiable skills that can transfer into work. These comprehensive education and training programs are suited to meet the needs of working learners and non-traditional students. Career pathways programs will be designed to serve a diverse group of learners to include; adults, youth, dislocated workers,

veterans, individuals with a disability, public assistance recipients, new immigrants, English language learners, and justice-involved individuals.

(2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

The state of North Dakota has been proactive in development of partnerships with business and industry, education, economic development, and the workforce development system to continuously identify and address workforce challenges. The North Dakota Talent Initiative is the basis for full statewide collaboration on workforce vision, goals, and issues. The Talent Initiative and ongoing partnership development facilitates solutions through strong relationships among partners. The Workforce Development Council, community colleges, business and labor, the Office of Apprenticeship, and TrainND all work closely to identify workforce needs and address training solutions. DVR's primary mission is to assist North Dakotans with disabilities to improve their employment opportunities and to assist North Dakota businesses in finding solutions to their disability-related issues.

Through this "dual client" approach, DVR assist individuals with permanent injuries, illness, or impairments to achieve competitive employment and increased independence. DVR also assist business owners and employers through full service business consultation on a variety of business and disability-related areas. Core program partners will collaborate with Career and Technical Education to receive professional development to build a common understanding of career pathways and how they can be used across all agencies. Career and Technical Education will, with consultation of the others involved, take the lead on professional development that will be applied across all agencies.

North Dakota continues to see resettlements of New Americans. There were 590 New American arrivals in FFY 2014. The projections for FFY 2015 & FFY 2016 estimated upwards of 450. Job Service AJCs link adult education and English literacy programs. Adult Education offers programs that blend academic instruction of English literacy with occupational skills training that is specific to local economic needs. A WIA Incentive funded project has developed a class to cover basic work skills to include but not limited to soft skills, basic work math, reading, writing, transportation, interviewing, application process, childcare needs and computers. Job Service AJC staff will partner to present the curriculum and provide job search information. New Americans will gain the skills to assist in completing more advanced job skills training that will lead to better employment opportunities.

Involving interns in North Dakota businesses addresses two important challenges. Internships provide employees in a tight labor market and build connections between young people and North Dakota employers. The state funded Operation Intern program

offers private businesses up to \$30,000 every two years to fund internships in their companies.

Adult Education plans to incorporate the concept of a business specialist into its existing educational staff. The purpose of this position would be to develop regional partnerships and serve as a conduit for regional employers and students to direct them to integrated employment and training, apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities.

North Dakota has a history of collaborating between the three agencies responsible for the six core programs and other required partners. State staff from Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Service North Dakota have been meeting monthly since 2011 with the North Dakota Workforce Leadership Team. This team also includes Career and Technical Education, Higher Education and the Department of Commerce. The core partners recommended a Unified Plan and received approval from the Governor's office. The intention is to continue to strive to integrate the workforce system and strengthen the current integration.

Co-enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs. Examples of funds leveraged with WIOA include: Title II Adult Education; Carl Perkins; Trade Act; Tribal WIOA and Tribal 477 programs; Motivation, Education and Training (MET); TANF; Vocational Rehabilitation; SCSEP; state funded Workforce 20/20 and North Dakota New Jobs Training. WIOA funds are used to cover the cost of GED testing, dual enrollments with WIA Dislocated Worker funds complement Trade Act enrollments, MET and WIOA co-enrollments support training and Vocational Rehabilitation referrals receive Wagner-Peyser services. JOBS clients also receive Wagner-Peyser services routinely and receive WIOA assistance as appropriate. Building on these partnerships assist in determining what funding source is best utilized to increase job seeker skills and to increase customer service. These efforts result in meeting the needs of North Dakota employers and supporting the Governor's vision.

The Job Service AJCs staff include the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). All JVSG staff are Disable Veteran Outreach Program and assist the needs of disabled veterans and those veterans and eligible persons who require intensive services in order to obtain and retain employment that supports their self-sufficiency. DVOP services are available in all Job Service AJCs and are integrated into all service delivery offerings.

A recent service delivery model change for unemployment insurance (UI) and a more regional based service delivery for Job Service AJCs has increased the customer base in the Job Service AJCs. UI claims are taken only through online means. This development has increased the need for assistance from Job Service AJC staff. Job Service AJCs have adjusted as required by WIOA and have adapted service delivery to meet the growing needs of UI claimants.

Registered Apprenticeship offers great benefits to both employers and workers. North Dakota's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development goal to expand and retain our

workforce includes a strategy to expand the use and availability of registered apprenticeships. Core and required partners will coordinate efforts with the State Director of the Office of Apprenticeship to increase the number of apprenticeships in the state and WIOA program support.

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 North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as the State Board under WIOA section 101(d). North Dakota is designated by the Governor as a single state local area. The Council shall carry out the functions of a local board.

The Workforce Development Council identifies, develops and recommends workforce policy changes to programs that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's workforce development system. Targeted industry and potential labor pools are the focus of the Council meetings to provide direction for a comprehensive workforce development strategic plan. The Council identifies and develops opportunities for collaboration and partnership between education, employment and supporting workforce development policies, resources and activities in the State. The nine American Job Centers are located regionally throughout North Dakota.

The Council consists of the following members:

- Representatives from business and industry, comprising the majority of the membership. There will be at least one member from each of the eight regional economic and employment planning regions in the State. These business members should represent the major business and industry interests within the State.
- Representatives from organized labor comprising at least 15% of the membership.
- Representatives of education comprising at least 15% of the membership. Categories include: secondary education, postsecondary education, North Dakota Tribal colleges, career and technical education, Job Corps, and local school board.
- One representative from a community-based organization.
- The following state officials having responsibility for administering federal workforce development programs: Commissioner of North Dakota Department of

Commerce, Executive Director of Job Service North Dakota, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chancellor of the North Dakota University System, and the State Director of the Department of Career and Technical Education.

- Additional members who are knowledgeable about human resources and economic development needs and the resources for meeting these needs.
- The Council will have the following ex-officio non-voting members:
 - The Director of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council
 - Executive Director of the Indian Affairs Commission
 - Representative from Veterans Affairs

The Council represents diverse geographic areas of the state. The chairperson is selected by the Governor and represents business. A director and support staff are employees of Job Service North Dakota and assist the Council in performing its functions.

The Council as a whole shall be responsible to the Governor for:

- Identifying, developing and recommending workforce policy changes to federal and state programs that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's workforce development system.
- Reviewing and identifying the current and future economic development and workforce development needs of the state and recommending steps for meeting those needs.
- Providing direction for a comprehensive workforce development strategic plan.
- Identifying and developing recommended actions that will enhance and increase the capacity of the state's workforce development system.
- Identifying and developing opportunities for collaboration and partnership between education, employment and supporting workforce development activities in the State.
- Reviewing and approving a Council operating budget.
- Performing the duties and functions of State Board as prescribed under WIOA.

The Workforce Development Council creates policies as required by WIOA and receives reports for all core programs, career technical education and the Department of Commerce. The members review the law and regulations and considers the benefits to the state. The Workforce Development Council considers the service delivery for the state and the single local area designation when determining service providers. The Council enters into memorandum of understandings for providers for WIOA Youth services and Adult and Dislocated Worker career services. The Council considers the unique characteristics of North Dakota and the wishes of the Governor when making provider decisions. The Council will monitor the PY 2013 Workforce Incentive Act incentive grant projects especially the projects that meet WIOA mandates of eligible training provider performance and the common intake, performance and reporting. The projects utilize the ND WDQI structure and SLDS.

In following WIOA's training emphasis for in-demand occupations, the Workforce Development Council will review LMI data annually and make adjustments as necessary. Biennially, the Council creates and submits a list of recommendations for workforce legislative initiatives to the Governor. These recommendations are utilized by entities in their legislative testimonies to Standing Committees.

The Executive Committee provides for the administration, continuity and good order of the Council as a whole and perform executive management tasks as may be determined by the Council membership.

- a. Assist in establishing the meeting agendas for the Council.
- b. Track all outstanding actions of the Council and recommend actions that would assure successful completion of all tasks and objectives.
- c. Recommend policy positions for the Council's review and approval.
- d. Establish task groups when needed--design purpose and role, obtain and appoint members, designate chair, and establish operating parameters and completion time subject to approval of the Council.

The Planning Committee shall be responsible for:

- a. Developing a Unified State Plan.
- b. Recommend to the Council, goals for the development and continuous improvement of the statewide workforce delivery system to include development of linkages to assure coordination and non-duplication among programs and activities.
- c. Provide recommendations for improvement of comprehensive State workforce delivery system, including State adjusted levels of performance as needed when the core program performance fails to meet negotiated levels.
- d. Recommend projects to the Council for Governor's consideration for funding and provide recommendations to the Council on the use of the Governor's Set Aside Funds when available.

The Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities is State established to further the goal of considering competitive and integrated employment as the first option when supporting individuals with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment. This committee will serve as a Council subcommittee to advise the members on services and strategies for persons with disabilities.

The Council will consider establishing a youth committee in PY 2016.

(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 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.

Current Job Service AJC service delivery accommodates integration and the focus of the ND Talent Initiative. Skill assessment and career counseling/promotion will be routinely provided to job seekers utilizing the Job Service AJC. Initial assessment will determine seekers' current workplace skills and determine whether skill development is necessary for employment goals or a referral to career services. Career guidance/promotion is based on the Governor's targeted industries of Energy, Value-Added Agriculture, Tourism, Technology-Based Business and Advanced Manufacturing as well as current labor market information.

The North Dakota workforce system gives all stakeholders including businesses, students, job seekers, researchers, and public officials access to all federally-funded workforce development programs, as well as several state-funded programs.

Services provided through the Job Service AJCs include:

- WIOA Title IB-Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth
- Wagner-Peyser
- Unemployment Insurance
- TANF Employment and Training (JOBS)
- Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Foreign Labor Certification
- SNAP Employment and Training (BEST)
- North Dakota Workforce 20/20
- North Dakota New Jobs Training

Job Service AJC system core and required partners' include:

- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Post-secondary Vocational Education under the Post-secondary Career and Technical Education under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

North Dakota capitalizes on the strengths each partner brings to the system while reducing or eliminating duplication of products and services. The simplicity in the structure with defined roles and responsibilities of all partners allow case managers and providers to deliver the services necessary for North Dakota's growth and competitive edge.

Job seekers have the option to search for employment, review labor market information and a variety of other employment topics through Jobsnd.com. Links to the job listing site provides fast access to a database of thousands of jobs. Jobsnd.com utilizes Job Spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate web

sites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards. Spidered jobs are added to Job Service's internal job listings to provide seamless access to thousands of job openings. Employers benefit from having job openings viewed by the largest applicant pool in North Dakota and the ability to view similar listings for wage and benefit comparison. Job seekers benefit by having the largest single portal in North Dakota to access job openings for all occupations. Jobsnd.com has the largest pool of job openings in the state.

Job Service provides staff assisted services. Job seekers are assessed to identify current skill levels and gaps. The assessment information is used to determine skill development opportunities within the targeted industries and in-demand occupations. Labor market information is provided for job seekers to make informed occupational choices and execute their job search efficiently. Career services will be provided to the extent needed based on individual assessments. Support service needs will be assessed and referrals made to partner programs or know community resources. Informational services are provided through the SHARE Network. The SHARE Network is a unique resource that brings together workforce development partners, faith-based organizations, community organizations and businesses. The SHARE Network is a partnership developed to assist customers gain access services in order to obtain, retain and advance in employment.

Job Service AJC staff providing assessment and orientation services will be knowledgeable of services of all core and required partners and will be able to explain services available and refer job seekers for those services. North Dakota has a strong history of partner collaboration and dual enrollment of mutual clients. Partner program staff, through release of information, share assessment information and employment plans. The sharing of information provides convenience for the client and also enhances the chances of success. When all employment and training resources are considered, the likelihood of success is greatly increased. ITA costs sharing with DVR and WIOA has been occurring for over a decade. Students working with Adult Education to earn their GED have received support services to cover testing costs. TANF participants, especially out of school youth, are referred to and receive WIOA services.

Job-driven workforce development will prepare workers and ensure businesses have skilled workers to be competitive. Individuals can quickly learn skills where hands-on experience in a work environment is integrated with classroom learning. Job-driven training programs will be promoted with the aim to include work-based learning opportunities that best suit their participants. Work based learning activities include:

- Work experience, paid and unpaid
- Job shadows
- Internships
- On-the-job training
- Pre-apprenticeships
- Registered apprenticeships

Participant outcomes of entered employment and wages improve with work based learning activities. Employers reduce their recruitment and training costs with work-based learning activities. It also helps them hire better-prepared employees who understand workplace

expectations. WIOA Career Services includes activities on behalf of employers, including small employers, which describe the work based learning opportunities available.

Job driven training ensures that job seekers and workers are equipped with the skills needed by employers and are matched to employers with good jobs. Staff will utilize the eligible training provider list and the ND in-demand occupation list to promote individual training accounts. Classroom training and on-the-job training will support the workforce needs of employers and where available, apprenticeships. Funds will be leveraged between core and required programs whenever possible.

Co-enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs. Examples of funds leveraged with WIOA Title I funds include: Title II Adult Education; Carl Perkins; Trade Act; Tribal WIOA and Tribal 477 programs; Motivation, Education and Training (MET); TANF employment and training (JOBS); SNAP Employment and Training (BEST); Vocational Rehabilitation and SCSEP. WIOA funds are used to cover the cost of GED testing, dual enrollments with WIA Dislocated Worker funds complement Trade Act enrollments, MET and WIOA co-enrollments leverage program training funds and Vocational Rehabilitation referrals receive Wagner-Peyser services. JOBS and BEST clients receive Wagner-Peyser services routinely and receive WIOA assistance as appropriate. These partnerships assist in determining what funding source is best utilized to increase job seeker skills. These efforts result in meeting the needs of North Dakota employers and supporting the Governor's vision.

To ensure the WIOA requirements are implemented with fidelity and to the 'spirit' of the law, the state core partner agencies will work together to develop a professional development calendar. This calendar will cover such topics as labor market information (LMI), career pathways, motivational interviewing, agency roles and partnerships, and the new data interface system. Trainings will be regional or quadrant and will include all core program staff to ensure networking, common training understanding and implementation of exemplary practices. This training concept maximizes staff time, funding and participant outcomes.

(B) Alignment with Activities outside the Plan. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by mandatory 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.

Core partners collaborate with community efforts and initiatives to assist North Dakotans meet their employment goals and increase earnings. Core partner staff participate in a variety of activities that promote in-demand careers, career pathways, academic achievement and employment.

Collaboration among WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, DVR, unemployment insurance, SCSEP, Trade Act, business and industry, the North Dakota University System, TrainND (state funded customized employee training), Career and Technical Education (Carl Perkins), Adult Basic Education, refugee services, foster care providers, the State Penitentiary system, and many more partners will result in:

- Expanded awareness and leverage of programs/funds designated to serving targeted populations, often served by multiple entities;
- Rapid development and deployment of programs and activities unique to economic and employment needs for North Dakota's workforce;
- Access to increased numbers of persons in need of assistance, including low skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, English Language Learners, disaffected youth, veterans, dislocated workers, and individuals residing in high unemployment areas, including American Indians.

The current collaboration between SCSEP and DVR is strong and greatly enhances the success of individuals. SCSEP refers participants to DVR to assist with disability evaluation and assessment and adaptation toward their recovery. DVR refers clients to SCSEP to assist with assessment of job skills and required training for employment in specific career fields.

SCSEP is progressively building partnerships with the Older Americans Act senior service providers, adult protective services, county social services, local veteran's service centers, adult education, Job Service AJCs, homeless coalitions, and tribal colleges, to facilitate referral of services through the use of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). These MOUs ensure co-enrollments of clients to provide maximum access to available resources.

The Workforce Leadership Team has the responsibility to enhance collaboration and implement strategies between the team members as well as Registered Apprenticeship. The Team will be instrumental in developing the One-Stop System Memorandum of Understanding. The Team will use this opportunity to more effectively connect with all the workforce partners and determine how to enhance collaboration.

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

North Dakota has an established core partner working relationship. DVR and Job Service AJC staff participate on local Adult Education advisory boards. Job Service staff are appointed members of the State Rehabilitation Council and the North Dakota Workforce Leadership Team. Core partner staff have integrated business services activities and local partner collaboration meetings to further integrate services. These meetings act as a way to educate each other on the services available under all titles which results in appropriate

referrals and enhanced outcomes. State level trainings will be offered to all local core program staff. Efforts to integrate service delivery and formalize referral process will continue on the State level as well as between local programs.

ND Advantage is a portal to connect employers with core partner business services. The website is a joint venture between the Workforce Leadership Team to provide options to find and keep qualified employees, use financial incentives to build employers teams and ensure access, and engage in training that enhances workforce diversity. Information on ND Advantage includes recruitment, retention, work based learning opportunities, information regarding services for employees with disabilities and Americans with Disabilities Act. <http://ndadvantage.com/>

Core program partners are engaged in a project with the assistance of the North Dakota Information Technology Department to create a common participant intake and through data sharing, provide a portal for collecting common participant outcomes for federal performance measures reports. The project has three phases: 1) The WIOA Study, 2) Procure WIOA Solution and 3) Implement Solution. Among the WIOA mandates for integrated reporting and performance, the solution will consider a feature that will automate partner referral.

With the increase in age eligibility and focus to spend 75 percent of WIOA youth funds on out-of-school youth, recruitment efforts are targeted toward this population. Youth Coordinators work closely with Job Service AJC Resource Room staff, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation on referral and dual enrollment of out-of-school youth. In addition, Youth Coordinators utilize local networks with social service staff and/or community-based programs targeting homeless, disabled and transitioning youth. Unemployment insurance claimants within the age eligibility are targeted for out-of-school youth recruitment. Although the focus is shifting to serving the out-of-school population, outreach continues to be provided to schools. Communication with school personnel including principals, CTE teachers and counselors is crucial to locate students who have dropped out or for those graduating and in need of assistance for occupational skills training to fill the jobs in-demand.

The strong relationship between the WIOA Youth Coordinators and DVR staff has resulted in over 70% of WIOA youth participants with disabilities in PY 2014. This can be attributed to collaboration on participant needs and the need to maximize funding due to North Dakota's minimum funding levels.

The Workforce Leadership Team together with the Workforce Development Council will monitor the progress of WIOA program coordination and alignment. Collaboration opportunities and strategies will develop and strengthen from the partner connectivity. Service delivery and integration improvements will be made through evaluations of feedback received and prospects for technical assistance will be identified.

The blend of career services and referral is provided and may vary depending on the customer needs that will be addressed. Customers may be directed to self-service only, job

getting services, or skill development services based on their initial skill assessment results. Co-enrollment will be utilized as appropriate in order to provide the most appropriate funding source for those services that best meet the customer's needs in a cost effective manner. A customer-focused approach including an initial assessment of skill level, skill development, career counseling/promotion and support service needs for each individual shall be available through the Job Service AJC.

This approach will be used to determine the needs of:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Dislocated workers, including trade impacted
- Displaced homemakers
- Basic Skills deficient
- Individuals with multiple challenges to employment
- JOBS clients
- BEST clients
- Non-custodial parents
- Low-income individuals including recipients of public assistance
- Migrants and seasonal farm workers
- Minorities
- New Americans and others with limited English proficiency
- Older individuals
- School dropouts
- Veterans
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals

Employment into in-demand occupations will be the goal for all individuals and will include non-traditional training choices.

North Dakota continues to see an increased population of New Americans/refugees and other English Language Learners. Lutheran Social Services reports 518 new arrivals in FY 15 with an additional 458 New Americans expected in the fiscal year 2016. Job Service ND AJCs link with adult education and English literacy programs. Adult education has offerings that incorporate English literacy with occupational skills training that is closely aligned with local economies.

The state of North Dakota has been proactive in development of partnerships with business. New Americans and English language learners require additional assistance and preparation to progress in employment readiness. The Job Service AJCs and Adult Education in southeast North Dakota have utilized WIA Incentive funds to provide a weekly work skills class. The class will cover basic work skills to include but not limited to soft skills, basic work math, reading, writing, transportation, interviewing, application process, childcare needs and computers. The curriculum is presented jointly by Adult Education and Job Service AJC staff. The class curriculum will rotate every six weeks, providing space

and computers for approximately 20 students every six weeks. The class began August 2015 and will be used as a model to replicate in other areas of need across the state.

In order to better serve English Language Learners, the Wagner-Peyser 10% funds will be designated to this special group of individuals.

North Dakota has had a very small number of long-term unemployed, (individuals out of work for 26+ weeks), due to the strong economy. Currently, there are 17 individuals, in state, considered long-term unemployed. North Dakota has felt the effect of falling oil prices and anticipates the numbers of long term unemployed to increase. Core program partners are prepared to face a unique combination of social, emotional, and skill deficiencies caused by the duration of their unemployment. Intensive services will be provided to address these issues and move individuals to paid work experience and reemployment.

DVR offers a Summer Youth Employment Program to connect high school students with disabilities to summer jobs. Research has shown that young people who have work experience also have a higher rate of academic attainment and are more likely to become employed after graduation. The program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Instruction, Job Service, secondary school transition teachers, community rehabilitation providers, parents, students, and employers.

The mission of the ND Community of Practice for Transition is to work towards building, supporting, and sustaining community partnerships. The system promotes and improves the scope, opportunity and quality of services for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career beyond high school.

Communities of Practice (COP) involve people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a similar passion and who interact on a regular basis to learn from each other and problem solve. North Dakota's Community of Practice will focus on working across groups and localities to share information, address issues, learn together, find shared goals and define shared work. The North Dakota structure is modeled on the national community of practice, of which North Dakota is a member.

The group will focus on developing the community by inviting relevant state agencies, and identifying groups that are involved in transition. The State and Regional Communities, as well as, other state Community of Practice groups will share information and ideas through Shared Work, a website established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act partnership.

The ND Office of Special Education sponsors a Statewide Interagency Community of Practice that actively engages all stakeholders that represent the roles important to secondary transition for students with disabilities in ND. In addition, the Community of Practice extends the existing state advisory into the regions. The State Transition Community of Practice Advisory Council identifies the development of Regional Interagency Transition Committees as a strategy to improve communication, knowledge

and expertise among stakeholders in the transition process for youth with disabilities. An interagency transition team brings together a variety of stakeholders who are supporting youth with disabilities so they can have the best chance for success as adults. The State Community of Practice meets quarterly and the Regional Community of Practice teams work to implement and state initiatives and best practices for the intended beneficiaries.

Recent Regional Community goals and accomplishments include:

- Transition Fairs
- Updated policies
- Increased training opportunities
- Development of timeline for services
- Development of transition folders for families
- Information sharing
- Sharing information
- Improved partnerships with the Department of Public Instruction, DVR, Developmental Disabilities, Job Service, Higher Ed, Independent Living centers, Chambers of Commerce, etc.,
- Development of services for students with disabilities ages 18-21
- Development of programs to balance functional and academic needs
- Identification of agency responsibilities
- Consistency of services throughout the region

Opportunities to locate SCSEP offices and training assets within all Job Service AJC locations are being pursued. This will increase collaboration to tie SCSEP with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services to greatly enhance participant employment possibilities such as resume building, application writing, and job seeking. This also will provide leverage of various programs and resources to meet the employment needs of North Dakota's senior workforce.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) offers training and employment services to assist in finding and retaining full-time employment leading to self-sufficiency. TANF families receive employment and training services by participating in the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS). JOBS program supportive services are available that help remove barriers to employment and training such as transportation allowance, assistance with child care costs, car repairs, tools and clothing for work, work experience, on-the-job-training, job search and job readiness, community service program, vocational educational training, providing child care services to an individual who is participating in a community service program.

TANF households with increased earnings may qualify for six (6) months of Transition Assistance. Transition Assistance promotes job retention by providing an extended period of case assistance that provides a safety net of financial support and support services to assist households in attaining self-sufficiency.

Post TANF supportive services may be provided to eligible individuals for up to six (6) months following the closure of their TANF or Transition Assistance case. Post TANF recipients continue to receive supportive services.

TANF Kinship Care program provides enhanced funding and support services in order to expand the options for placement of children who are in the care, custody, and control of County Social Services, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) or Executive Director, Department of Human Services. As an alternative to Foster Care, children may be placed with relatives. Kinship care rules follow many of the same rules as foster care.

Diversion Assistance was implemented as a means to provide short-term emergency benefits and support services to families during a 'specific crisis or episode of need'. The intent of the assistance is to address current need that may prevent the family from needed assistance under TANF. Diversion benefits and support services may be received four months in a 12 month period. Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE) program is a collaborative effort with Child Support, Job Service ND and TANF Program. The program addresses non-payment of child support by the noncustodial parent. Referrals to the program are made by Child Support or by judicial order by a district court. The program assists individual find employment. Support services are offered to assist to remove barriers to employment.

Individuals with disabilities are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation to assist in finding solutions to disability-related issues to improve employment by providing:

- Assessments for items such availability and use of transportation, problem-solving abilities, strengths and weaknesses with social behaviors, communication skills, grooming, dealing with conflict, motivational skills, target interventional levels, identification of barriers and support options, transferable skills and abilities, interest, self-concept
- Job Development and Placement Services to assist in attaining the job and developing essential work skills.
- Job Retention services follow along service directly engaging with the client and employer to assist in maintaining and retaining employment.
- Supported Employment for individuals who have traditionally been excluded from consideration for community employment.

TANF is the payer of first resort for TANF recipients who are eligible to receive the same supportive services from Vocational Rehabilitation.

Children and adults without a high school education are referred to Department of Public Instruction for adult education. School age children (ages 4 to 18) receiving TANF are automatically eligible for the Free or Reduced School Lunch Program through the Department of Public Instruction. Department of Public Instruction auto enrolls the

children in the School Lunch Program from a daily electronic match and exchange with the Department of Public Instruction to direct certify children for school meals.

Services offered online by Job Service ND available to all TANF recipients:

- Search for employment
- Receive job postings
- Apply for employment
- Access current labor market information
- Resume services
- Find career assessment tools
- Assessment tools
- Share Net work
- O'net
- RUReady
- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- Rosetta Stone
- Interdisciplinary Team Case Management

In addition, Job Service ND provides TANF recipients living in Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, and Traill counties the following services:

- Case management
- Coaching on a variety of soft skills ranging from problem solving, working with difficult people, child care problems, scheduling problems, etc.
- Job retention guidance includes frequent, structured status checks, self-evaluation and planning for the next step on the career ladder.
- Ongoing job coaching can help improve job performance and avoid disciplinary issues

The Employment and Training Program is a required component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – (SNAP) - formerly known as the food stamp program. The primary goal of the SNAP Employment and Training program is to provide SNAP participants opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience that will improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. Additionally, the Employment and Training program offers a way to allow SNAP recipients to meet work requirements.

(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, mandatory and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Wagner-Peyser program is administered by Job Service and has historically been co-located in the Job Service AJCs alongside WIOA Title I programs, the Jobs for Veterans State

Grant, TANF, SNAP, Trade Act, and PRIDE (a TANF-funded noncustodial parent employment program), facilitating collaboration and seamless service delivery between all programs when providing services to employers.

North Dakota employers use jobsnd.com to post job listings, search resumes for qualified candidates, review labor market information and market trends. Employers create automated candidate searches and access links to business related resources. Job Service ND staff provides facilitated self-help to employers, who telephone into the Job Service AJC and need coaching to access online services.

Jobsnd.com uses job spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate websites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards. Spidered jobs are added to Job Service's internal job listing which provides great efficiency advantages for employers. Employers who list job openings on a corporate website will automatically have their positions spidered to jobsnd.com and will not have to re-enter job order information.

Job Service's Labor Market Information (LMI) Center is the premier source of labor market information in the state. The LMI department organizes and packages labor market information for use in business and economic decision-making. Regional economic profiles, job reports, unemployment rates, wage reports, informed analyses and employment projects are a few items the Job Service AJC staff provide to help businesses make more informed workforce decisions.

Skill assessment completed by Job Service ND staff enables clear direction to employer job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed and paired with transferable skills of job seekers.

Job Service ND staff showcase agency services regarding on available self-service tools, provide assistance with entering effective job listings and share best practices for successful recruiting using the online system.

Job Service ND staff offer workshops for employers on a limited basis and in limited locations focusing on current, timely information needed to successfully run their businesses. Subjects include recruitment and retention strategies in a very competitive employee market, interview and screening techniques, tax laws for employers, labor market information and writing quality job listings.

Proficiency and other testing benefits employers. Job seekers can provide validation of skills and employers request testing of applicants. Job Service ND facilitates testing including, customer service, computer software, clerical office skills, legal and medical office skills and Microsoft Office. Other testing available may include flagging, and the Job Service AJC's are available for use by employers for group testing.

Job fairs for employers have proven to be a hugely successful activity. These events may be large with multiple employers or for a single business needing to fill key positions. The single employer job fairs have been providing especially successful results. An employer schedules time to spend in the Job Service AJC to connect directly with job seekers. The job fair information is shared within the Job Service AJC and on the jobsnd.com website to promote job opportunities.

Wagner-Peyser, WIOA and JSVG staff working in the same Job Service AJC allows for greater sharing of information about employers' needs and job seekers skills. When training needs are identified, Job Service works with employers to provide work based learning opportunities for in-demand occupations. Job seekers get updated skills to meet the changing needs of the workforce. WIOA funded work based learning is an excellent tool for skill building and helps employers grow their workforce. Existing skills are expanded and strengthened while new abilities are developed. Job Service staff working with employers are cognizant of occupations and opportunities to refer to registered apprenticeship. On-the-job training contracts paired with registered apprenticeship opportunities provide maximum training benefits for employers.

Job Service ND administers a state funded incumbent worker program and Job Service AJC staff promote this program to employers who are looking to increase the skills of their workforce. Workforce 20/20 provides funding assistance to businesses to offset training costs for current workers and new employees when a business is new to the state, expanding employment in the state, introducing new industry technologies or introducing new industry production methods.

Several core program staff serve on advisory boards for TrainND, the state's four regional workforce training regions. This frequently provides opportunities to collaborate when discussing training needs with employers. Job seekers and employers are referred to TrainND programs to build skills. Job Service staff may recommend future employer focused training opportunities to TrainND due to their connection and communications with employers. Job Service staff are engaged with local chambers of commerce and economic developers. LMI is frequently requested to help with decisions for prospective companies that are in locating to communities within the state.

DVR applied for and has been selected to receive technical assistance and training by the national Job Driven VR Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC.) Utilizing their technical assistance, DVR will develop and begin utilizing an LMI curriculum tailored to North Dakota's needs. The LMI curriculum will be used to help clients set and accomplish career goals based on current business and employment needs within the state. In addition, the JD-VRTAC will provide technical assistance to further enhance our methods for building and maintaining employer relations. This will result in improved services to employers including employer driven training and meeting their needs utilizing customized employment.

Partner training sessions will be planned to incorporate the use of LMI data and business service activities. Adult education and Vocational Rehabilitation are implementing and

expanding their services to include employer services. Job Service AJC staff will collaborate with the new partner business service staff by providing additional guidance and technical assistance on engaging employers.

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

The 2015 legislature directed the State Board of Higher Education shall establish a Workforce Education Advisory Council to advise the board regarding skills and qualifications needed for workforce training, vocational, and technical education programs offered at institutions under the control of the board. The council is composed of a representative of the Department of Career and Technical Education, a representative of Job Service ND, a representative of the Department of Commerce, and eight members representing business and industry in the state. The eight members representing business and industry shall be appointed by the chairman of the legislative management. The initial suggested mission key points include:

- Review North Dakota's current workforce programs
- Identify needed workforce skills and qualifications
- Recommend revisions to existing lists of high-demand skills and qualifications and recommend ways to meet those needs.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships and efficiencies Workforce Education Advisory Council

The Workforce Education Advisory Council will work in partnership with the Workforce Development Council to identify collaborative efforts to improve the connections and engagement between the workforce development system and educational institutions.

The Workforce Leadership Team will collaborate to address the goal to expand and retain workforce. The Team will implement and track progress on the strategy to identify and promote untapped labor pools such as Native Americans, New Americans, Individuals with Disabilities and workers pursuing a second career. Further provide training opportunities for above mentioned populations through DVR, Adult Education Centers, TrainND and the state's public, private and tribal colleges and universities.

(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.

The 2015 legislature directed the State Board of Higher Education shall establish a Workforce Education Advisory Council to advise the board regarding skills and qualifications needed for workforce training, vocational, and technical education programs offered at institutions under the control of the board. The council is composed of a

representative of the Department of Career and Technical Education, a representative of Job Service, a representative of the Department of Commerce, and eight members representing business and industry in the state. The eight members representing business and industry shall be appointed by the chairman of the legislative management. The initial suggested mission key points include:

- Review North Dakota's current workforce programs
- Identify needed workforce skills and qualifications
- Recommend revisions to existing lists of high-demand skills and qualifications and recommend ways to meet those needs.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships and efficiencies Workforce Education Advisory Council

The Workforce Education Advisory Council will work in partnership with the Workforce Development Council to identify collaborative efforts to improve the connections and engagement between the workforce development system and educational institutions.

The Workforce Leadership Team will continue to collaborate to address the goal to expand and retain workforce. The Team will implement and track progress on the strategy to identify and promote untapped labor pools such as Native Americans, New Americans, Individuals with Disabilities and workers pursuing a second career. Further provide training opportunities for above mentioned populations through Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education Centers, TrainND and the state's public, private and tribal colleges and universities. The Workforce Leadership team continues to be instrumental in communicating the WIOA requirements for the eligible training provider list and developing the processes.

Job Service is responsible for establishing the eligible training provider list (ETPL) as required by WIOA. Job Service has been in contact with all providers, public and private on the existing ETPL via written correspondence, conference calls and one on one contact and has provided information and guidance to comply with new regulations included in WIOA. Job Service staff will assist training providers through the processes needed to make application for and provide the necessary data for performance for inclusion on the ETPL. Job Service staff are coordinating efforts with the State Director of the Office of Apprenticeship to include the North Dakota sponsors on the ETPL.

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

The North Dakota workforce development and training system receives Federal and State funding support, and in many cases matching funds are also provided by the private sector. WIOA funds are used to help leverage other Federal fund sources such as Pell Grants and student loans and State funded scholarships such as the North Dakota Academic or Career and Technical Education Scholarship. North Dakota workforce partners have become accustomed to making the most out of limited funds. Collaboration between partners is

strong and leveraging funds is a necessity. Co-enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs.

Collaboration among WIOA core programs, SCSEP, Trade Act, business and industry, the North Dakota University System, TrainND (state funded customized employee training), Career and Technical Education (Carl Perkins), refugee services, foster care providers, the State Penitentiary system, and many more partners will result in:

- Expanded awareness and leverage of programs/funds designated to serving targeted populations, often served by multiple entities;
- Rapid development and deployment of programs and activities unique to economic and employment needs for North Dakota’s workforce;
- Access to increased numbers of persons in need of assistance, including low skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, disaffected youth, veterans, dislocated workers, and individuals residing in high unemployment areas, including American Indians.

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

The Workforce Leadership Team will establish a committee to specifically address career pathways and strategies to improve access to post-secondary credentials. The committee will consist of staff from Career and Technical Education, Higher Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, ND Office of Apprenticeship, Department of Commerce, Adult Education and Job Service North Dakota. The committee will set goals and metrics which will be tracked through the State Longitudinal Data System and the State Office of Apprenticeship.

(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.

Economic development entities and Job Service have a long history of collaborating with efforts to address workforce needs in the state. North Dakota continues to experience workforce shortages statewide and in all of the Governor’s targeted industries. Job Service is a valuable and willing partner for career awareness events such as regional and local career expos, job shadowing and internship promotion events.

Attracting workforce continues to be a huge need in the state and economic development partners coordinate efforts for large job fair events. Each region of the state holds multi industry job fairs that target the specific needs of local employers. These job fairs enable over 110 employers to connect with up to 1300 job seekers. Employers find these recruitment events extremely beneficial and often times hire needed employees on the spot.

North Dakota has many initiatives to recruit talent and involve economic development entities locally and statewide. Job Service's participation strengthens these efforts by providing links and data on real time job availability and opportunities. The Find the Good Life in North Dakota is a workforce recruitment campaign started by the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation. It is a private/public sector funded program designed to help solve the greatest challenge facing our business community: workforce development, recruitment and retention. The <http://www.findthegoodlifeinnorthdakota.com/jobs/> website includes links to the Job Service labor exchange site and also includes weekly featured jobs for larger communities in the state. Job Service AJC locations are included and links to local Job Service AJC webpages and the list of job fairs. Job Service generates and provides reports on the Find the Good Life activity and these reports include the number of new registrants and resumes posted, number of phone calls from the dedicated phone line to the Job Service AJCs and current employment statistics from the current employment statistics (CES) report.

Make Your Mark is the Bismarck-Mandan approach to showcase employment opportunities in the capitol city. The website promotes the benefits of living in the Bismarck-Mandan area and right at the top of that list are the employment opportunities with a link to the jobsnd.com website and second are the area profiles generated by the Job Service Labor Market Information department. It is clear having JOB SERVICE collaboration with these initiatives adds value and increases results. <http://bmda.org/make-your-mark/> Job Service participates in many activities that support economic development around the state. Established sector groups hold manufacturing roundtables to jointly discuss industry challenges and find solutions, one challenge is recruiting workforce. Job Service staff offers the services available to assist with labor exchange, training opportunities and labor market information.

A labor market study in the Greater Fargo/Moorhead area indicated the critical need for workforce in the highest populated area in North Dakota. Job Service staff assisted in conducting the survey and continues to assist in establishing and executing initiatives on three subcommittees; Attract, Build and Innovate. The study specifically included utilizing the New American population as a workforce pool. Job Service, local economic development staff and other community stakeholders in Fargo and Grand Forks areas are working together to find ways to overcome language barriers and cultural differences to meet the needs of employers.

Local Job Service AJC staff engage and collaborate with many county Job Development Authorities in their localities and staff are members on their boards. All locations in North Dakota are experiencing workforce shortages and collaborating with these local entities assist with recruitment of workforce and offer training resources. One Job Service Employer Committee remains in North Dakota and has continued due to the benefits of collaboration for this value added agriculture and manufacturing community.

(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.).*
- (B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.*

WIOA AND WAGNER PEYSER

Job Service utilizes the Geographic Solutions products as the operating system for labor exchange, case management and labor market information. The labor exchange function is linked from jobsnd.com to the job listing site that provides fast access to a database of thousands of jobs. Job Spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate web sites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards is one of the features included. Spidered jobs are added to internal job listings to provide seamless access to thousands of job openings. Employers benefit from having job openings viewed by the largest applicant pool in North Dakota and the ability to view similar listings for wage and benefit comparison. Job seekers benefit by having the largest single portal in North Dakota to access job openings for all occupations. Jobsnd.com has the largest pool of job openings in the state.

The Job Service case management system is also a Geographic Solutions product and is utilized for all registrations, enrollments and data entry for the Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. The case management system is linked to the labor exchange system and tracks participant's activity. The Trade Act program activity is incorporated into this system. The system provides ease for dual enrollment and seamless case management. Each participant has an enrollment summary that captures the activity from the multiple programs and case managers can quickly ascertain the current status and plan for future recommendations to achieve employment goals. All case notes are centralized which provides a cohesive picture of a participant's activity over multiple programs. Case managers have a procedure manual that provides technical assistance for data entry, data validation and system use.

Geographic Solutions generates a data file from all program information and sends to Job Service. Job Service sends this file to WRIS and uses the file to match against North Dakota wage records. The results from WRIS and the state's wages are combined and sent back to Geographic Solutions. The wage results are incorporated into the data file and returned to Job Service. This file is used to generate the WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, VETS and Trade Act federal reports through the E-DRVS.

Jobsnd.com includes the link to North Dakota's Workforce Intelligence Network (NDWIN). NDWIN is a next generation internet application bringing together diverse stakeholders

through an expanded data collection and data mining effort. NDWIN generates, compiles, disseminates and publishes the state's leading economic data and labor market information—from wages to projections to the latest employment figures—resulting in better-informed economic decisions. NDWIN has the most extensive network of economic data resources in the state, maintained by experienced research analysts meeting high statistical standards.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

AWARE (Accessible Web-Based Activity Reporting Environment) is NDVR internal, web based, fully integrated, comprehensive case management software system designed for public vocational rehabilitation agencies.

AWARE is hosted by the State of North Dakota Information Technology Department. Staff within the VR program possess the requisite skills and program knowledge to support the administration of AWARE. This group exchanges information about the system and recommends system's modifications to its vendor Alliance Enterprise.

Additionally, AWARE can be customized to include data elements unique to NDVR's business plan and to produce specialized reports. The agency uses AWARE to track service delivery, case service funds, usage and outcomes. The agency further uses AWARE to track service provided through contracts with local school districts and providers to students age 14-21 engaged in pre-employment activities. Pre-employment activities to this group follow the required cores service funded through 15% of the agencies federal VR grant. Students' engagement in pre-employment service can be tracked and their activities achieved in the AWARE until the time they graduate secondary school, no longer participate in pre-employment service or apply for and are found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation service.

Web-based and real time reports are available to all staff with access to AWARE, both remotely and at itinerant locations. Counselors and managers can view a variety of data and information, including budgets, production activities and "action due" reports. The RSA-113 and RSA-911 reports produced for RSA are generated directly from AWARE.

ADULT EDUCATION

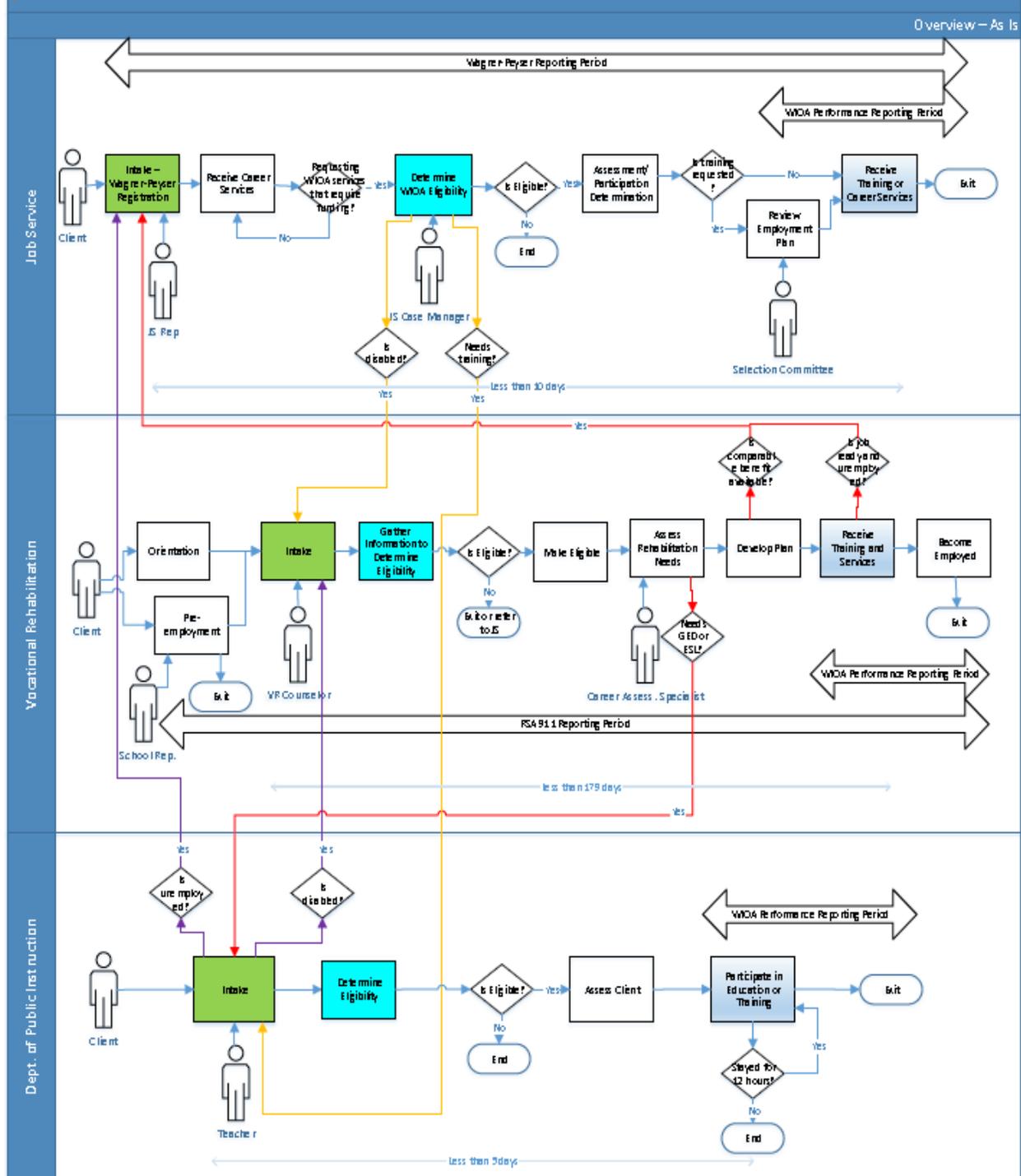
The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education office, operates a statewide student management data system known as LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) for every student served. Used since 2010, this comprehensive web-based program allows each adult learning center, as well as the ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to enter standard demographic, assessment, attendance, class hours and other relevant related data into a real time structured system. Customized alerts allow staff to track multiple data fields, including follow up. Multiple queries are readily available, as is a dashboard feature for each program to 'self-assess' progress in six key areas. The State Office has access to all program data and conducts a quarterly data analysis of each local program for progress, accomplishments and challenges. State and local program staff use LACES to track service delivery and outcomes as an individual teacher and program performance indicators. The LACES system is self-

hosted and produces annual tables required by OCTAE through an upload process to the NRS site. Training is annually required on feature use and data evaluation. This student data management system is used by 17 states as the adult education student data management system.

(2) The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.

Core program partners are engaged in a project with the assistance of the North Dakota Information Technology Department to create a common participant intake and through data sharing, provide a portal for collecting common participant outcomes for federal performance measures reports. The project has three phases: 1) The WIOA Study, 2) Procure WIOA Solution and 3) Implement Solution. Each phase will complete the business analysis needed to develop policies and agreement needed for co-enrollment and business rules. New processes and policies will be provided as developed. The chart illustrates where core programs intersect and opportunities to co-enroll and leverage resources.

Client Participation and WIOA Reporting



The North Dakota Workforce Leadership Team will initiate the development of the guidelines for the State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system. Since North Dakota is a single workforce area, the Team will develop benchmarks and guidance with State agency leadership to determine equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure. The Team will make recommendations to the

Workforce Development Council Executive Committee for input prior to submitting the recommendations to the Governor.

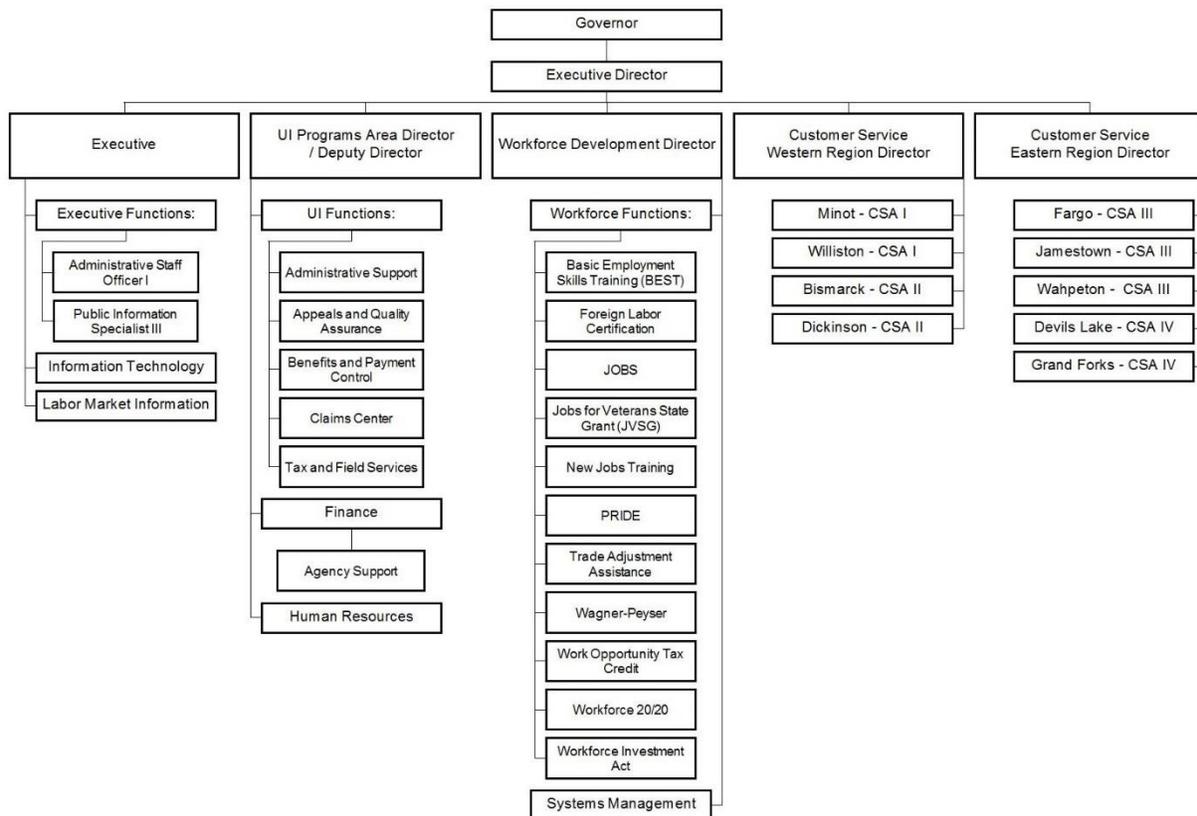
(3) *State Program and State Board Overview.*

(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.*

Titles I and III of WIOA are administered by Job Service North Dakota.

Job Service’s history is rooted in the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 and the Social Security Act of 1935 and is the WIOA one-stop operator providing employment and training services to workers, job seekers, youth and businesses. Job Service administers the unemployment insurance program, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Trade Act, TANF employment and training and a TANF discretionary program, SNAP employment and training, and 2 state programs including incumbent worker training. Job Service houses the Labor Market Information Center.

**JOB SERVICE NORTH DAKOTA
Organizational Structure**



Title II of WIOA is administered by the Department of Public Instruction. The organization chart may be viewed here, <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/28/orgchrt.pdf>.

Title IV of WIOA is administered by the Department of Human Services. The organizational chart may be viewed here, <https://www.nd.gov/dhs/about/docs/org-chart.pdf>.

(B) State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including---

(i) Membership Roster. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

- Al Anderson, North Dakota Department of Commerce
- Maggie Anderson, North Dakota Department of Human Services
- Patrick Bertagnolli, B & G Oilfield Services (business)
- Karin Blanchfield, Woodland Resort (business)
- Chris Blowers, BNI Coal (business)
- Sonja Bommersbach, Dickey Rural Networks (business)
- Dr Drake Carter, Bismarck State College
- David Farnsworth, Great River Energy, (business), Chair
- Valerie Fischer, North Department of Public Instruction
- Cheri Giesen, Job Service North Dakota
- Rosella Grant, Organized Labor
- Mark Hagerott, North Dakota University System
- Waylon Hedegaard, AFL-CIO
- Uma Hoffman, Steffes Corporation (business)
- Lee Ann Johnston, Devils Lake School Board
- Jan Kamphuis, Sanford Health (business)
- David Kemnitz, Organized Labor
- Janel Klinke, Eventide (business)
- Wayne Kutzer, North Dakota Department of Career & Technical Education
- Perry Lubbers, Trail King Industries (business)
- Leslie Lzicar, JR Simplot (business)
- Julie Magnus, Strata Corporation (business)
- Dr Leander "Russ" McDonald, United Tribes Technical College
- Jane Priebe, Wahpeton Economic Development
- Dan Rood, Southeast Region Career & Technology Center
- Ricky Thomas, Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems (business)
- Bruce Walker, Coldwell Banker/1st Minot Realty (business), Vice-Chair
- Jim Walker, Organized Labor
- Ofelia Wagner, Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative (business)
- Scott Davis, North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, ex-officio
- Lonnie Wangen, Veteran Affairs of North Dakota, ex-officio
- Susan Gunsch, Council Director, ex-officio

(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 Workforce Development Council meets quarterly and is briefed by the Director and core program staff of the requirements in WIOA. The Council discusses recommendations and provides approval on policies concerning their responsibilities. Each meeting provides the status of each core program's outcomes towards negotiated performance levels. The meetings showcase target industry's workforce needs and challenges and holds discussions on how the workforce system can assist. Progress made on initiatives, such as the in-demand occupation list or ETPL is provided and feedback gathered in implementation.

(4) Assessment 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.

North Dakota is a single area workforce area.

Job Service North Dakota staff conducts annual on-site monitoring of the WIOA programs at the Job Service AJCs. The annual visits occur every year during the months of October to December. WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth files will be sampled and reviewed for compliance with federal WIOA regulations, and Job Service WIOA policy and procedure directives. At the conclusion of each on-site visit, the results and recommendations of the monitoring are reviewed with the Job Service AJC managers and supervisors. A written report identifying deficiencies and recommendations for improvement is disseminated in February of each year for response and, as warranted, corrective action. This monitoring enables WIOA managers and supervisors to readily see how well the Job Service AJCs are performing in case management and where improvements are needed.

Desk reviews include quarterly monitoring of participant WIOA expenditures. The process of monitoring expenditures includes pulling a sample of payments from all the quarterly payments made on behalf of WIOA participants. Case managers forward the source documentation used to justify the payments in the sample. The results of the review are documented and compiled in a formal report and disseminated to the WIOA managers and supervisors for response and, as warranted, corrective action.

The WIOA and Wagner-Peyser data element validation reviews coincide with the annual on-site WIOA monitoring visits. WIOA data element validation verifies the accuracy of WIOA participant data used to generate the WIOA performance reports. An official report on the results of the WIOA data element validation review is issued in February of each year.

The ND Department of Public Instruction and the Adult Education office have several levels of internal assessment. A developed work plan is reviewed and approved by DPI management each biennium as part of the budget process; state funds are allocated to align to the work plan goals and tasks. Quarterly reviews of the work plan and accomplishments are completed between the Director and management. The review includes fiscal, program data, local program data and general program oversight.

The adult education office is also available upon request for federal and state auditing/monitoring; the adult education office has undergone state audit process the past two biennium's with no fiscal or program findings.

The State Adult Education office monitors each of the 17 local programs every 3 years and more often if there is a new director, a previous finding or upon request. The onsite monitoring covers 17 areas of program and fiscal authority and involves multiple staff.

Federal performance indicators are also part of the Director annual review process and a determination of performance. Additionally, each local program is also assessed on its individual performance indicators.

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a comprehensive program evaluation system with various components:

- Consumer record of services review
- Grantee oversight
- Evaluation of service providers
- Customer satisfaction
- Performance measures monitoring

Data for program evaluation is collected using various methods, including surveys (telephone), public forums, site reviews, grant reports, client record reviews, client comment forms, a statistical system and program standards and performance indicators. This information is analyzed by management; if appropriate, it is shared with staff, service providers, grantees, federal funding agencies, legislature, clients and others. The analysis is used to assess unmet consumer needs, improve services and to guide the Division in planning its future focus and direction. Additionally, the information is used to assess and forecast the training needs of the Division's staff. Performance indicators have traditionally included:

Change in Employment Outcomes

- Percent of Employment Outcomes
- Competitive Employment Outcomes—a primary indicator
- Significance of Disability—a primary indicator
- Earnings Ratio—a primary indicator
- Self-Support
- Rehabilitation Rate

Collectively, the core partners share performance measures and annual outcomes with the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

(B) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

North Dakota is a single area workforce area.

Job Service, as the one-stop operator, will assess the performance of other one-stop delivery system partner programs. Programs included in this assessment are Trade Act, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, SNAP employment and training, TANF employment and training and TANF discretionary funds. Assessments are completed by matching to North Dakota UI wages for entered employment performance on SNAP employment and training. Job Service will monitor monthly work participation rate reports for TANF employment and training. The State Administrator of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) accompanies the DVET during the annual required audit which assesses service delivery, priority of service and performance measures. Additional JVSG assessment is a review of the Managers Quarterly Report for Service to Veterans. Annual TAA data element validation results are assessed for any areas to improve and technical assistance. The results of the TAA review are documented and compiled in a formal report and disseminated to the Job Service AJC managers and supervisors for response and, as warranted, corrective action.

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

Job Service North Dakota analyses the performance outcomes on a quarterly basis. Even though North Dakota is a single area state, reports are created to evaluate the performance geographically. Records are divided into 4 quadrants and performance is calculated based on the geographic area. Each quadrant of the state has unique sectors and workforce needs and this assessment provides a method to evaluate areas of improvement needed and where technical assistance may be needed. North Dakota met or exceeded all the WIA negotiated performance measures for PY 2013 and PY 2014. In PY 2013, North Dakota was one of only three states awarded the last WIA Incentive grant.

A common identifier between core programs will be built into the Common MIS project to enable reports to be created based on co-enrollments. Cohorts of co-enrolled customers will be compared to cohorts of customers who were provided service by a single core

program. The result of the evaluation and research will be shared with all core programs to illustrate the extent of the benefits of co-enrollment and will be used with program staff to further promote the integration of core programs.

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has traditionally met and exceeded prime indicators. As an example the VR program standard for the percent of employment outcomes for a North Dakota Combined is 55.8%. North Dakota VR's percent of employment outcomes for FY 15 is 72%.

Adult Education uses two methods for assessment of the effectiveness of services: the dissection and review of performance measures and monitoring and subjective evaluation with students, local advisory boards and sponsoring agency evaluations. In addition to the local review of performance measures and program monitoring as discussed previously, customer (student) satisfaction surveys and focus groups are completed at each local program to determine their level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction, the coordination of career information, and overall improvements or suggestions. Local programs have changed hours, instructional delivery or other program features based on the surveys. Each local program has an advisory board who also provides regular feedback on service delivery, partnerships and outcomes; this information is also used to make changes at the local program level. Lastly, each sponsoring agency (i.e., school district or community college) is asked to annually assess for performance and services; this is part of the overall performance management of the local program director. The combination of these methods allows both state and local programming to be flexible in meeting the needs of their communities and students, as well as assess unmet student needs, improve services and to guide the department in planning its future focus, fiscal and programmatic needs.

(D) 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 WIOA intent of integrated services will be evaluated. The benefits of co-enrollment will be the focus of a research project. A common identifier between core programs will be built into the Common MIS project to enable reports to be created based on co-enrollments. Cohorts of co-enrolled customers will be compared to cohorts of customers who were provided service by a single core program. The result of the evaluation and research will be shared with all core programs to illustrate the extent of the benefits of co-enrollment and will be used with program staff to further promote the integration of core programs.

(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, 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), (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3), (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

For Title I programs, North Dakota is a single State local area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act of 2015 as designated by Governor Jack Dalrymple. Job Service North Dakota is designated by the Governor as the WIOA Fiscal Agent, Grant Recipient and State Administrative Entity. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services and Training are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor, the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota.

(B) For Title II:

(i) 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.

(ii) 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.

Title II, Adult Education, awarded local programs through a competitive basis in 1998 following the reauthorization to WIA. We have not held a formal competition since that time; the same 17 local providers remain in place. The NDDPI has agreed to hold a competition once the ND State Plan is approved and for the 2017 program year. The competition will align with all federal requirements of WIOA and will follow state procurement laws and regulations to ensure equitable access.

(C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

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

North Dakota VR program, authorized as title IV of WIOA is designated as a “combined” agency. The Rehabilitation Act, provides that states may operate a “combined” agency serving individuals regardless of their disabilities. The act does allow states to operate two separate VR agencies, one agency for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and a “general” agency for individuals with all other disabilities.

(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.

(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.

(iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across mandatory 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.

(iv) Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section116(d)(2)).

Job Service ND, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation have begun the project of integrating data systems and a method for common intake. The project is collaborating with the ND Information Technology Department and the State Procurement Office. The project charter has been created and the business analysis has been completed. The business analysis will be utilized in the creation of an RFI. The RFI responses will determine the need to progress to an RFP. The planned result of the project will be to implement interfaces among the partner agencies with a common intake process which includes a self-service customer notification based on responses for recommended services. The project will also create an integrated system to create the required federal performance reports. The project includes the creation of data sharing agreements necessary for the nature of this task.

The Workforce Development Council will receive progress reports of this project.

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

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

North Dakota's lead agencies will use the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance to assess the immediate progress of participants from core programs. North Dakota's lead agencies will comply with federally directed WIOA evaluations and will on occasion conduct evaluations of longer term outcomes for program participants. Such evaluations will include impact studies that will assess a participant's employment status, earnings or educational achievement beyond the established timelines that are incorporated into the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance. The Workforce Leadership team will assess the best use of SLDS data and jointly establish reports to assess post-program success. The report results will be evaluated and focus on identifying successful service strategies.

(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.)

North Dakota will use a WDQI data warehouse which is populated daily to utilize UI wage data for WIOA requirements. This data base will be the source for wage data for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law.

(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.

Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, through the Department of Human Services, and Adult Education, through the Department of Public Instruction have signed data sharing agreements with the State Longitudinal Data System. The project underway with these same agencies to establish a common intake process and common reporting and performance measurements has resources earmarked for legal review for new and expanded data sharing agreements. These agreements will include the necessary safeguards as required in section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

(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.

Job Service AJCs offer priority of service to all covered persons who access the workforce system. Covered persons will be identified at point of entry to allow them to take full advantage of priority of service. Customers entering a Job Service Office will be queried in the customer reception area (point of entry) to ascertain covered person status. A "quick assessment" guide will be used by staff. A customer that self-attests to being a veteran or spouse of an eligible veteran (covered person) will be offered the opportunity to step to the front of the line and receive services before a non-covered customer. At that time, the covered person will be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, employment and training services available and eligibility requirements for available employment and training services.

Covered persons utilizing self- service will be made aware of entitlement to priority of service at the time of their registration in the Virtual One Stop (VOS). Once the customer identifies themselves as a covered person, a screen automatically displays information on entitlement to priority of service and programs and services that are available through Job Service North Dakota.

Job Service AJC staff will conduct an intake/assessment for each Veteran/Eligible Spouse at point of entry to a Job Service AJC. Throughout the intake process, Veterans who disclose or self-attest to meeting one or more of the criteria for DVOP services will be referred to a DVOP. If a DVOP is not available when a referral is necessary, the Veteran/Eligible Spouse may choose to be served on a priority basis by another staff member.

Veterans not meeting the criteria for DVOP services are to be referred to appropriate non-JVSG staff to receive core, intensive, and/or training services on a priority of service basis.

Job Service will monitor priority of service to veterans/eligible persons to ensure that all staff are in compliance with the statutory and regulatory requirements regarding all

Department of Labor programs. Priority of service will be monitored through analysis of data found in the Employment and Training Administration's Federal Reports, from observations annotated in the Manager's Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans and from reports completed by Job Service Systems Management Staff. These reports are reviewed by the Job Service Workforce Development Director, the State Veterans' Program Administrator and the Director of Veterans' Employment and Training and conclusions drawn regarding the extent of priority of service demonstrated by each Customer Service Area. Process improvement plans are recommended for those offices needing improvement.

(8) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System. 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. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Compliance with section 188 of WIOA and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act is met through the submission of the Methods of Administration (MOA) to the US DOL Civil Rights Center.

Job Service, in determining site or location of facilities, may not make selections with the purpose or effect of excluding individuals from denying them the benefits of, or subjecting them to discrimination on a prohibited ground, or with the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing the accomplishment of the objectives of the program, or the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

The Webmaster keeps the Job Service website in compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 with the use of Compliance Sheriff Software. The Agency Webmaster utilizes Compliance Sheriff after the release of website updates and the North Dakota State Information Technology Department also runs routine compliance checks of the website using Compliance Sheriff.

Job Service's online service is a web-based self-service system that satisfies a major one-stop objective: Universal access to a broad range of employment, training and education services. Job Service North Dakota's online services ensure:

- Access to specific services is available to all customers throughout the one-stop system.
- Access 24/7 services to anyone with Internet access.
- Access to services by clients in remote and rural areas who might find it inconvenient to use a physical one-stop.

- Access to services by clients in urban areas who are unable to access a physical one-stop due to lack of transportation, disability, etc.

Job Service's online services provide users with a text only interface option. It is ideal for customers who use non-graphic browsers or extremely slow and unreliable Internet connections.

Job Service shall ensure accessibility to individuals with disabilities in employment and employment-related training; including reasonable accommodation, program, and physical accessibility. Job Service AJCs have self-service job getting rooms with individual workstations for clients with disabilities. These workstations consist of height-adjustable work surface areas that are operated either electrically or hydraulically. Modern adaptive technology is available in Job Service AJCs to eliminate barriers often experienced by hearing impaired, physically impaired, and/or visually impaired customers. In 2015, funding was provided by VR to purchase additional adapt technology for resource rooms in the Job Service AJCs. A phone amplifier, ear-covering, noise-cancelling headphones, Magic with Speech software and 24" monitors were purchased after consulting with the ND Interagency for Assistive Technology, VR and the ND School for the Blind. Training on the equipment purchased is coordinated with VR.

Qualified individuals with disabilities shall: receive aid, benefits, services, or training equal to or as effective as that provided to others; not receive benefits separately unless it is needed to provide training, benefits, or services that are as effective as that provided to others; have opportunity to be on planning advisory boards for WIOA; enjoy any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity enjoyed by others; and receive services in the most integrated setting.

(9) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency. 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 limited English proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources and other materials.

Job Service makes every attempt to ensure the needs of customers with limited English speaking skills. To provide interpretation services in a timely manner, Job Service uses CTS LanguageLink interpreter services and partner agencies interpreting services.

IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

If the State is submitting a Combined State Plan, describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination of the core programs and the other programs and activities covered by the Combined State Plan.

North Dakota is submitting a Unified State Plan.

*V. COMMON ASSURANCES
(for all core programs)*

The 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;
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;
3. The lead State agencies with 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;
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, 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;
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 adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs to carry out workforce investment activities under chapters 2 and 3 of subtitle B;
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).
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination as applicable;
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;

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

OMB Control Number 1205-0NEW

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

(OMB Control Number: 1205-0NEW)

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.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

(a) General Requirements

1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

(B) Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed ” 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.

(C) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

(D) Provide the appeals process referred to in section

North Dakota is a single state local workforce investment area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 as designated by Governor Jack Dalrymple. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as both the State and local board as outlined in WIOA.

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 State shall follow all applicable Federal and State regulations and guidance pertaining to the use of each individual fund source for workforce investment activities.

(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

North Dakota intends to use the small amount of Governor's set aside funds to primarily meet the WIOA required activities. Any additional resources remaining would be used to conduct an evaluation of the benefits of co-enrollment and implement innovative activities in support of the Governor's workforce initiatives which may include increasing apprenticeships and sector strategies for emerging industries such as unmanned aerial systems.

The Dislocated Worker Office (DWO) of Job Service has been designated by the Governor as the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services through the Job Service AJC Managers' direct supervision and provision of these services. WIA funding is utilized for Rapid Response services.

The local Chief Elected Official is the Governor who is informed of dislocation notifications and planned Rapid Response activities. The Governor maintains an ongoing option to become involved with larger dislocations per his/her or Job Service's request. For Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices, the Governor and the ND Department of Commerce are notified immediately. Depending on the level of community impact, the same communication is sent to specific state level service providers to inform them of the potential to assist in tailoring and delivering Rapid Response and in serving impacted workers.

In the case of WARN notices, the community's chief elected official also receives a notice from the company. A Job Service representative contacts that community leader as a part of planning the response effort. In the case of non-WARN dislocations, Job Service may contact that person depending on each situation's impact on the local area.

Following either a permanent closure, mass layoff or a natural/other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation, Job Service AJC office managers have the responsibility for initiating Rapid Response in their administrative areas as warranted. When the DWO receives a WARN notice, immediate contact is made with the Job Service AJC office manager/designee to initiate contact for Rapid Response with the employer and employee representatives if organized labor is involved. The DWO notifies and utilizes partners (Department of Public Instruction, Department of Career and Technical Education, Department of Commerce, Department of Human Services, North Dakota University System, Veterans Employment and Training Service, ND Building and Trades Council, ND AFL-CIO, etc.) as appropriate when any dislocation notification is received. The Job Service AJC office manager or designee coordinates the response effort and works with the DWO to determine the level of involvement of the chief elected official, economic development officials, and others.

In many Rapid Response scenarios, these services are delivered seamlessly by Wagner Peysner, WIOA, and UI staff members. External partners also participate and offer their perspectives and services.

The Rapid Response plan has many facets which may include the following:

- Offering information on business start-up, growth and layoff aversion as a common service to all employers during regular employer visits or to anyone upon request.
- Exploring the potential for a task force which involves community leaders, company management, state leaders and representatives, organized labor, etc.
- Guiding a team in determining specific assistance to be provided at the dislocation site. ND is in the enviable position of experiencing a labor shortage, which sets the tone for directing the dislocated workers' attention to their transferable skills.
- Utilizing Transferable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ) software to identify other occupations for which dislocated workers have transferable skills, thereby providing optimism for potentially rapid reemployment.
- Sharing information (in case of layoffs resulting from foreign competition) regarding petition filing, timing, and availability of TAA, Trade Readjustment Assistance, and the Health Coverage Tax Credit.
- Meeting with impacted employees to inform them of programs and available services (including scheduled activities, and special workshops which may include basic computer training) as well as answer questions and providing standardized dislocated worker information packets. Agendas cover a full range of topics reflecting a fully integrated service delivery system.
- Encouraging employers and employees to begin using services immediately rather than waiting until the layoff date.
- Arranging reverse job fairs onsite with employers with a scheduled closure or a large layoff.

Rapid Response is a natural fit with North Dakota's Talent Initiative to retain workers and transition them to the many job openings within the state. When a dislocation is reported to the DWO, the occupations and locations of these workers are listed in a management report to notify staff around the state of this talent pool.

Ongoing proactive efforts exist within the various areas of the state through cooperation between Job Service staff members and economic development. When a layoff is pending, opportunities to help transition those impacted workers to expanding and new North Dakota businesses are effectively coordinated in order to retain a skilled workforce. For businesses in other stages of the economic cycle, assistance from outside resources is offered as well as information on recruitment services, unemployment insurance, workforce training, SHARE Network, business tax incentives, Workforce 20/20 and North Dakota New Jobs Training program.

Job Service's Management Information System includes a list of all Rapid Response sessions linking individuals applying for WIOA and TAA. All WIOA and TAA participants can be properly reported as having attended Rapid Response session(s) associated with the impacted employer.

(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 the event of a natural disaster, Rapid Response would be provided following an activation from the Workforce Coordination Center. North Dakota follows Workforce Coordination Center Standard Operating Procedures which is a joint emergency effort among Job Service ND, Human Resource Management Services, North Dakota Workforce Safety & Insurance and the North Dakota Department of Labor. The Workforce Coordination Center is part of The North Dakota State Emergency Operations Plan of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, Division of Homeland Security.

(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.

Rapid Response in North Dakota operates in essentially the same manner regardless of whether a TAA petition or certification is involved. See Section 2 (B) above for the description of Rapid Response activities.

Rapid Response services are provided to all worker groups covered by a TAA petition similarly to any worker group that has been or will be permanently laid off. In most cases, the State and its local Rapid Response team are already aware of a dislocation event and Rapid Response activities are underway before a TAA petition is filed. If a TAA petition is the first notice of a dislocation event, the State will notify the Job Service AJC staff, who will contact the employer to plan and schedule the Rapid Response.

When Rapid Response is extended to potentially TAA-eligible worker groups, basic TAA Program information must be shared, including the Program enrollment process should certification occur. If the State does not have access to the worker group prior to layoff, the State will use UI claimant information to identify potentially affected workers. In this situation, the local Rapid Response team will be required to extend outreach to the laid off workers using contact information obtained from UI. At minimum, the outreach materials must include information about the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and basic information explaining the TAA Program.

(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.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) remains a training strategy for applicants who lack experience but have education or training related to the job, or whose limited experience does not qualify them for the jobs. North Dakota plans to review the current processes and requirements with the intent to find efficiencies and streamline the process to make OJT more attractive for employers. A simplified process will make it easier for Job Service AJC staff to promote the program. The outcome of this re-engineered process will result in increasing collaboration with Registered Apprenticeship and the numbers of co-enrollment between WIOA and Registered Apprenticeship.

(2) Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

The state is collaborating to develop a strategy for the implementation of registered apprenticeships throughout the state. The state will be working with the US DOL Office of Apprenticeship in North Dakota to coordinate information, expansion and eligibility of apprenticeships in North Dakota. Entities will share outreach information that enhances collaboration to result in increased WIOA and Registered Apprenticeship enrollments. Core program staff will receive training from the State Director and the new EPTL will provide important information on utilization of Registered Apprenticeship.

The Workforce Leadership Team will establish a committee to specifically address career pathways and strategies to improve access to post-secondary credentials. The committee

will consist of staff from Career and Technical Education, Higher Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, ND Office of Apprenticeship, Department of Commerce, Adult Education and Job Service. The committee will set goals and metrics which will be tracked through the State Longitudinal Data System and the State Office of Apprenticeship. This team will strengthen the partnership between the State Director and other WIOA partners.

(3) Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS

POLICY 2-06-01 (2)

PURPOSE:

A. Training Providers Subject to ETP List Requirements

The following types of training providers are subject to the ETP list requirements in order to receive WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide training services to eligible adult and dislocated worker individuals through Individual Training Accounts (ITA). ITA's may also be used for WIOA Title I Youth funds to provide training to older, out-of-school youth (ages 18-24).

1. Institutions of higher education that provide a program of training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. Public or private training providers, including joint labor-management organizations, and occupational/technical training; and
3. Providers of adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with occupational skills training.

Postsecondary institutions located in Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota are eligible to receive North Dakota ITA's based on reciprocal agreements. Post-secondary institutions outside of North Dakota that offer online training/distance education may be authorized to receive ITA's as long as the training program is listed on the home state's ETP list.

B. Initial Eligibility and Application Process

Beginning in October 2015, training providers that were not eligible providers under WIA may submit an application for initial eligibility, which can be granted for up to one full calendar year (January 1 – December 31).

1. All applications for the ETP list will be completed using a link available on jobsnd.com. The following information is required:
2. Training provider applications must include verification documentation that the training provider is licensed, certified, or authorized by the North Dakota Department of Higher Education, or the relevant state agency with oversight, to operate training programs in North Dakota. If a program is not in compliance with the oversight agency as required by state law, the provider will not be able to apply for inclusion on the ETP list until they meet the necessary requirements. If a provider is in compliance with the oversight agency, the provider can proceed to #2 in the application process.

3. Training providers applying for initial program eligibility must provide the following with the application:
 - a) A description of each program of training services to be offered;
 - b) Information on cost of attendance, including costs of tuition and fees;
 - c) Whether the training program leads to an industry-recognized certificate or credential, including recognized post-secondary credentials;
 - d) Whether the provider has developed the training in partnership with a business (and the name of the business);
 - e) The in-demand industry sectors and occupations that best fit with the training program;
 - f) The type of credential attained by all students in the program;
 - g) Social security numbers (SSNs) for all students in the programs listed on the application, regardless of the funding source.

NOTE - SSNs will be used to generate the required annual WIOA wage and employment performance reports. Job Service ND will access SLDS data to generate these reports for institutions in the North Dakota University System.

Social security numbers must be provided for all students by program listed in the application for the previous two calendar years (January 1 – December 31) regardless of the funding source. Training providers that have not been on the ETP list for at least two years will be required to provide student data for the time period available.

Once the application is submitted and the state has determined that the required information is available, the state will approve, deny, or request further information on the program within 30 days of the receipt of a complete application. The state will notify the provider of the determination.

Registered apprenticeship programs are not subject to the eligibility criteria or application requirements. While registered apprenticeship programs are automatically eligible, not all registered apprenticeship sponsors may wish to be included on the list. Registered apprenticeship programs will automatically be included on the State list unless they indicate they do not wish to be included or until they lose their registration.

C. Continued Eligibility

After the initial eligibility period of one full calendar year, training providers must submit applications for continued program eligibility every two years. Applications for continued eligibility must be submitted by October 1st for the year in which eligibility expires. The continued eligibility application is required for any program that has previously been on the list.

The SLDS will be used to generate performance information for institutions in the North Dakota University System. For training institutions not participating in SLDS, the following information must be submitted to Job Service.

TrainND, Private training providers, and Tribal colleges must include the following:

- a) The total number of participants enrolled in the program;
- b) The total number of participants completing the program;
- c) The total number of participants exiting the program;
- d) Information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants;
- e) Information on the program completion rate for such participants;
- f) Social security numbers for all participants by program listed on the application for the two previous years, regardless of funding source, which will be used to calculate the performance measures listed in **Attachment 1**.

NOTE - SSNs will be used to generate the required annual WIOA wage and employment performance reports. Job Service ND will access SLDS data to generate these reports for institutions in the North Dakota University System.

All training/education providers must include the following:

- g) Applications for continued eligibility must include verification documentation from the appropriate oversight agency to operate in North Dakota.
- h) Description of how the provider will ensure access to training services throughout the State, including rural areas and through the use of technology;
- i) Description of how the providers provide training services to individuals who are employed and/or individuals with barriers to employment;
- j) Information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA title I-B; and

D. Transition of Eligible Training Providers under WIA

To ensure a smooth transition to WIOA, eligible training providers under WIA may continue to be eligible until June 30, 2016 and the current ETP list will remain in place until that date.

Beginning In October 2015, current eligible training providers may begin applying for continued eligibility in the new system. All eligible training providers under WIA must re-apply in the new system to remain eligible after June 30, 2016, under the continued eligibility procedures in Section C. Current eligible providers are strongly advised to review the new requirements for continued eligibility, particularly the requirement that programs be authorized to operate in North Dakota by their state oversight agency, so they can prepare immediately for the transition to WIOA.

We anticipate the new WIOA-compliant ETP list and online platform will launch with the newly entered data from training providers by July 1, 2016, assuming no delays in the new system development.

During 2016, minimum performance targets will not be set as eligibility criteria for training programs to remain on the ETPL. Performance information for each program will be posted on the ETPL to help consumers make an informed decision. Once the transition from WIA

to WIOA is completed, this policy will be revised to establish minimum performance targets for programs for 2017 to remain on the ETPL.

E. Performance Requirements

The performance information required is outlined in Attachment 1. Social security numbers must be provided for all students in programs included on the application in North Dakota for the previous two calendar years (January 1 – December 31) regardless of the funding source. The electronic system will provide a secure means to transmit the data file. Training providers that have not been on the ETP list for at least two years will be required to provide student data for the time period available. Social security numbers for all North Dakota students will continue to be required annually and will be used to calculate the performance measures. Performance information will be published online for each training provider on the ETP list. Programs with less than 10 students enrolled will not be included in performance data.

F. Conditions for Removal

The state may remove a program or programs from the list for failing to meet the established criteria or performance levels in this policy, or for not providing all required performance information for subsequent eligibility. Removal is also appropriate if the program has failed to attain or lost the accreditation required for professional licensure. A training provider that is removed from the list for the reasons stated above may re-apply for continued eligibility when they can demonstrate that they meet all the requirements.

The state must remove from the eligibility list for a period of not less than 2 years any providers that willfully supply false performance information, misrepresent costs or services, or that substantially violate requirements of WIOA law or regulations. Providers are liable to repay all adult and dislocated worker funds received during the period of non-compliance.

No training provider debarred by the Federal Government may be permitted to be placed or remain on the ETP list.

In the case of a training provider or a program of training services that is removed from the list while WIOA participants are enrolled, the participants may complete the program unless the provider or program has lost state licensing, certification, or authorization to operate by the appropriate state oversight agency.

G. Appeal Process

Training providers can choose to appeal the rejection of their program for inclusion in the ETP list or its subsequent termination of eligibility. For any appeal by a training provider, an appeal must be submitted in writing via email within 14 days after notification of the decision. The appeal must include the justification for the appeal in their request. The training provider also has the right to request a hearing to discuss their appeal.

An ETP list appeals board will be assembled. The appeals board will schedule a hearing if requested and make a decision within 60 days of appeal. This will be a final decision and

the program will be unable to reapply through the ETP list eligibility process for one year from the date of final notification by the ETP list appeals board.

Attachment 1

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE DATA

The following information is required for all applications for continued eligibility. Outcomes will be determined based on the student Social Security Numbers provided for each program. The SSNs will be matched to North Dakota wages and WRIS II data to generate reports for each program with the following information:

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 a recognized post-secondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program

(4) Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance, other low income individuals, or 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.

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council has established a policy due to limited funding to only serve individuals that meet the WIOA Adult priority.

POLICY 2-05-01 (0) POLICY

An individual shall be eligible to participate in the WIOA Adult Program if he or she is:

- i) Age 18 or older;
 - ii) Eligible to work in the United States including a citizen of the United States, a United States national, permanent resident alien, lawfully admitted refugee, parolee, or other individual authorized to work in the United States;
 - iii) In compliance with Selective Service System registration (applies to males only);
- and
- iv) Meets priority of service.

Priority of Service:

The Workforce Development Council supports the WIOA priority of service while under limited funding for eligibility. These categories are:

- low income adults (WIOA Sec 3(36))
- adults who are receiving public assistance
- basic skills deficient (WIOA Sec 3(5))

The Workforce Development Council also encourages enrollment of North Dakota residents as a priority.

Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans - covered persons - will receive priority of service. 20 CFR Part 1010.110 adopts the term “covered person” to define those veterans and spouses of eligible veterans who are eligible for priority of service. The Jobs for Veterans Act does not change the requirement that individuals, to include veterans and military spouses, must first qualify as eligible under the WIOA Adult Program before participation.

(5) Describe the State’s criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

(c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

(1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.¹⁰

North Dakota is a single workforce area state. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by Job Service ND through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Development Council and Job Service ND.

(2) Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 Youth Program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.¹¹

The WIOA Youth program incorporates all the requirements outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, specifically, objective assessments, employment planning (individual service strategies) and referral processes.

All youth services will be accessible through the Job Service AJCs and services will be designed based on labor market information. All youth, including youth with disabilities, entering the service delivery process will receive an objective assessment. Assessment will follow the guidelines in WIOA, section 129, including a review of academic and

¹⁰Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

¹¹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

occupational skills, interests and supportive service needs. Assessments will provide the needed information and data to complete employment plans that link employment, educational and career pathway goals with the service strategies necessary to reach the goals.

Youth will receive integrated services through the Job Service AJC. The assessment process will identify those with the interests necessary to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities, including non-traditional training opportunities. Youth program participants have all career services available as part of their employment strategies.

Based on the assessment, youth will be referred to appropriate services, including career counseling and promotion, specialized counseling, guidance and skill assessment. Information will be shared with other partners involved in the assessment to help unify and enhance the guidance and counseling process. Supportive services will be provided to youth to assist them in completing their individualized employment plans. The service strategy is coordinated around the 14 Youth Program Elements, which must be made available to every participant. The 14 youth program elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training and dropout prevention strategies:

Participants may receive tutoring services and study skills training in order to complete secondary school. The North Dakota universities, community colleges, tribal colleges and other higher education partners will assist youth making the transition into postsecondary opportunities.

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate: Providing alternative secondary school services will be vital to re-engage youth who have not responded to traditional school settings. This service will be provided through coordination with local school districts.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences including summer employment and other opportunities throughout the year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, on-the-job training opportunities:

Participants will have the opportunity to participate in paid and/or unpaid work experience activities, including internships and job shadowing. This will not only help provide skills and experience, but it will help youth understand what is associated with “real work” and what employers require of employees.

Work-based learning opportunities, including summer employment opportunities, paid and unpaid work experience, internships, job shadowing and on-the-job training will be directed at preparing youth for success in employment. Summer employment opportunities will be directly linked to academic and occupational learning. In most rural areas in North Dakota, many youth are first introduced to jobs through summer employment opportunities. Activities for youth with significant barriers to employment will continue to focus on pre-employment and work maturity skills. On-the-job training is an excellent tool for occupational skill building for out of school youth who are ready

for skill development and employment. The individual plan of each youth will be focused on the needs identified through the individualized assessment process.

Job Service and the state apprenticeship office will collaborate to determine how to establish and expand out of school youth work experience opportunities to registered apprenticeships offered by employers.

Additionally, youth will have access to services provided at the Job Service AJCs, including assistance with work search, resume writing, interviewing, and career exploration. They will also have access to jobsnd.com to connect them with unsubsidized employment opportunities.

4. Comprehensive guidance and counseling:

Through the comprehensive assessment process, a Youth Coordinator may identify that guidance and counseling services would be of benefit to a youth as the individual proceeds through the program. If so, referral to various providers would occur. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling services may include, but are not limited to the following: 1.) Referrals to drug and alcohol counseling; 2.) Referrals to mental health counseling; 3.) Career counseling including information on career pathways and review of the RUPReady.nd resource; 4.) Educational counseling; and 5.) Case management performed by a professional Social Worker or Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. Each of these services must be provided by an appropriately trained staff member, educational instructor, licensed counselor or social worker.

5. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training:

Services will be available for youth in need of such services to prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. These services may include assistance with post-secondary financial aid documents, assistance to attend college tours, assistance with college entrance or program exams.

6. Occupational skills training:

Occupational skills training is provided through Individual Training Accounts to youth whose employment plan includes post-secondary school through short term skill training or a degree program through a community college or tribal college. Focus will be placed on preparing or retraining individuals for the in-demand occupations in the state. Priority consideration is given to training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with the in-demand sectors and occupations in the local area.

7. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities:

Services will be available for youth in need of education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities.

8. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors:

Youth will be provided leadership development opportunities that may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, decision making and team work.

9. Adult mentoring:

Mentoring opportunities with caring adults will be sought to provide consistent guidance and support. Activities and projects that provide citizenship skills, life skills training, community improvement skills, and increase positive social skills, will be used to develop overall leadership qualities.

10. Financial literacy education:

Youth in need of financial literacy education services will have access to activities designed to educate or assist youth with the following: making informed financial decisions including budgeting and accessing checking and savings accounts; learning to effectively manage spending, credit and debt; learning the significance of credit report and credit scores. Case managers have knowledge of financial literacy resources in their local area and will make an effort to identify youth who need financial literacy assistance.

11. Entrepreneurial skills training:

Resources are available for youth interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills. Resources include:

- The UND Center for Innovation, a comprehensive, hands-on assistance is available to technology entrepreneurs, innovators and manufacturers interested in starting up new ventures, commercializing new products and licensing new technologies.
- Entrepreneur Centers of North Dakota provide access to over 20 financing programs and a network of organizations who provide counseling, training and assistance to start-up and existing entrepreneurs.
- Innovate ND is a comprehensive program of entrepreneur education and follow-up assistance with a goal to launch up to 20 new businesses in North Dakota annually. The program is open to all North Dakotans, former North Dakotans or other entrepreneurs, including students, who have an innovative idea, product or business service and want to grow their venture in North Dakota.
- Marketplace for Entrepreneurs is a yearly event for where economic development organizations meet at Marketplace to provide training and technical assistance to North Dakota's entrepreneurs. A comprehensive

directory for ideas, contacts, and other economic development information is found on the Marketplace Web site.

- Strom Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation focuses on revitalizing the state's economy by encouraging and supporting entrepreneurs and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit. The center actively promotes regional partnership development and offers entrepreneurs a network of professionals who can provide support and assistance in the areas of applied research, business consulting, technology and marketing resources.

12. Labor market information:

Labor Market Information is provided to all youth receiving WIOA services. Information is mainly centered on career awareness, career pathways, career counseling or career exploration resources and occupational training available for targeted and in-demand industries and occupations. This information along with other services is available for youth as they transition and prepare for postsecondary education and training.

13. Support Services:

Support services may be provided to WIOA youth participants when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in authorized WIOA activities. Support services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Linkages to community services.
- Assistance with transportation.
- Assistance with housing.
- Referrals to medical services.
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work and safety-related attire, work-related tools, eyeglasses which include protective eye wear.

14. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation:

All youth will be provided follow-up services for at least 12 months after participation ends. The intensity and duration of follow-up services will be based on individual need.

Given the appropriate release of information, assessment information and employment strategies will be shared with core and required partners to encourage consistent and accurate information that will foster a continuum of services. Information and referral processes will be implemented to introduce youth to the wide array of applicable services available through the workforce system.

(3) Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

IN-SCHOOL YOUTH ELIGIBILITY POLICY 2-02-01 (0)

PURPOSE:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) includes the Youth eligibility category of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment”. Section 681.300 advises State Boards to define this criterion.

POLICY:

Individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” is defined as:

1. Having limited employment opportunities as defined as being unable to obtain employment after a four week employment search, or
2. Residing in a community with limited youth-related employment opportunities defined as a community with 60 or less worksites based on LMI Area Profile data on July 1st of each year, or
3. Having one or more parents incarcerated, or
4. Having a record of being unable to hold employment demonstrated by being terminated from two or more jobs in the past six months, or
5. Being identified as at risk of dropping out of school as documented by school professionals.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH ELIGIBILITY POLICY 2-03-01 (0)

PURPOSE:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) includes the Youth eligibility category of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment”. Section 681.300 advises State Boards to define this criterion.

POLICY:

Individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” is defined as:

1. Having limited employment opportunities as defined as being unable to obtain employment after a four week employment search, or
2. Residing in a community with limited youth-related employment opportunities defined as a community with 60 or less worksites based on LMI Area Profile data on July 1st of each year, or
3. Having one or more parents incarcerated, or
4. Having a record of being unable to hold employment demonstrated by being terminated from two or more jobs in the past six months

(4) Provide the State’s definition of “alternative education”.

Alternative education is not formally defined in North Dakota Century Code. However, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction allows middle and high schools the opportunity to create and implement alternative education and programming based on student need and can include non-traditional programs within a traditional K12 school, or a different environment, and even home-based learning, apprenticeships, and independent study.

(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.

North Dakota Century Code CHAPTER 15.1-20 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

15.1-20-01. Compulsory attendance.

1. Any person having responsibility for a child between the ages of seven and sixteen years shall ensure that the child is in attendance at a public school for the duration of each school year.
2. If a person enrolls a child of age six in a public school, the person shall ensure that the child is in attendance at the public school for the duration of each school year. The person may withdraw a child of age six from the public school. However, once the child is withdrawn, the person may not reenroll the child until the following school year. This subsection does not apply if the reason for the withdrawal is the child's relocation to another school district.
3. This section does not apply if a child is exempted under the provisions of section

15.1-20-02. Compulsory attendance - Exceptions.

1. The provisions of section 15.1-20-01 do not apply if the person having responsibility for the child demonstrates to the satisfaction of the school board that:
 - a. The child is in attendance for the same length of time at an approved nonpublic school;
 - b. The child has completed high school;
 - c. The child is necessary to the support of the child's family;
 - d. A multidisciplinary team that includes the child's school district superintendent, the director of the child's special education unit, the child's classroom teacher, the child's physician, and the child's parent has determined that the child has a disability that renders attendance or participation in a regular or special education program inexpedient or impracticable; or
 - e. The child is receiving home education.
2. A decision by the board of a school district under subsection 1 is appealable to the district court.

15.1-20-02.1. Attendance - Determination - Policies.

1. To be deemed in attendance for purposes of this chapter, a student may not be absent from school without excuse for more than:
 - a. Three consecutive school days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar;
 - b. Six half days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar; or
 - c. Twenty-one class periods.
2. The board of each school district and governing body of each nonpublic school shall adopt a policy that:
 - a. Defines an excused absence as any absence from school, if that absence is supported by either a verbal or written excuse supplied by the student's parent, teacher, or school administrator; and
 - b. Articulates the type of documentation that may be requested to verify a student's absence.
3. This chapter does not preclude a school district or nonpublic school from withholding credit, removing a student from a course, or taking other punitive measures against a student who does not arrive in a timely fashion or who exceeds a specific number of absences, as determined by the school district or nonpublic school.

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

(1) Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)

Any public comments entered here.

(2) The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)

The Governor has designated Job Service as the fiscal agent for WIOA funds for the state.

(3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

Job Service is the provider of WIOA title I Youth activities. Job Service provides all fourteen WIOA Youth elements and provides these activities statewide through the nine Job Service AJCs. Job Service has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the North Dakota Workforce Development Council

(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.

This section does not apply as North Dakota is not requesting a waiver.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

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

10. Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs; and

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

12. 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);

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)

(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

North Dakota continues to see an increased population of New Americans/refugees and other English Language learners. Lutheran Social Services reports 518 new arrivals in FY 15 with an additional 458 New Americans expected in the fiscal year 2016. Job Service ND AJCs link with adult education and English literacy programs. Adult education has offerings that incorporate English literacy with occupational skills training that is closely aligned with local economies.

The state of North Dakota has been proactive in development of partnerships with business New Americans and English language learners require additional assistance and preparation to progress in employment readiness. The Job Service AJCs and Adult Education in southeast North Dakota have utilized WIA Incentive funds to provide a weekly work skills class. The class will cover basic work skills to include but not limited to soft skills, basic work math, reading, writing, transportation, interviewing, application process, childcare needs and computers. The curriculum is presented jointly by Adult Education and Job Service AJC staff. The class curriculum will rotate every six weeks, providing space and computers for approximately 20 students every six weeks. The class began August 2015 and will be used as a model to replicate in other areas of need across the state.

In order to better serve English Language Learners, the Wagner-Peyser 10% funds will be designated to this special group of individuals.

(1) Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Professional development is conducted in a variety of ways. The Job Service Labor Market Information Center presents an LMI workshop to Job Service AJC staff annually. An annual Business Services Teleconference Training schedule is established with monthly training events on a variety of business service topics such as OFCCP, Registered Apprenticeship, assimilating New Americans, etc. This includes a review of LMI publications and resources available online. The Career and Technical Education, Career Resource Network invites

employment service staff to the variety of workshops scheduled each year. Workshops include Improved Career Decision Making, Career Planning, RUReadyND Training, and other career educational topics. Labor Exchange system training is held to ensure staff working with job seekers and employers are always informed of any changes to the online services. Workforce3one and other online webinars are available for viewing as well. Job Service AJC staff receive annual training from UI staff on the UI Internet Claims Entry System (UI ICE) each fall of the year prior to the UI claims peak period.

(2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

Job Service administers the UI, Wagner-Peyser and WIOA programs. The Senior Management collaborates closely to support claim center and the Job Service AJC assistance to claimants needing to file their claims and register for work. During heavy peak seasonal increases in UI claims filing, UI and Job Service AJC managers and staff increase their cooperation to expedite the claims taking process. Job Service AJC staff receive annual training on UI ICE. This ensures staff efficiently assist claimants with their UI claim filing. Job Service AJC staff connect with UI staff to resolve certain adjudication issues as identified in the established roles and responsibilities.

(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.

North Dakota Job Service AJC staff are knowledgeable in assisting individuals with UI claims filing and some Job Service AJC staff are experienced in actual claims taking while working in the UI department. Job Service AJC staff have a long history of providing assistance to UI claimants. North Dakota has seasonal increase in UI activity and when telephone claim wait times increased, it was beneficial to encourage UI claimants to utilize online filing in resource rooms. Job Service AJCs provide assistance following roles and responsibilities guidance provided by State UI management. Effective November 2015, the UI claims call center discontinued the UI claims call center and moved to online claims taking only. Job Service AJC staff are well prepared to provide meaningful UI claims filing assistance and manage large influxes of individuals during peak claims taking periods.

Staff provide assistance to claimants in navigating the UI ICE system in the Job Service AJC resource rooms on the available computers. Job Service AJC staff assist in setting up a State of North Dakota Login and ID, this includes creating an email address if needed. UI ICE Reference Guides and additional UI information are made available for claimants in resource rooms.

(c) Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

North Dakota UI claimants are required to have a resume on file with jobsnd.com. When a UI claimant files a claim online, information is interfaced to jobsnd.com and creates a partial registration. Jobsnd.com uses the partial registration data to automatically perform a job search and informs the UI claimant of suitable job openings available for application. Employment Service staff assist with reemployment opportunities.

Job seekers, including UI claimants, visiting an Job Service AJC receive skill assessment, career counseling, and labor market information. Job Service AJC staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals.

Career services including skill assessments, career guidance utilizing labor market information, job search assistance and access to WIOA assistance are available to all job seekers. Skill assessment completed by Job Service AJC staff enables clear direction to job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed.

Job Service has invested in jobsnd.com to allow for self-service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from anywhere Internet access is available. Jobsnd.com links to the online labor exchange system for individual job search activity and employers to post job listings. Job seekers can use jobsnd.com to create quality resumes and conduct automated job searches. Additionally, job seekers can access education and training programs available and view labor market information such as in demand occupations, current wages and training required. Job seekers can also explore career options, find direction to veteran services, and access community resources.

(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;

UI claimants, visiting an Job Service AJC receive skill assessment, career counseling, and labor market information. Job Service AJC staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. Job Service administers the UI, Wagner-Peyser and WIOA programs. The Senior Management collaborates closely to support claim center and the Job Service AJC assistance to claimants needing to file their claims and register for work.

(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

North Dakota UI claimants are required to have a resume on file with jobsnd.com. When a UI claimant files a claim online, information is interfaced to jobsnd.com and creates a partial registration. Jobsnd.com uses the partial registration data to automatically perform a job search and informs the UI claimant of suitable job openings available for application. Employment Service staff assist with reemployment opportunities.

(3) Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

North Dakota UI claimants complete their reemployment activities online on UI ICE. One feature of the UI ICE system is a provided a list of five job openings that matches the UI claimants' last work occupation through an interface with the state job bank. A job list is provided each time a UI claimant logs into the UI ICE system to complete their reemployment activities. The reemployment activities includes information on effective job search strategies, creating cover letters and resumes, an interviewing skills video and information on coping with job loss. Job Service AJC staff provide career services as outlined in WIOA to UI claimants and compliment the reemployment activities provided online.

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

UI claimants receive skill assessments, career guidance utilizing labor market information, job search assistance and access to WIOA assistance. Skill assessment completed by Job Service AJC staff enables clear direction to job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed. WIOA case managers will provide information to training and education programs via the ETPL which includes Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. Job Service AJC staff will provide assistance to UI claimants requesting or requiring guidance to complete financial aid applications.

(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.

(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.

Based on the most current information available from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), North Dakota had \$10.1 billion in combined crop and livestock production sales in 2012. Eighty-eight percent (\$8.89 billion) of North Dakota's total agricultural sales are attributed to crop production. North Dakota's \$10.1 billion in total agricultural sales in 2012 ranked North Dakota at number 11 out of 13 states with total agricultural sales in excess of \$10 billion.

According to the United States Department Agriculture, North Dakota's 2014 and 2015 crop acreage numbers ranked in the top ten states for many grain crops, #2 in sugar beets, and #3 in potatoes. In 2015, North Dakota planted 7.65 million acres of wheat (#2), 710,000 acres of sunflowers (#1), 224,000 acres of sugar beets (#2), 82,000 acres of potatoes (#3), and produced 42,000,000 pounds of honey (2014/#1). Based on USDA data, North Dakota consistently ranks 16 or 17 in annual cattle and calf livestock inventory. Other than sugar beets and potatoes, North Dakota does not rank in processed vegetable, fruit, nut, or melon production among the 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Crop and cattle production is spread pretty evenly across North Dakota. However, sugar beets and potatoes are primarily grown in North Dakota's far eastern Red River Valley. Based on past and projected agricultural activity in North Dakota, we do not anticipate the above acreage or cattle inventories to change significantly in the next 4 years.

Based on agricultural employer activity with Job Service ND for calendar years 2014 and 2015, agricultural employers placed an average of 543 seasonal job orders per year requesting an average of 1,873 seasonal agricultural workers per year (1,378 H2A openings and 495 non-H2A openings on average per year). In general, the number of H2A job openings can be an inflated number and not all H2A positions requested will be filled. This is because agents and farmers will request more visas than are needed in case the foreign workers who are hired do not work out.

In order of need, the majority of the job orders were recruiting for farm equipment operators (#1), animal ranch workers (#2), general farm labor workers (#3), beekeepers (#4), and truck drivers (#5). As a major agriculture state, North Dakota, places great emphasis on the provision of employment services for agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs).

The high proportion of H2A openings reflects the shortage of agricultural labor in North Dakota due to the increased demand for workers in North Dakota's oil patch and the higher wages paid

by the energy companies. During 2015, oil prices dropped from record highs and oil field workers have been laid off. However, it is unknown how many of the laid off workers will stay in North Dakota. This is because many of the oil field workers have come to North Dakota from out-of-state to work specifically in the oil fields. Despite the diminished labor pool available for agricultural openings, Job Service ND remains dedicated to working with agricultural employers to locate qualified farm laborers and equipment operators to assist with the spring to fall farming season.

Based on the best information available, an estimated 700 migrant and seasonal farm workers may be in North Dakota at any time during planting, growing, and harvest seasons for PY 2016 - 2019. The planting season generally starts in April and the final harvests generally occur no later than October. These same workers may also work on the Minnesota side of the Red River Valley. In addition, Job Service ND works to move MSFW's into permanent nonagricultural openings whenever possible.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing 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 number of migrant farm workers traveling to North Dakota each year, primarily to work in the Red River Valley, continues to decrease. The decrease in migrant farm workers can be attributed to farmers' use of new equipment that improves spacing between row crops, the increased use of Roundup Ready sugar beets, and the use of modern farming practices has almost eliminated the need for manual workers in the sugar beet and potato fields.

The transient nature of seasonal farm workers and their established working relationships with agricultural employers in North Dakota makes it difficult to develop accurate demographic data and consistent estimates of MSFW's in North Dakota. During calendar years 2014 and 2015, agricultural employers requested an average of 1,873 seasonal agricultural workers (1,372 H2A workers and 495 non-H2A workers), However, with Job Service ND receiving less than 60 new MSFW registrations per year over the last few years, many of the positions appear they will go to returning workers not registered with Job Service ND or will go to foreign workers under the H2A program.

However, based on information available to Job Service ND and from the WIOA Section 167 grantee (Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET), Hispanic groups and families from the southern states and North Dakota Hispanic families who have made North Dakota their permanent home make up the majority of non-H2A MSFW's workers.

(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.

MSFW Outreach Workers primarily schedule meetings with migrants or receive walk-in customers in the Job Service AJCs. When necessary, contacts can also be made in the field or at the workers' home. In addition, through Migrant Services Network Meetings attended by outreach workers, outreach workers maintain contact with social service agencies, Migrant Health Services, Migrant Legal Services, Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (Migrant Head Start), and Minnesota Job Service. At these networking meetings, these agencies provide information on how they are locating and providing services to MSFW's.

Recently, one promising practice has been to visit public summer school programs in rural communities where MSFW's are known to live and work.

(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.

To support the Job Service AJCs and the MSFW Outreach Workers, the State Monitor Advocate provides the MSFW Outreach Workers with a variety of resources and assistance throughout the year. The following technical assistance and resources are provided to the MSFW Outreach Workers throughout the year: 1.) Once every month, Wagner-Peyser registration reports are distributed to outreach worker staff in all offices for review to determine if newly registered MSFW's, by virtue of the information they have supplied and their work history, are eligible for MSFW outreach and additional assistance; 2.) The State Monitor Advocate visits each Job Service AJC annually and meets with the MSFW Outreach Workers to discuss local trends and to determine if the MSFW Outreach Worker has the necessary tools and resources to carry out their duties; 3.) The MSFW Outreach Workers are given the opportunity to offer input to, and review, the Job Service Complaint System Manual each time the manual is updated; 4.) To ensure all equity indicators continue to be met, the State Monitor Advocate reviews monthly and quarterly MSFW activity reports and based on these reports provides guidance as necessary to the Job Service AJCs and other strategic partners; 4.) The State Monitor Advocate attends the annual State Monitor Advocate National Training conferences. After each conference, the State Monitor

Advocate provides copies of all materials and PowerPoint presentations provided at the training conferences to the state's MSFW Outreach Workers; 5.) When directives or MSFW information is disseminated by National Office, the State Monitor Advocate forwards this information to the MSFW Outreach Workers; and 6.) Minutes taken by MSFW Outreach Workers at Migrant Services Networking Meetings are shared with the other MSFW Outreach Workers in the state.

(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.

MSFW Outreach Workers do not perform the MFSW program duties full-time. In addition to the MSFW Outreach Worker duties, The MSFW workers at Job Service ND also provide Wagner Peyser services and in some cases, WIOA case management services. Because our MSFW Outreach Workers also perform Wagner Peyser duties, the staff assigned as outreach workers are very knowledgeable of the core programs and the unemployment insurance program. Wagner Peyser staff receive training through in-person and Interactive Video Network (IVN) training sessions.

(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.

MSFW Outreach Workers do not perform the MFSW program duties full-time. In addition to the MSFW Outreach Worker duties, The MSFW workers at Job Service ND also provide Wagner Peyser services and in some cases, WIOA case management services. Because our MSFW Outreach Workers also perform Wagner Peyser duties, the staff assigned as outreach workers receive training and professional development in the provision of high quality services to jobseekers and employers through in-person and IVN Wagner Peyser training sessions.

In addition, the State Monitor Advocate attends the annual State Monitor Advocate National Training conferences. After each conference, the State Monitor Advocate provides copies of all materials, Webinars, and PowerPoint presentations provided at the training conferences to the state's MSFW Outreach Workers. The MFSW Outreach Workers are assigned to review the materials and to provide feedback and/or questions to the State Monitor Advocate.

(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET) operates the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in eastern North Dakota. An ongoing partnership between Job Service ND and MET has existed to provide MSFWs additional opportunities for employment and training. MET maintains offices in the Red River Valley cities of Grafton, Fargo, and Wahpeton, ND. These MET offices and the Job Service AJCs work together to provide

services to MSFW's in the respective areas. Tying the various service agencies together broadens the potential of serving the MSFWs in a one-stop concept.

In the Red River Valley where most of the state's MSFW's are located, MSFW Outreach Workers from the Red River Valley offices attend networking meetings sponsored by farm worker advocacy groups. Farm worker advocacy groups at the networking meetings include, but is not limited to the following: 1.) Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET); 2.) Migrant Legal Services; 3.) County Social Service agencies; 4.) Migrant Health Services; 5.) Migrant and Seasonal Head Start agencies; 6.) Emergency food pantries; and 7.) Salvation Army organizations. At these networking meetings, participating members provide information about the services they offer to MSFW's and their families and the efforts they make in locating MSFW's in order to promote their services.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I 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.*

North Dakota is not designated as a "Significant State" and does not have "Significant Bilingual" offices. However, all nine Job Service AJC locations in the state have a designated Business Services representative, MSFW Outreach Worker, and a Complaint Service Representative.

The Job Service AJCs, in coordination with other strategic partners, provides MSFW's and Limited English Proficient individuals with the full range of employment and training services including, but not limited to the following:

- Assistance with the Wagner-Peyser registration process in order to receive the full array of services;
- Provide assistance with posting resumes and how to do online job searches;
- Assistance with accessing other self-services via electronic technologies;
- Provide assistance with posting resumes and how to do online job searches;
- Provision of information on services available in the Job Service AJCs and contact information for partner agencies;
- Provision of basic information on labor rights, protections and responsibilities with respect to terms and conditions of employment;
- Assistance in reviewing job orders effectively;
- Assessment and referral to agriculture and non-agricultural jobs, training, and support services;

- Provision of skill assessments, counseling, and other job development services;
- Assistance with preparation of complaints related to employment and non-employment services;
- Acceptance and referral of labor-related complaints and apparent violations to appropriate state and Federal agencies;
- Referrals to local community service organizations;
- Assistance to Limited English Proficient individuals encountering language barriers;
- Assistance with career guidance and other job development contact strategies; and
- Provide follow-up services as necessary and appropriate.

Special emphasis is placed on the identification of MSFW customers. Once every month, Wagner-Peyser registration reports are distributed to outreach worker staff in all offices for review to determine if newly registered MSFW's, by virtue of the information they have supplied and their work history, are eligible for MSFW outreach and additional assistance.

Job Service ND recognizes the importance of the agricultural industry to North Dakota and the large economic contribution made to the state's economy. Therefore, Job Service ND and the Job Service AJCs ensure agricultural employers receive all the services provided to non-agricultural employers (see WIOA/WP Plan for services to employers). Job Service ND and the Job Service AJCs provide agricultural employers the full range of employer services and some specialized services including, but not limited to the following:

- Assistance with the online employer registration process in order to access the full array of employer services provided by Job Service ND;
- Assistance with the placement of job orders;
- Access to online labor market information;
- Access to online searches for qualified candidates registered with Job Service ND;
- Assistance with assessing labor needs;
- Opportunities to participate in job and career fairs;
- Recruitment activities to find and refer qualified MSFW's and other domestic candidates to fill job order positions;
- Assistance with the H2A temporary labor certification program for agricultural employers experiencing a shortage of workers;
- Provision of housing inspections;
- Maintain active and inactive files on employers who have utilized the H2A program;
- Provision of information for compliance with labor laws and regulations;
- Assistance with information on employment and training programs, tax incentives (WOTC), and bonding services;
- Provide contact with individual agricultural employers to explain our services when requested or a need for personal contact has been determined by a business services representative.

In addition, Job Service ND staff identifies employers who employ MSFW's and promote the recruitment and hiring of U.S workers when they are available. When U.S. workers are not available, agricultural employers may utilize the H2A Labor Certification Program administered by Job Service ND. The H2A program is a resource for agricultural employers to use when an employer anticipates sufficient qualified workers will not be found in the local labor market. Using the job requirements provided by the employers, Job Service ND staff identify individuals who may be interested in working for an agricultural employer and refer those individuals to the agricultural employer. When employers are unable to locate domestic workers, they may seek workers from outside the U.S. by using the H2A program. Designated Job Service ND staff review H2A job orders for accuracy and compliance with the H2A federal regulations before employers forward a request for foreign workers to the U.S. Department of Labor. The job orders are also entered into the Interstate Clearance System with Montana, South Dakota, Texas, and Puerto Rico. Job Service ND's priority for all agricultural job orders is the recruitment and hiring of qualified and available U.S. workers.

As a major agricultural state, our Job Service AJCs are dedicated to the provision, and continual improvement of the services provided to MSFW's and employers.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Job Service ND has nine local AJC locations in the state. Each office has a Complaint System Representative and MSFW Outreach Worker. In some offices the Complaint System Representative and MSFW Outreach Worker are the same person. The Complaint System Representatives will assist MSFW's to file complaints (both JS and non-JS related), file apparent violations when necessary, and coordinate with 167 grantees and other MSFW services providers.

The MSFW Outreach Workers will market the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups. Marketing of the employment service complaint system to the farmworker community is done when MSFW Outreach Workers meet with MSFW's in person and by informing attendees at Migrant Services Networking meetings sponsored by farm worker advocacy groups of the employment complaint system service. Farm worker advocacy groups at the networking meetings include, but is not limited to the following: 1.) Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET); 2.) Migrant Legal Services; 3.) County Social Service agencies; 4.) Migrant Health Services; 5.) Migrant and Seasonal Head Start agencies; 6.) Emergency food pantries; and 7.) Salvation Army organizations.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

The purpose of the ARS is to meet the labor needs of agricultural employers, provide job opportunities to farm workers and protect the domestic agricultural workforce. The ARS

ensures proper disclosure of the terms and conditions of employment to seasonal workers who are recruited from outside the local commuting area.

Job Service ND, Wagner Peyser staff, and MSFW Outreach Workers will continue efforts to strengthen its working relationships with MSFWs and employers so that each better understands how the Wagner Peyser Labor Exchange System and outreach services can be of assistance.

Efforts will continue to include promoting the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to employers and the full range of Wagner Public Labor Exchange services delivered by Job Service ND's Job Service AJCs. We will promote Agricultural Recruitment System services available to employers by participating in employer conferences, workshops and seminars that respond to the needs of the agricultural community in a general, and to agricultural employers participating in job fairs sponsored or attended by Job Service ND.

(4) Other Requirements.

(A) Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the 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).

Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET) operates the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in eastern North Dakota. An ongoing partnership between Job Service ND and MET has existed to provide MSFWs additional opportunities for employment and training. Job Service ND and MET collaborate to meld services that provide the most benefit to MSFW's. MET maintains offices in the Red River Valley cities of Grafton, Fargo, and Wahpeton, ND. The MET office in Grafton, ND co-locates in the same building with Job Service ND. These MET offices and the Job Service AJCs work together to provide services to MSFW's in the respective areas. Tying the various service agencies together broadens the potential of serving the MSFWs in a one-stop concept.

Over the next few months leading up to the beginning Program Year 2016 on July 1, 2016, Job Service ND and MET Inc. will cooperate in entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the current cooperative relationship that has existed between Job Service ND and MET Inc. for many years. MET Inc. has already reached out to Job Service ND and we are ready to fully cooperate in getting the MOU into place. Job Service ND will also seek to further the relationship by examining the possibility of co-locating the Fargo and Wahpeton MET offices within the local Job Service AJCs; similar to the arrangement in Grafton, ND.

(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.

The following MSFW related organizations and agencies, but not limited to, were given the opportunity to provide information and comment on the PY 2016 to PY 2019 Combined State Plan and Agricultural Outreach Plan:

Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc. (MET)
927 12th Street West
Grafton, ND 58237
(WIA Section 167 Grantee)

Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc. (MET)
1122 1st Avenue North
Fargo, ND 58102
(WIA Section 167 Grantee)

Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc. (MET)
108 7th Street South
Wahpeton, ND 58075
(WIA Section 167 Grantee)

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.
102 N Broadway
P.O. Box 607
Crookston, MN 56716

Migrant Health Services, Inc.
810 Forth Avenue South. Suite 101
Moorhead, MN 56560

Legal Services of North Dakota
Migrant Legal Services
1025 North 3rd Street, Suite 8
P.O. Box 1893
Bismarck, ND 58502

- (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.

During the previous four years Job Service ND received 376,045 Wagner-Peyser registrations, with 392 identified as MSFW's. Less than one-tenth of one-percent of all registrants were identified as MSFW's in the previous four year. However, when the Equity Ratio Indicators were reported to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) on the quarterly ETA 5148 – Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Reports, the quarterly reports for the previous four years shows North Dakota was successful at providing services to MSFWs at higher rates than to non-MSFWs in all 5 Equity Ratio Indicator categories for all sixteen quarters of the previous four years.

Job Service ND and the State Monitor Advocate will continue to place special emphasis on the identification of MSFW customers and to ensure all Equity Ratio Indicators continue to be or exceeded. This will be done by continued monitoring of monthly and quarterly MSFW activity and providing guidance as necessary to the Job Service AJC outreach workers and other strategic partners.

- (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.

The previous Agricultural Outreach Plan for PY 2014 and extended through PY 2015, established an outreach goal of 200 MSFW contacts and continued efforts to meet or exceed the Equity Ratio Indicators for provision of services to MSFW's. Job Service ND met these goals during PY 2014 and is on pace to meet the goal again for PY 2015.

The Agricultural Outreach Plans for PY 2011 and PY 2012 established outreach goals of 250 MSFW contacts and the PY 2013 and PY 2014 established outreach goals of 200 MSFW contacts. The outreach contact goals were met or exceeded in three of previous Program Years. In PY 2011 when the goal was for 250 MSFW outreach contacts, Job Service ND came up short with only 247 MSFW outreach contacts. This was still a 98.8% success rate

for PY 2011. As mentioned earlier, Job Service ND met or exceeded the Equity Ratio Indicators for provision of services to MSFW's in all sixteen quarters of the previous four years.

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

North Dakota is not designated as a significant state, but Job Service ND has a full-time, year round employee designated as the State Monitor Advocate who administers the duties on a part-time and as needed basis. The State Monitor Advocate participated extensively in the preparation of the Agricultural Outreach Plan and had the opportunity to approve and comment on the 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));
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;
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
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

(a) Aligning of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) adopted the ESEA common core state standards for adult education (refer to Appendices _ - memo from DPI

management) in May 2015. Professional development to all adult education staff has been implemented over the past two years using the 2014 GED as a model.

*(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 adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.*

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

- 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and*
- 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.*

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.*

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, NDDPI ensures that local service providers (adult learning centers) provide services to eligible individuals who:

1. are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance (16 years of age);
2. do not have the basic literacy skills necessary to function effectively in society;
4. have not reached a level of education equivalent to that required for a certificate of graduation to be issued;

5. are unable to speak, read, or write English to obtain or retain employment commensurate with their ability.

All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved and overseen by the NDDPI. Adult basic education and English Language service are the responsibility of the local seventeen (17) adult learning centers located across the state. The following organizations are eligible to apply, per AEFLA, to the NDDPI for federal funds through a competition process to provide the identified services:

- Local education agencies
- Community-based or faith-based organizations
- Voluntary literacy organizations
- North Dakota University System Institutions
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Libraries
- Public housing authorities
- Other nonprofits that have the ability to provide literacy services
- Consortiums of organizations listed above

The following would constitute ineligible applicants:

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

By federal law, providers are prohibited from using federal funds to supplant state or local dollars. All federal funding will be used to enhance learner services, as outlined in this Plan. The NDDPI will conduct a competition using a Request for Proposal (RFP) process under WIOA upon receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. Criteria will be standard with the considerations required by federal legislation. Grants will be awarded on a three year basis. Future efforts will be made to assess what support eligible providers might need in order to implement this Plan and broaden discussion of how these needs can be met.

The NDDPI will use the following process to distribute funds to awarded applicants:

1. not less than 82.5 percent of this grant funds to award grants and contracts under Section 231 and to carry out Section 225. Programs for Corrections, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out Section 225,
2. shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out State Leadership activities under Section 223, and
3. shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or \$85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Local grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA:

1. assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skill necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
2. assist adults who are parents for family members become a full partner in the education development of their children;
3. promote transition from adult education to post-secondary education and training through career pathways;
4. assist immigrants and English language learners improve reading, writing, math, speaking and comprehension of the English language and acquire understanding of American government, individual freedom, and responsibilities of citizenship.

This will include providing adult education and literacy services to the negotiated performance levels (not less than the State) which demonstrates academia, college and career effectiveness, and focused on research-based methods of instruction. This will also include alignment with local workforce and other partnerships which create a collaborative seamless process and system for eligible students. The determination of priority services will follow the federal guidance. All activities will have sufficient intensity and duration, as so aligned with the common core standards, resulting in strong college and career readiness. North Dakota partners have a strong history of meeting performance, receiving four WIA Incentive grants in the past ten years.

Under the WIOA (Section 2013), adult education and literacy activities are defined as, “programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education, and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.” A wide variety of program strategies will continue or begin to be implemented to be responsive to the needs of adult learners, with a strong foundational emphasis on quality, intensity and duration of services which will result in real learning and related life changes, over placing emphasis on serving large numbers of students. These areas include the following:

- Reading, writing and numeracy for grades 0 – 12.9
- English language – NRS levels 0 – 6
- Civics education – includes individual education plan, career research, and employability skills Instruction to assist students in acquiring high school equivalency credentials and transition into post-secondary (career pathway focus)
- Integrated ABE and ELL with occupational instruction (Career Pathway Bridges)
- Digital literacy – computer literacy to meet workplace competency demands and transition to post-secondary education and training

- Financial literacy – courses and individualized work helping students understand issues including budgeting, debt, impact of student loans, unfair lending practices, etc.
- Workforce readiness training – individualized advising as part of individual education plan to include career research, employability skills, etc.

The plan scope, or the ‘how’ for adult education involves implementation of a developed comprehensive professional development plan to all local adult education providers, of the WIOA required features to meet its stakeholders requirements, and best practice strategies for both instructional and social readiness for college and career.

(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 NDDPI allocates federal and state funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) to provide adult education and literacy services at five state correctional facilities: State Penitentiary, Missouri River Correctional Center, James Valley Correctional Center, Dakota Women’s Rehabilitation and Correctional Center and the Youth Correctional Center. DOCR educational staff teach a comprehensive program which includes special education services, secondary high school diploma or GED, integrated education and training, career pathways, peer tutoring and re-entry transition.

Allocated funds shall be used to support education programs for the five facilities in these areas:

- Adult education and literacy services,
- Special education as determined by the eligible agency,
- Secondary school credit, and

- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives/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.

DOCR shall give priority to serving individuals who will be released within a period of five years. DOCR staff include highly qualified strategist/special education teacher for both adult and juvenile populations. Data shows that almost all adult offenders work towards their GED while about 25% of the incarcerated youth do as well, with the remainder working towards a diploma. Also available for both adults and juveniles is the research/evidence based Read Right program and also industry specific programs (i.e., welding, construction, FACS, Agriculture, Technology education, Commercial Arts, Vehicle Maintenance and Repair). Inmate tutoring is offered as paid employment following completion of a training program. Classes in career readiness and reentry planning are available and required by inmates within a year of parole/release. DOCR offers TPC -- Transition from Prison to Community, which reviews the standards for release, readiness skills, recidivism rates, and makes recommendations to Corrections management as to proposed program changes.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs will engage students in purposeful use of the language. It will offer the opportunity to develop and implement integrated English Literacy and civics education services to immigrants and other limited English proficient populations.

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.

Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis through the RFP process mentioned earlier. Funds will be used to provide ELL and Civics instruction. The funds will pay for instructors and purchase materials on listening and reading comprehension along with writing and speaking.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Staff from the adult learning centers have formed a subcommittee to solicit, review and recommend use of curriculum or modules that best support the expanded requirements of the legislation and the student goals and needs in the most experiential method possible.

Describe how the program is 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.

The English Literacy and Civics Program is designed to improve the productivity and obtaining of gainful employment through the improvement of skills of non-native English learners. Working with local providers, Job Service AJC's and local community employers, the adult learning centers and students will determine in-demand industries and occupations that can lead to economic self-sufficiency.

(e) State Leadership. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The most critical element of continued leadership activities also focuses on monitoring and evaluation of local programs. All local programs are on a two-three year cycle for onsite monitoring.

NDDPI has a good foundation of working with education and workforce partners on a statewide career pathway system and sector strategy initiative. Additionally, the NDDPI is on the Governor's Workforce Development Council and the Leadership Team. This position promotes the collaboration and vision of workforce partners to ensure a seamless system is developed, implemented and evaluated for effectiveness. The development of Career Pathways and Integrated Employment and Training will be a key initiative for all partners.

The provision of high quality professional development has been strong the past two years as North Dakota prepared for the 2014 GED. Professional development continues in this arena and will expand to career pathways, bridge programs and effective career planning to meet the state's continual employment needs. Integrated Employment and Training (IET) and digital literacy will be advanced and designed for work with ELL students as our priority.

As always, technical assistance will continue to be a strong component of leadership activities and funds as the State Office continues to support local programs with research/evidence based programs, activities and curriculums to meet the individual needs

of students. Technical assistance will focus on data and our associated student data management system (LACES), assessment and instruction; additionally, the aforementioned areas of career readiness, integrated employment and training and career pathways will be key for local programs.

(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.

The adult learning centers are responsible to the State Office for meeting standards of quality for administration and instruction. Effectiveness of programs, services and activities of local recipients of funds will be assessed through systematic evaluation of programs.

All activity related to ABE/ESL students is entered at least monthly into the student data management system. The State Office conducts random, but at least quarterly, audits of all program data for multiple indicators of quality.

Secondly, the state uses both data match and personal contact to identify performance indicators. Each local program is expected to meet the state negotiated performance measures in the new WIOA reauthorization --

- percent of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit of the program;
- percent of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit of the program;
- median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- percent of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and effectiveness in serving employers.

Lastly, as mentioned above, accountability lies in the results on onsite monitoring by the State Office as well as local program monitoring to assess their own standards and performance.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
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;
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and,
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;

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);
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;
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;
4. 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; and
5. 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; and
6. 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.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan¹² must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by 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;*
- (2) the designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and*
- (3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.*

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to regularly seek the advice of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) on a number of issues including the state plan contents, consumer satisfaction, program goals and evaluation, policies, order of selection, public education and building relationships with the business community.

The results of the client satisfaction survey for FFY 2015 showed 96% satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC's Planning and Evaluation Committee receives quarterly reports on the client satisfaction rates. They review the information, which is then discussed at the quarterly SRC meetings. They have not identified any trends or anomalies. The SRC made no policy recommendations during this fiscal year, nor did their Annual Report include any specific recommendations based on the survey results.

As had been identified in the Strategic Plan, DVR has been reviewing and making changes to agency policies. All revisions have been reviewed with and approved by the SRC.

¹²Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii)of WIOA

Three recommendations were made by the SRC throughout the year and after reviewing public comment from the state plan input meetings held in December, 2015.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

DVR should maintain the Order of Selection structure within the state plan.

Response:

DVR concurs and will continue to do so. *Attachment (m) addresses this recommendation.*

RECOMMENDATION 2:

DVR should develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an outside company to perform the client satisfaction surveys by telephone or electronically.

Response:

DVR concurs and has done so. *Attachment (o) addresses this recommendation.*

RECOMMENDATION 3:

DVR should support the ND Provisional Hiring Program to enhance the state of North Dakota as a model employer for individuals with disabilities.

Response:

DVR concurs and is doing so.

(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;

(2) the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

(3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

ND does not request a Waiver of Statewideness.

(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;

(2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

(3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

(4) Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

(5) State use contracting programs.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work with multiple agencies and entities throughout the state. A number of these are related to cooperative ventures with the Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division in development of a sustained system of benefit planning and other vocational supports that facilitate employment of persons with the most significant disabilities. Listed below are the primary businesses, agencies and groups with whom we are currently working. The only groups in this attachment, with whom we have a formal written agreement, are with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and Department of Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Department of Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program – Cooperative agreement with VA/VR is to 'ensure seamless, coordinated, and effective VR services to North Dakota's veterans with disabilities and their dependents with disabilities; to improve cooperation and collaboration between the two agencies; to avoid duplication of services; to improve interagency communication; and to establish staff cross-training opportunities.'

While we do not have formal written agreements with the following entities, state and regional DVR staff work cooperatively with them based on the individual consumer needs.

Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) – IPAT is North Dakota's Tech Act Program. IPAT serves as North Dakota's federally funded assistive technology project through a sub-contract with the North Dakota's Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. IPAT offers free services to North Dakotans with disabilities to help them get the assistive technology (AT) services they need. IPAT is a statewide program designed to increase access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology. The DVR Director is a voting member on their advisory council and participates in a collaborative partnership with IPAT and others on an AT Re-use Program established in 2010.

Business Information Centers (BIC) – Located in Bismarck and Grand Forks, the BICs provide consultation and resources for DVR consumers on various aspects of establishing and maintaining a business.

Small Business Administration (SBA) – Ongoing coordination of shared training and education programs between SBA staff and DVR staff.

Department of Commerce and local economic development groups – Offers resources for funding and business development for DVR consumers.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) - Provides mentoring and consultation to DVR consumers who are developing business plans.

Lewis and Clark Development Corporation - Process revolving loan fund applications for DVR consumers pursuing self-employment.

Developmental Disabilities Council – Periodically provides monies for the revolving loan fund. They also provided an overview of transition data in ND as it relates to ND DVR and employment outcomes.

North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD) – Occasionally provides monies to DVR consumers for non-employment related expenses.

North Dakota Chamber of Commerce - Cooperative training and information exchange. Regional DVR staff are also members of their local chambers and participate on various chamber committees. This enables DVR to develop relationships with the business community.

Rocky Mountain ADA Center - Provides technical assistance, resources, education and training on disability issues including the ADA.

Center of Technology and Business – Provides technical assistance to DVR consumers in developing Business and Marketing plans.

North Dakota Center for People with Disabilities (NDCPD) at Minot State University – NDCPD also administers the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) in North Dakota. DVR staff also serve as members of various MIG committees.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:

(1) 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.

(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;

(B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

(C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

(D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working with the Department of Public Instruction and local school districts to identify potentially eligible students with disabilities in need of pre-employment transition services. Students may receive these services as young as fourteen. DVR will typically open a case two years prior to exit from school however, this may vary based on individual needs. Once a student has been found eligible for services, DVR and the student, with input by the transition team, will complete the IPE within 90 days.

Transitioning students who are identified through the education unit's Section 504 coordinator are referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and contacts are made with the guidance counselors to assure those with special needs are aware of services through DVR. Referrals are also received from Independent Living Centers, Human Service Centers, and Community Rehabilitation providers working with transition age students.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Transition Services was revised and renewed July 1, 2011, and is in effect until such time as IDEA is reauthorized. Parties to the agreement are the Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education, Job Service North Dakota, the Department of Career and Technical Education, and the Department of Health's Children's Special Health Services Unit, Developmental Disabilities Division, Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The MOU addresses many areas including: consultation and technical assistance, transition planning, and roles and responsibilities including financial responsibilities of the agencies and outreach.

DVR and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) are involved with a Community of Practice (CoP) for Transition. The mission of the group is to work towards building, supporting, and sustaining community partnerships and systems that promote and improve the scope, opportunity and quality of transition for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career beyond high school.

North Dakota's CoP focuses on working across groups and localities to share information, address issues, learn together, find shared goals, define shared work, and improve practice. Representatives from DVR and DPI attend the National Capacity Building Institute, bringing back transition information from other states, which is then presented as a team at the state level.

North Dakota's CoP has representation from most regions and continues to be very active, holding quarterly meetings. Four subcommittees address specific areas of need: **Youth Leadership, Healthy Transitions, Guardianship and Employment**. A DVR Administrator serves as the chair on the employment subcommittee. A couple of projects these committees are currently working on are listed below:

The subcommittee on Youth Leadership provides an annual leadership conference for youth with disabilities and their families. DVR representatives are working with the students at the conference on various businesses/careers that may be experiencing growth, interviewing skills, soft skills, etc.

The subcommittee on employment has created an employment training manual for teachers, paraprofessionals in the school, new VR counselors, new provider staff, and others.

The subcommittee on Healthy Transitions has created a booklet for students to help navigate the health care system and be aware of their health care needs.

The subcommittee on Guardianship is working on identifying guardianship needs in ND.

Since the actual service delivery takes place in the eight regions of the state, most regions have developed a regional transition Community of Practice committee. Each regional committee is to develop committee goals which are in various phases of implementation. The committees use a specific document for their planning process entitled: "*Essential Tools, Interagency Transition Team Development and Facilitation*" published by the National Center on Secondary Education and Training and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP.) The use of this document is helping to better coordinate efforts. The state director for DPI's Special Education and the State Transition Coordinator for DVR provide technical assistance on how to continually improve their regional CoP.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has committed approximately \$1.5 million per year statewide to fund transition activities which may be used on an individual basis. Required activities include job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, training on self-advocacy, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, and work place readiness training. In addition to services purchased based on approved IPEs for students, DVR staff are providing services which includes tracking time spent for travel to rural areas. Under IDEA, the local school districts are required to provide transition services, however DVR has entered into purchase of service agreements with local school districts and private providers to enhance or expand services.

- DPI and DVR teamed with Centers for Independent Living and private providers to host a Transition Conference. The event brought transition stakeholders together to collaborate and learn about best practices for transition students. Due to the success of this event, the intent is to offer it every other year.
- Teachers and DVR counselors are collaborating to provide students with a foundation with activities such as career exploration, self-advocacy, interest testing, and work place readiness training using a common curriculum.
- DVR is partnering with schools and community rehabilitation providers to offer competitive, integrated work experience.
- DVR is partnering with the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) and schools to provide assistive technology training as part of the career planning process.
- DVR is partnering with Pathfinders, which is the Federally Funded (Office of Special Education Programs – OSEP) Parent Training and Information Center. The purpose is to

support parents and assist students with increasing independent living, self-determination and self-advocacy skills.

- DVR and DPI continue to collaborate at a local level with colleges, work force offices, community rehabilitation providers, independent living centers, and employers to provide transition fairs. These fairs provide transition students with hands on opportunities to explore and experience various careers.
- DVR and North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind have sponsored a weekend retreat with the purpose of providing intensive pre-employment career services to youth with visual impairments. Due to the success of this retreat, plans are to continue sponsoring this event.

DVR launched the Teacher Internship Program. The DVR Teacher Internship Program is designed to provide teachers with an opportunity to work closely with their local DVR office and transition counselors. The teachers participate in a three-week internship, beginning with an in-depth orientation to the VR process. The project provides teachers with information regarding the VR program and process, adult agencies, employers' needs, labor market information, disability legislation, and has enhanced relationships between teachers and DVR staff. Due to the success, DVR plans to continue to offer this program.

Additional Collaborative Efforts:

DPI, the Developmental Disabilities Division (DD), and DVR partner to offer the Adult Education Transition Service (AETS) to eligible transition students. The program is designed to fill in the service gaps for students who have completed their high school requirements, have not yet exited high school, are ready for adult services, but are not old enough to qualify for adult funding through DD.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Protection and Advocacy (P&A), North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD), the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), and DVR partnered as a consortium to create the Launch My Life portal. It is a resource where youth, parents, counselors, teachers, and others can explore information about transition. The website will continue to be updated by the consortium. It may be accessed at: www.launchmylifend.com

DVR is part of the advisory committee for the Adult Student Transition Education Program (A-STEP). The program offers students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to attend college.

DVR coordinated with the Behavioral Health Division to develop the administrative code and policies for the Transition to Independence Program (TIPS). A Strategic Plan was then completed and used to give direction to the project. DVR serves on the TIPS Advisory Committee.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The utilization of community rehabilitation programs varies considerably throughout the state in that needs and resources are unique to each region. The regional offices at the local level work closely with their local providers to identify needs and to determine, with the provider, whether or not they are able to meet that need. In addition, the triennial assessment of rehabilitation needs completed in FY 2012 included survey questions specific to community rehabilitation programs, their ability to meet individual's employment related needs and barriers encountered in meeting needs. Survey results are discussed in *Attachment (j)*.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also continues to utilize information gathered from public hearings as well as input received from the providers themselves and organizations such as the North Dakota Association of Community Providers and the North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council to work more closely together. The agency will continue to make every effort to improve services to individuals when a problem is identified in a particular region.

To insure ongoing dialogue, the North Dakota Association of Community Providers and the North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council are represented on the State Rehabilitation Council where issues are discussed whenever appropriate.

As a major player on the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, DVR continues to be an active partner as opportunities arise.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to survey providers for input regarding their training needs. Current training available to Community Rehabilitation Providers includes: video conference training on various topics, DVR 101, and online employment modules through the Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE.)

DVR continues to be involved in quarterly statewide TBI advisory and systems committees.

Outcome based job placement rates and guidelines were implemented October 1, 2012. Two work groups were established from the semi-annual provider meeting to review and update SEP guidelines and job development and placement services. A standardized fee for service was implemented with an annual 3% inflationary increase. During the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey, providers indicated insufficient funds for the level of intervention they were providing. Based on the results, guidelines and rates will be reviewed and updated.

In addition, standards will be established for facilities and providers of services used by the agency. Rehabilitation facilities must be certified either by CARF, The Council (The Council of Quality and Leadership for People with Disabilities or CQL) or have an approved plan in place for acquiring accreditation. Medical service providers must be approved by the State Licensing

Board through its agreement with the Department of Human Services. All educational and vocational technical programs must be recognized by the State Board of Higher Education.

The department has, as part of its contract package, language that addresses accessibility of facilities, affirmative action plans, special communication needs, and fraud, waste, and abuse.

(f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. 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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is purchasing services from 21 providers, for the provision of supported employment services and extended services. Outcome based SEP rates and guidelines were implemented October 1, 2012. Two work groups were established from the semi-annual provider meeting to review and update SEP guidelines. A standardized fee for service was implemented with an annual 3% inflationary increase. During the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey, providers indicated insufficient funds for the level of intervention they were providing. Based on the results, supported employment guidelines and rates will be reviewed and updated.

All units that purchase extended services fall under the administrative control of the North Dakota Department of Human Services and have developed a Memorandum of Understanding. During this past year, the units were focused on securing a contract to provide extended services. The contract was granted to Rocky Mountain Rehab PC and is being managed by the Behavioral Health Division.

In cooperation with the Behavioral Health Division, DVR participated in a supported employment pilot project in one of the regional offices. The project uses an evidence-based supported employment model for consumers with the dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse. The project began March 2009. Due to the positive outcomes, the project has been expanded into two additional regions. The DVR state office program administrator responsible for supported employment is involved with the project. Regional VR staff are involved with the fidelity review teams.

(g) Coordination with Employers. 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

(2) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to building strong, long-term relationships with business. The agency has a dual customer approach with business being a key consumer of VR service. Services provide to business include consultation, technical assistance and information that serves to build awareness of business to an available source of qualified employees. Long term engagement with business will result in incorporating the workforce needs of business when assisting consumers of DVR to develop goals that are consistent with in-demand occupations.

DVR has developed a team of Business Service Specialists (BSSs) within the state. This team was developed through re-classification and assignment of VR Counseling staff. Full time BSSs are employed in the division's larger office to include Fargo, Minot and Bismarck. Staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion's Job Driven VR Technical Assistance Center is providing support to the division in development of goals and strategies to capitalize on the resource of business service staff to assist the agency in developing goals, strategies and objectives.

Goal 1: Increase business engagement to assist business retains, or hires employees that have incurred an injury, illness or health impairment.

Objective: Increase the number of contacts between business and staff from the VR agency.

Strategies:

1. Develop Best Practice Guidelines that will be used to train staff to increase staff skill in assessing business needs.
2. Develop standards for the number and extent of presentations and outreach to business by staff to include Business Specialist and Rehabilitation Counselors.
3. Develop a statewide senior Business Service staff member responsible for leading a team that includes the Business Service Staff and VR Administrators responsible for business service in regions in the state without a dedicated Business Specialist.
4. Develop marketing and branding tools to promote engagement with business.
5. Participate as a member organization in business-led organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Rotary etc.
6. Attend Workforce Development Board and disseminate information to the statewide VR staff on the business needs as expressed during Board meetings.
7. Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET) and the NET-Southeast regional team to share referrals and best practices.

Goal 2: Become a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

Objective: Increase the use of Labor Market Information to align consumer goals with workforce needs.

Strategies:

1. Train consumers to access state specific labor market information to make decisions related to vocational goals.
2. Train VR staff to use labor market information in all interactions with consumers to reinforce the need for training that is in demand in the local labor market.
3. Collaborate with State Workforce Partners to access labor market information.
4. Provide training to community rehabilitation providers to support understand local labor market trends that reflect local and statewide workforce needs.

5. Through the use of labor market information in all aspects of work with consumers that creates a pool of qualified job candidates.

In addition, VR staff, teachers and CRPs are working with employers to place transition students in work experiences which will lead to competitive integrated employment.

(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;

(2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

(3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is organized within State Government with the Department of Human Service (DHS) as the Designated State Agency. Medicaid, the Developmental Disabilities Division and the Behavioral Health Division are all part of DHS. The placement of the VR program within DHS provides significant opportunities to develop informal and formal working relationships.

DVR has historically collaborated with the State Medicaid agency. Examples of historical and more recent collaborative efforts between DHS Medical Service and VR Division include:

- Working together to inform consumers with disabilities of Medicaid's Workers with Disabilities Coverage that allows individuals with disabilities in the work force to maintain their Medicaid coverage.
- Partnering with staff from Medicaid's Autism Unit to identify youth with disabilities that have the potential to benefit from the State Autism Waiver Service. Staff from the Autism Unit has provided technical assistance to VR staff that is related specifically to the effective service and supports to assist individuals with symptoms associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Data Sharing Memorandum of Understanding between Medicaid and VR related to the implementation of the Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplementary Social Security Income (PROMISE) grant. Included in the MOU is an agreement to share data across the programs and report this information on program participants to the Social Security Administration.
- Utilizing Medicaid to fund Extended Service for consumers who have successfully secured employment through the provision of VR Supported Employment Program.
- VR is an active stakeholder to the Medical Service Division's Money Follow the Person Program.

VR has an MOU and high level of collaboration with DHS DD Division in the delivery of Supported Employment to consumers who experience ID/DD. VR policies and procedures instruct counselors to open a case for ID/DD consumers who may require long-term services.

The partnership between DVR and DD utilizes DVR funding to provide the initial training and job stabilization with DD using Medicaid Waiver funding to provide long term support.

VR has a high level of collaboration with DHS Behavioral Health Division in the delivery of employment services to consumers who experience behavioral health issues. VR provides employment services including SEP for individuals with mental illness with extended services provided through the Behavioral Health Divisions' funding. DVR is also involved as a team member for individuals involved in the Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) program which then allows for a smooth transition into VR SEP once those individuals have stabilized and are ready to pursue competitive integrated employment.

VR will request Technical Assistance from the Rehabilitation Service Administration in development of an MOU that is consistent with the requirements of regulations for the VR program.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. 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;

(ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

(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.

DVR's system to collect personnel information provides annual data concerning the numbers and categories of personnel that are employed by the state agency as well as the projected retirements within five years. The numbers of personnel are then compared to the clients served to determine the projected number of staff needed, including the ratio of counselors to clients. Information on personnel development is described in Section 4 of this attachment.

There are currently 90 individuals employed by North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. During FFY 2015, 3088 individuals were served by vocational rehabilitation. This results in an annual client to counselor ratio of 77.2 to 1. DVR attempts to hire counseling staff as necessary, based on projected caseload numbers. Current staffing is sufficient to provide vocational rehabilitation services. Hiring additional counseling staff will be dependent upon the need to maintain a reasonable counselor to client ratio and the availability of funding. DVR currently has 4 counselor vacancies. In addition, there is 1 support staff vacancy.

In 2015 North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation’s annual turnover rate for counselors was 21%, with an overall agency turnover rate of 13.79%. We do not anticipate the turnover rate to increase in 2016.

During the next five years we estimate 22 staff members will be leaving the agency due to retirement alone. Additional vacancy positions are estimated at 25 counselors in the next five years. Traditionally, there is very little turnover in the non-counselor positions.

The table below shows the total number of staff positions, the current vacancies and projected vacancies due to retirement over the next five years:

Vocational Rehabilitation Positions with Current and Projected Vacancies

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years
DSU Director	1	0	1
State Office Administrators and Support Staff	11	0	7
Regional Vocational Rehabilitation Administrators	8	0	5
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	41.25	4	8
Vision Rehabilitation Specialists	7	0	2
Business/Career Assessment Specialists	4.75	0	0

Human Service Specialists/Aides and Rehabilitation Technician	6	0	4
Supported Employment Coordinator	1	0	1
Regional Support Staff	10	1	3
Drivers (part-time)	0	0	0

(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;

(ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

(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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has 27 Counselors and Regional Administrators who meet the Qualified Rehabilitation Professional (QRP), Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) standards. This represents 54% of the staff who are required to meet QRP standards. We anticipate 2 additional staff will be eligible to sit for the CRC exam during the fall of 2016. Six Central Office administrators hold CRC certification. All CRC staff must maintain CRC status by participating in the required training. The state DVR office is an approved continuing education provider through CRCC, and the training officer coordinates and notifies staff of various training opportunities throughout the year, including training available at the annual conference. Counselors update their CRC status with their administrator at their annual performance review.

The table below depicts the out-of-state institutions that are providing training to North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff who are required to meet Qualified Rehabilitation Professional standards: Regional VR Administrators and VR Counselors. The table also depicts training sites used by North Dakota Vision Rehabilitation Specialists. Current counseling staff are taking post graduate classes to enable them to sit for the CRC Exam. The numbers enrolled and graduated are for FFY 2015.

Institutions Providing Training to North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

Institution of Higher Ed	Students Enrolled (10/1/14 – 09/30/15)	Employees Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates from Previous Year (10/1/13 – 09/30/14)
Utah State University	0	1	0	1
Virginia Commonwealth University	1	1	0	0
West Virginia University	0	0	1	0
Mississippi State University	1	1	1	0
South Dakota State University	4	4	0	0
San Diego State University	1	1	0	0

(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.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation lists all counselor job openings with Job Service North Dakota, specifying a preference for individuals with a Master’s Degree in rehabilitation counseling with credentials to qualify for certification. We will also consider the possibility of paid internships as an incentive to attract Master’s level interns with the intention of retaining them for counselor openings. We recently on hired an intern as a permanent counselor.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation recruits minorities and individuals from graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling, however, universities in our state do not offer a Master’s Degree in rehabilitation counseling. Therefore, we are forced to recruit graduate level counselors from out-of-state. We are often unsuccessful in this effort because in most instances, our salaries are not competitive at the graduate level. If we are successful in recruiting graduate level counselors, we often find it difficult to retain them for the same reason.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation recruits individuals with disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations needed to perform essential job functions. Reasonable

accommodations include adaptive equipment for current staff with disabilities. In addition, reasonable accommodations are addressed when requested.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation had requested reclassification of the professional rehabilitation counselor series, to move the counselor positions up a pay grade. This request was submitted to the state's Human Resource Management Services and was reviewed by the committee in June 2013. The reclassification request was denied. Counseling staff did receive equity adjustments in 2015.

(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 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

(B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

DVR recognizes that we will be losing valuable experience and managerial knowledge with the high level of retirees who are currently administrators in the regional and central offices. Our Success in Leadership initiative (launched in 2007) was a major aspect of our succession planning efforts. Due to entering Order of Selection, Success in Leadership has not met.. Applications are currently on hold.

The purpose of Success in Leadership is to challenge individuals to become positive forces of change in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation by adopting and implementing exemplary leadership practices. All staff, regardless of their position, are able to apply to become part of Success in Leadership. We believe it is important for all staff to be able to expand their knowledge, skills and abilities by participating in quality training on their path to leadership.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has established a policy to ensure that professionals providing Vocational Rehabilitation services are appropriately and adequately trained to meet "Qualified Rehabilitation Professional Standards." The standard established is that they are nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselors.

A. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will hire rehabilitation counselors who hold a Master's Degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related field from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited program and who hold CRC certification or could obtain such certification within 5 years of the date of hire. If unable to recruit individuals who meet these qualifications, DVR will hire the most appropriate and qualified applicant with the

expectation that the individual hired will participate in educational programs to meet “Qualified Rehabilitation Professional” standards within 5 years of the date of hire.

B. Individuals who do not meet personnel standards will develop a training plan that will identify how they will meet the personnel standards. The plan will also include time lines for meeting the personnel standard which must be approved by their regional administrator and the Central Office Training Coordinator.

C. At the present time, individuals requiring retraining to meet the personnel standards enroll in Utah State University’s Distance Education Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling program, South Dakota State University and San Diego State University to complete the educational requirement for qualified rehabilitation personnel standards.

We are waiting to hear which universities will be receiving the RSA Long-Term Training/CSPD Scholarships along with the changes there will be in the funding support available. Costs not covered by the scholarships are covered by Vocational Rehabilitation’s 110 funds.

In 1999, North Dakota DVR’s QRP standards were implemented. The goal established at implementation was that 50% of staff on board October 1, 1999, would meet the QRP standards by October 2004 and 100% by October 2009. All staff hired after that date are required to meet QRP standards within 5 years of hire. Currently, 100% of the original staff meet the QRP standards. Staff hired after that date have either met the standard or are in the process of doing so as required.

(4) Staff Development. Describe the State agency’s policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

(A) 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

(B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts an assessment of the training needs of the current staff at all levels - administrative, counselor, and support staff. The needs assessment focuses on two levels of training (1) statewide training topics that are consistent with the State Plan and RSA priorities, and (2) regional training that addresses issues identified through case reviews, performance appraisals and other training that will assist staff in progressing toward their career goals.

In-service training provides for attendance at workshops, webinars, conferences, formal course work training in rehabilitation counseling, medical assessment, ethics, job placement, rehabilitation technology, ADA, reauthorization, and other rehabilitation related training. All employees have access to these training opportunities. The agency's continuing education program also allows reimbursement for the cost of tuition and books for classes that are related to job duties and will increase the employee's skills in specific areas.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation receives and distributes information such as rehabilitation journals, Rehabilitation Briefs, National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Research Materials, topics researched by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, as well as videos and printed materials on related rehabilitation issues. Information is disseminated through the state email system and hard copies, CDs, DVDs are sent through the mail.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation supports participation in professional organizations by encouraging attendance and providing registration and travel expenses for professional organization meetings and conferences. A number of vocational rehabilitation personnel are active members and hold leadership positions in professional organizations.

(5) Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs. Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides interpreter services to individuals who have limited English speaking ability. In several regions where minority populations are more predominant, DVR staff have attended training on the customs and culture of minority groups. These materials are available to all DVR staff.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides personnel or obtains services to accommodate clients in need of appropriate modes of communication. Agency staff members who have an interest are encouraged to take sign language classes. In regions that do not have personnel trained in alternate modes of communication, this service is purchased.

(6) Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates CSPD efforts with the CSPD requirements under IDEA. The Department of Public Instruction (DOPI) is represented on the State Rehabilitation Council where information on training conferences is shared and invitations extended to attend each other's conferences and other training activities. DVR is also a member of the statewide Community of Practice that has broad-based representation of agencies involved in various aspects of Transition. Members of the Community of Practice, including DVR staff,

were also part of multi-agency team that participated in the Annual Capacity Building Institute to identify ways to improve transition services in the state. In addition, ND DVR had one staff on the planning committee for the North Dakota DPI Secondary Transition Interagency Conference. DVR staff attended the conference and two staff presented at the conference in November 2015.

(j) Statewide Assessment.

(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*

(B) *who are minorities;*

(C) *who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;*

(D) *who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and*

(E) *who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.*

(2) *Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and*

(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.*

Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs every three years. Together with the State Rehabilitation Council's Evaluation Committee and research analysts from the designated state agency's research team, DVR began planning for the FFY 2016-2018 assessment in 2014. The results of the CSNA will be used to develop goals, priorities, strategies and actions for both DVR's State and Strategic Plans.

In November/December of 2014, DVR completed a series of assessment activities to determine the employment service needs of individuals with disabilities. These activities included: surveys to DVR consumers; representatives of organizations that provide employment services to individuals with disabilities; people advocating for individuals with disabilities; and individuals with disabilities that could benefit from employment-related services. Activities also included

environmental scan of data from sources such as the American Community Survey, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, and the Current Population Survey. This information was analyzed and the report was completed in September 2015.

There was a total of 1,000 consumer needs survey questionnaires sent to individuals with disabilities. In addition, a press release invited interested parties to participate in the survey. Both a paper-based and online version of the survey was provided to give respondents flexibility in completing the survey. A total of 266 consumer needs surveys were returned.

The link to the online survey was sent to advocates. These individuals were chosen based on their role with certain agencies or as a member of boards, advisory councils and committees who are connected to, and advocate for, individuals with disabilities. This included advocacy groups, disability organizations, Client Assistance Program, SRC and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) members, Centers for Independent Living, various state agencies, 121 projects, and VR staff. Both a paper-based and online version of the survey was provided to give respondents flexibility in completing the survey. A total of 348 Advocates responded.

In addition, a link to the online survey was sent to individuals and directors of institutions and agencies chosen because of their likelihood to have a connection with or interest in individuals with disabilities. This included community rehabilitation programs (CRP), supported employment providers, psychosocial rehabilitation centers, disability support services in the North Dakota University System, occupational therapy departments and directors of special education. Both a paper-based and online version of the survey was provided to give respondents flexibility in completing the survey. A total of 67 CRP providers responded.

For all surveys, responses were received from every region in the state with higher populated regions taking a greater share. Descriptive statistics and qualitative methods were applied for data analysis.

DVR also conducted a Pre-Employment Transition Survey in 2014. Due to the emphasis on transition services, the results were incorporated into this assessment.

DVR performs an ongoing analysis of data. There are monthly reports created that show progress towards employment goals, number served, number of referrals, rehab rate, and percent with significant disabilities. In addition, quarterly reporting also tracks goals for Business Services Older Blind, Client Satisfaction surveys and results of follow-up surveys conducted with individuals whose cases closed successfully. This follow-up survey tracks job retention six months after closure which is at least nine months after employment began. It also serves as an opportunity to assess if any post-employment services might be needed at that time. This ongoing analysis is used to identify trends which then generally require further analysis. Due to our relatively low response to our Client Satisfaction Surveys, we have contracted with an outside research firm to conduct the surveys. The expectation is that there will be a higher response rate and more in depth data which will be able to assist with changes in practice. Of the 266 individuals with disabilities who completed the survey, respondents did not have strongly ranked employment needs; none of the employment needs were above twenty percent, instead the employment needs that were unmet were spread throughout the choices. The most

commonly identified employment need not being met was workplace relationship training (15.5%). Other highlighted needs were assistance with finding and/or keeping a job (13.4%) and on-going support/support on the job (13.1%).

Likewise, transition-age respondents did not have strongly ranked employment needs. As with the others, workplace relationship training (11.6%) and assistance with finding and/or keeping a job (9.9%) was listed in their top three employment needs along with vocational guidance and career options (8.3%). Transition-age respondents had a lower average number of employment service needs not being met than respondents 25 years of age and older (0.9 compared to 1.5). Overall, a lower percentage of transition-age respondents (9.1%) say their employment needs are never met than respondents 25 years of age and older (17.4%).

The table below contains the major rehabilitation needs identified during the 2016-2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment with the most predominant needs at the top.

The needs include those identified by or on behalf of individuals with all types of disabilities including individuals with the most severe disabilities, minorities, individuals who may be underserved and individuals served through the state’s Workforce System. Individuals who are considered underserved are frequently individuals who have a mental illness.

The rehabilitation needs cut across all types and “categories”. No needs were unique to any one of the groups for whom this assessment was conducted. Rather, the unique needs are identified with each individual during the vocational rehabilitation process.

Many of the major rehabilitation needs are systemic in nature and apply one way or another to every individual with a disability who receives VR services.

Rehabilitation Need	Most Severe Disability	Workforce	Unserved & Underserved	Minorities
Workplace Relationship Training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assistance with Finding and/or Keeping a Job	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supported Employment (SEP)	✓		✓	✓
Vocational Guidance and Career Options	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benefits Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
On-The-Job Training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased Opportunities for Self-Employment	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transportation	✓	✓	✓	✓

Assistive Technology	✓		✓	✓
Independent Living Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical and Mental Restoration Services	✓		✓	✓
Transition Services – Youth to Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interpreter Services	✓		✓	✓

Based on information from the Department of Public Instruction in 2015, there are approximately 4,245 students who are between the ages of 14-21. These individuals could potentially receive Pre-employment Transition Services, Title 1 and/or supported employment services during the next one to seven years. Some of the major disability categories of these students include the following:

Primary Disability	Total by Disability	Age 14/15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21
Autism	332	130	73	61	29	22	13	4
Emotional Disturbance	437	195	112	90	29	6	4	1
Hearing Impairment	42	17	6	8	6	5	0	0
Intellectual Disability	443	136	82	84	53	40	36	12
Other Health Impairment	809	361	176	154	89	20	8	1
Orthopedic Impairment	26	9	5	1	4	6	0	1
Speech Language Impairment	244	124	55	37	25	3	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	1875	911	403	351	187	22	1	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	25	8	2	8	4	2	1	0

Visual Impairment	12	5	3	3	1	0	0	0
Total by Age	4245	1896	917	797	427	126	63	19

In order to provide these transition students with pre-employment, in addition to the services provided by DVR staff, DVR has entered into purchase of service agreements with local school districts and private providers to enhance or expand services.

Assessment of the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs

As part of the 2016 - 2018 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs, a link to the online survey was sent to individuals and directors of institutions and agencies chosen because of their likelihood to have a connection with or interest in individuals with disabilities. This included community rehabilitation programs, supported employment providers, psychosocial rehabilitation centers, Disability Support Services in the North Dakota University System, occupational therapy departments, and directors of special education. A total of 67 CRP provider surveys were returned. In addition a link to the online survey was sent to advocates. These individuals were chosen based on their role with certain agencies or as a member of boards, advisory councils and committees who are connected to, and advocate for, individuals with disabilities. This included advocacy groups, disability organizations, Client Assistance Program, SRC and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) members, Centers for Independent Living, various state agencies, 121 projects, and VR staff. A total of 348 Advocate surveys were returned.

An online version of the survey was provided with the option for alternative formats to give respondents flexibility in completing the survey. Responses were received from every region in the state with higher populated regions taking a greater share. Descriptive statistics and qualitative methods were applied for data analysis.

The surveys were designed to enable a comparison between Community Rehab Programs' responses and non-CRP responses to the same set of questions. Questions included met and unmet employment-related needs, barriers encountered by CRPs and allowed for suggestions for improving services and removing barriers.

Unmet Needs:

CRPs identified transportation as being at the top of the list of unmet needs, followed by support on the job, and assistance with finding and/or keeping a job. Advocates indicated transportation was the most significant unmet need.

Transportation continues to be in the top of the list of unmet needs. DVR is an active member of the ND Transit State Management Plan Committee. We will continue to advocate for increased services. We will also provide referrals and counseling and guidance to our clients on how to access the available transportation.

There are concerns with the need for assistance with finding and/ or keeping a job as well as support on the job.

About 58% of the CRPs stated they provide job placement and follow up. In addition, an additional 53% provide SEP.

DVR is working with providers to try to expand the services that they are able to provide. A pilot project has been launched to explore expanded SEP which will provide additional intensive training for providers and will result in policy amendments. There will also be continued education and awareness activities for the business community, lawmakers, service providers, educators, family members, and the general public. DVR will also continue to work with Extended Services Funding sources to ensure individuals are able to utilize SEP and access supports once the DVR case is closed. *Attachment (q)*

Barriers:

CRPs felt that funding for agency operations and services was the most significant barrier to their ability to provide employment related services followed by funding for staff and funding for extended services. Advocate respondents felt that there are insufficient community resources followed by funding for extended services and funding for agency operations and services.

Comments were made about the need for increased funding for SEP/Extended services and job coaching.

Outcome based job placement rates and guidelines were implemented October 1, 2012. Two work groups were established from the semi-annual provider meeting to review and update SEP guidelines and job development and placement services. A standardized fee for service was implemented with an annual 3% inflationary increase. During the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey, providers indicated insufficient funds for the level of intervention they were providing. Based on the results, guidelines and rates will be reviewed and updated. *Attachment (e)*

Additional discussion relative to community rehabilitation programs is found in *Attachment (e) - Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Rehabilitation Service Providers*.

(k) Annual Estimates. Describe:

(1) *The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.*

(2) *The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:*

(A) *the VR Program;*

(B) *the Supported Employment Program; and*

(C) *each priority category, if under an order of selection.*

(3) *The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and*

(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.*

Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, North Dakota has over 37,400 residents between the ages of 16 & 64 who report a disability and consequently could be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.

It is estimated that during the federal fiscal years 2016-2017, a total of 6083 individuals will receive Vocational Rehabilitation services. The estimated breakdown is 5774 individuals will receive services through Title I and 309 individuals will receive services through Title VI, Part B.

The table below shows potential eligible individuals who receive services through Title I, the estimated annual cost to provide services to individuals who are in a service status is \$5.3 million.

Priority	Served	Estimated Cost
Priority Category 1	2737	\$2,385,000
Priority Category 2	2800	\$2,438,000
Priority Category 3	546	\$477,000
Total	6083	\$5,300,000

NDVR is currently under an order of selection. Beginning December 17, 2012, DVR began serving individuals in Priority Category 1 on the Order of Selection wait list. As of February 2, 2014, DVR has opened all categories and no longer has a wait list.

We are estimating that there will be 309 individuals eligible for Title VI, Part B funds for a total of \$600,000.

(l) *State Goals and Priorities.* *The designated State unit must:*

(1) *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.*

(2) *Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.*

(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;

(B) the State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

(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 following annual goals and priorities were presented to the SRC on January 8, 2016, and were approved. The goals were based on the results of the 2016-2018 Triennial Needs Assessment which is described in *Attachment (j)*, public input gathered in December 2015, and VR’s managing for results strategic planning.

Goal	Description	State Rehab Council	Analysis of Triennial Assessment	Public Input	NDVR Managing for Results	Federal Standards and Indicators
1	DVR will increase the number of individuals employed due to expanded services to businesses.	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	Ensure VR services incorporate 21 st Century Labor Market Information and result in employment outcomes in high demand occupations.	✓			✓	✓
3	DVR will ensure Pre-Employment Transition Services will be available and sustained statewide.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	*Provide leadership that promotes competitive integrated employment as the first choice for individuals who are of working age.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* These include supported employment. Supported employment is also specifically addressed in *Attachment (n)*

(m) Order of Selection. Describe:

(1) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

(2) The justification for the order.

(3) The service and outcome goals.

(4) *The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.*

(5) *How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and*

(6) *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.*

Justification for Order of Selection:

The division projects total program expenditures for FFY 2017 of \$14,465,837. The total projected revenue from the federal grant required state match and program income for FFY 2017 is \$12,900,000. Thus the difference between program revenue and expenditures for FFY 2017 is a shortfall of \$ 1,565,837. The division with use estimated FFY 2016 carry over fund to fund the difference between revenue and expenditures.

The division’s projected expenditures include pre-employment transition service as well as activities related to providing competitive integrated employment to individuals currently receiving employment service in sheltered settings or for below the federal minimum wage. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction provided the division with information about the number of students with disabilities that will exit secondary special education programming.

Primary Disability	Total by Disability	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21
Autism	202	73	61	29	22	13	4
Emotional Disturbance	242	112	90	29	6	4	1
Hearing Impairment	25	6	8	6	5	0	0
Intellectual Disability	307	82	84	53	40	36	12
Other Health Impairment	448	176	154	89	20	8	1
Orthopedic Impairment	17	5	1	4	6	0	1
Speech Language Impairment	120	55	37	25	3	0	0

Speech Learning Disability	964	403	351	187	22	1	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	17	2	8	4	2	1	0
Visual Impairment	7	3	3	1	0	0	0
Total by Age	2349	917	797	427	126	63	19

There is an increase in the increase in the number of students with disabilities that will exit secondary education and have the potential to apply for VR service. This fact along with the requirement to allocate 15% of the division's budget for pre-employment transition service together pose a significant decrease in the amount of funding available to serve all adults with disabilities.

With input from the State Rehabilitation Council, the division will continue to implement and Order of Selection.

North Dakota VR entered order of selection in 2012 as a result of increased case service expenditures that exceeded the federal VR grant award and state required match in excess of 3.2 million dollars. Carry over of federal funds from prior years was depleted due expenditures exceeding program revenue. This pattern of expenditures exceeding revenue continues and is anticipated to remain consistent.

Additional Factors that influence the decision to implement an Order of Selection are:

1. The health of the State economy is factored in the determination to continue to implementation of Order of Selection. Historically in times of recession individuals with disabilities struggle to maintain their existing employment and gain access to alternative employment. A report by Moody's Analytics written in December 2015 provides the opinion that North Dakota could be headed for a recession. The factors included in Moody's report include falling oil prices, and an increase in the number of individuals filing to receive Unemployment Insurance Benefits.
2. The Board of Higher Education announced that tuition at the 11 post-secondary institutes with increase 7% for community colleges and 4% for the four larger institutions. These increases in tuition. Fifty three percent of NDVR's Case Service expenditures were for training in FFY 2015. This percentage is expected to remain consistent.

All eligible individuals with disabilities will be assigned a priority category, notified of their assigned category, and notified of their right to appeal that assignment. All necessary and reasonable services shall be available to individuals receiving services under an Order of Selection.

Description of Priority categories:

Priority Category 1 - Individuals determined to have a most significant disability

- (1) those who meet the criteria for significant disability, but are seriously limited in two or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
- (2) require multiple core services over an extended period of time (six months or more).

Priority Category 2 - Individuals with significant disabilities

- (1) individuals who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income; or
- (2) those who have significant physical or mental impairments which seriously limit one functional capacity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
- (3) whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time (over six months); and
- (4) who have one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from: amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

Priority Category 3 - Other individuals with disabilities

All applicants, including those in trial work programs, shall receive services necessary to determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services and Order of Selection priority classification without regard to the availability of funds or the implementation of the Order of Selection. Such services shall be provided on a timely basis in accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

VR is considering whether or not to provide discretionary services to eligible individuals, regardless of order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain

employment. This is a new option created by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This has been discussed with the State Rehabilitation Council, but public input has not been received and a final decision has not yet been made. If VR elects to provide these services, the plan will be amended accordingly.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order:

Services are offered to individuals based on their service status at the time of application, their priority category and their date of application. At this time, we are continuing to provide services to all individuals.

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved:

All categories are currently open. This chart includes individuals who are currently open and an estimate of new applicants during FFY 2016 and 2017. We are estimating that 6,083 individuals will receive services and that 1,034 individuals will exit services with employment after receiving services. We are also anticipating an estimated 426 individuals to exit services without achieving their employment goal.

PRIORITY CATEGORY	ESTIMATED NUMBER TO BE SERVED	ESTIMATED NUMBER REHABILITATED	ESTIMATED NUMBER TO EXIT NOT REHABILITATED AFTER RECEIVING SERVICES	TIME WITHIN WHICH GOALS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED	COST OF SERVICES
1	2737	465	192	29 months	\$2,385,000
2	2800	476	196	29 months	\$2,438,000
3	546	93	38	29 months	\$477,000

(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.*

(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*

(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 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation’s primary goal for the utilization of Title VI-B funds is to provide training and stabilization for an estimated 188 individuals with the most severe

disabilities per year. It's projected that during FFYs 2016-2017, 309 individuals will be designated as eligible for supported employment and 90 will become employed. During FFY 2015, 157 individuals were designated as eligible for supported employment and 46 became employed. The breakdown by disability of those employed is expected to be similar to that of FFY 2015: cognitive impairments – 61%; psychosocial impairments – 37%; and physical impairments – 2%.

Because the VI-B funds can only be used for supported employment services when there is an assurance of the availability of extended services, the level of usage is dependent upon the availability of other funding sources for extended services. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to work with the Behavioral Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, Division of Aging Services, County TBI Waiver Services and service providers to coordinate funding and services.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue agreements whenever and wherever appropriate with the twenty one community rehabilitation agencies to provide training and stabilization throughout the state. Extended Services will also be provided by the community rehabilitation agencies with state general funds, Title XIX waived funds, or other funds from sources other than state/federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

(o) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, working with the SRC, is involved in ongoing data analysis, soliciting input from the public, to include VR consumers and partner stakeholders, in determining the strategic direction of the agency that are inclusive of the goals and priorities in Attachment (I). The data sources used in identification and evaluation of the agency strategies include the Triennial Needs Assessment and information extracted that reports on the progress toward attaining the standards and indicators. DVR has contracted with an independent research company to conduct our client satisfaction surveys. The scope of the survey has been expanded and will now be done with clients who are currently open as well as those who are closed. The expanded survey will provide DVR with current data that can be used to identify trends and patterns and can be used to improve services for individuals. The annual case review process is used to further evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation counseling and guidance services provided across the agency. The Designated State Agency conducts biannual stakeholder surveys that provide important information to the agency with regard to emerging needs.

DVR continues to expand services to businesses which will result in an increased number of individuals employed and those able to maintain their employment.

Goals 1 and 2 in Section (8) of this attachment is specific to expanding LMI and out reach to businesses.

- (2) How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each state of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.*

DVR continues to support assistive technology as an integral part of each stage of the VR process. An assistive technology screening tool is used during the intake process with all applicants. When assistive technology needs are identified, further assessment and/or referrals are provided as necessary to include referrals to IPAT, the State Tech Act Program. DVR is a member of the IPAT Advisory Council and the AT Re-use Work Group. Staff at IPAT meet the highest standard of their profession, providing assistive technology assessment and training, and are certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America. IPAT maintains a blog with updates posted three times a week on their website. The topics of the blog posts rotate between the categories of AT equipment, AT funding, AT anecdotes, and staying at home through the use of AT. IPAT maintains an active presence through social media to include Facebook. In addition to the two demonstration labs, IPAT has expanded their Fargo presence to include a Home First Show Room that is a complete home environment that provides a homelike atmosphere for demonstration of AT. IPAT, the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, and DVR have developed a joint strategic plan to increase the availability and use of AT by those with blindness/low vision.

- (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.*

In North Dakota, 9.4% of the population is comprised of minorities. Native Americans are the largest of these minority groups at 5.5%. During FFY 2015 of all the individuals who became employed through VR services, 13.2% were minorities.

The breakdown of minorities employed during FFY 2015 is as follows: 5.5% Native Americans, 1.5% Hispanic, 4.7% Black and 1.5% Asian/Pacific Islander. These figures are about the same as last year and are expected to be similar during this next year.

VR administrative staff, including the agency Director, meets with the 121 Program Directors on an annual basis to provide a forum for discussion and support the collaborative efforts of counseling staff from both agencies to promote an increase in shared consumers.

Both the state and regional Vocational Rehabilitation offices provide technical assistance to the 121 projects, as requested. These four programs are also served by the Client Assistance Program. In addition to providing technical assistance, DVR has itinerant counselors who visit the reservations to work together with the projects to provide services otherwise not available or to meet with those individuals who prefer to work with vocational rehabilitation. DVR also

coordinates off reservation services for individuals and invites 121 Project staff to any training activities coordinated through our office.

Goal 4, Strategy 4.2 in Section (8) of this attachment is specific to supported employment 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).

DVR is committed to provide pre-employment transition services to students. Activities will include job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, training on self-advocacy, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, and work place readiness training and other services bases on individual needs. DVR has entered into purchase of service agreements with local school districts and private providers to enhance or expand services. The activities will include the following:

- Teachers and DVR counselors are collaborating to provide students with a foundation with activities such as career exploration, self-advocacy, interest testing, and work place readiness training using a common curriculum.
- DVR is partnering with schools and community rehabilitation providers to offer competitive, integrated work experience.
- DVR is partnering with the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) and schools to provide assistive technology training as part of the career planning process.
- DVR is partnering with Pathfinders, which is the Federally Funded (Office of Special Education Programs – OSEP) Parent Training and Information Center. The purpose is to support parents and assist students with increasing independent living, self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- DVR and DPI continue to collaborate at a local level with colleges, work force offices, community rehabilitation providers, independent living centers, and employers to provide transition fairs. These fairs provide transition students with hands on opportunities to explore and experience various careers.
- DVR and North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind have sponsored a weekend retreat with the purpose of providing intensive pre-employment career services to youth with visual impairments. Due to the success of this retreat, plans are to continue sponsoring this event.

ND DVR has become involved with Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE). PROMISE is a federal initiative through the Departments of Education, in collaboration with the Social Security Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Department of Labor.

PROMISE is targeted for transition youth, who are ages 14 – 16 at the time of enrollment and are beneficiaries of SSI. Due to the number of youth required to receive the grant, ND has joined a multi-state consortium including: South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The ND

agency partners include: the Governor's Office, Behavioral Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, Medicaid, Parent Training Programs, DPI, Job Service, the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, Benefits Planners and DVR.

PROMISE is intended to improve the education and employment outcomes of child SSI recipients and their families, and eventually lead to increased economic self-sufficiency and a reduction in their dependence on SSI payments. For the program participants who are assigned to the Model Demonstration Project (MDP), or treatment group, an array of services and supports would be available to the students and their families. This would include case management, benefits counseling, career and work-based learning experiences, and parent training and information, as well as other services which may help the student's education and employment outcomes.

Goal 3 in Section (8) of this attachment identifies additional activities related to services to youth.

(5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

The results of the Provider Survey conducted with the 2016-2018 Triennial Needs Assessment is discussed in Attachment (j).

DVR continues to schedule statewide provider meetings and has one staff assigned part-time to support the collaborative effort of DVR and providers to assist VR consumers to gain competitive integrated employment. DVR worked with providers in 2012 to establish policy and practice in the establishment of an outcome/results based payment approach to the provision of service related to Job Development and successful Job Placement. Within the contracts with providers are milestones for the completion of assessment service, development of a job placement plan that includes strategies to include AT, Job Coaching, an annual inflationary increase of 3% and other methods to achieve successful case closures by DVR. There will continue to be work to analyze and update policy and guidelines as well as payment rates.

In addition, DVR has implemented a Provider Service Agreement. The purpose of the certification is to enhance provider training in order for them to better meet individual needs.

DVR continues to work with the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Public Instruction, and providers in the development of an advanced job coaching module for providers to access additional training for their staff.

(6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

To be decided pending federal guidance.

(7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The North Dakota Workforce Leadership team has been engaged in developing and evaluating the success of strategic workforce planning. The Workforce Strategic Plan is developed by the members of the Leadership Team which includes Job Service North Dakota, Department of Career and Technical Education, Adult Learning programs, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the ND University System and the Workforce Division within the Department of Commerce. The strategic initiatives are presented to the larger Workforce Development Council. The Council recognizes the alignment of the activities listed below and North Dakota's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development. Subsequently, the Council supports the following strategies which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment based strategies:

- Engage students, parents, educators, schools, and businesses in a comprehensive career planning process.
- Increase stakeholder promotion of and employer use of work based learning.
- Build partnerships for future workforce needs and opportunities.
- Assess and analyze gaps between labor supply and demand to provide programmatic offerings.

(8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:

(A) achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

(B) support innovation and expansion activities; and

(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 goals and strategies below are based on the results of the 2016-2018 Triennial Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs conducted in 2015, public input, federal standards and indicators, recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council and DVR's Managing for Results Strategic Planning. They are designed to support achievement of DVR's goals and priorities identified in *Attachment (I)*.

Notations are made by the goals and/or strategies that include innovation, expansion and improvement of services and/or outreach activities.

Some strategies support achievement of more than one of DVR's goals.

Goal 1 DVR will increase the number of individuals employed due to expanded services to businesses.

Strategy 1.1 *Work with the JD-VRTAC to develop best practices related to business services.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.2 Reintroduce Rapid Response related to engagement with employers to meet the need of business to retain qualified staff that experience disabilities.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.3 Develop outreach approach to meet these employer needs

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.4 JD-VRTAC will research and provide ND VR with curriculum to train VR clients in effective Job Getting strategies.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Goal 2 Ensure VR services incorporate 21st Century Labor Market Information and result in employment outcomes in high demand occupations.

Strategy 2.1 Identify curriculum or materials for training VR staff on labor market information

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.2 Partner with Job Service ND to identify those occupations which prove to have the greatest growth in the next four year.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.3 Identify curriculum to train consumers about LMI which will assist them with making an informed choice regarding their vocational goal.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Goal 3 DVR will ensure Pre-Employment Transition Services will be available and sustained statewide.

Strategy 3.1 Partner with local school districts and CRPs to provide pre-employment transition services to eligible or potentially eligible students.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 3.2 Assign counselors to provide pre-employment transition services within each region of the state.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Goal 4 *Provide leadership that promotes competitive integrated employment as the first choice for individuals who are of working age.

Strategy 4.1 Facilitate the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities in managing the State's Employment First Initiative.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 4.2 Partner with four community providers and WISE and to pilot the Expanded SEP program.

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

(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.

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

DVR achieved or made substantial progress towards achieving the goals, priorities and innovation and expansion activities established for FFY 2014. Progress is described as follows:

Goal #	Description	Achievement Status
Goal 1	DVR will meet or exceed, at a minimum, four of the six indicators, and at least two of the three primary indicators	Exceeded Exceeded 5 of the 6 indicators including two of the three primary indicators in Standard 1.
Goal 2	DVR will enhance service delivery to youth.	Achieved DVR has 30% increased our participation in the summer employment. We have started pre-employment transition contracts. We maintain active participation in the statewide and local CoP.
Goal 3	Ensure VR services are available to meet the job readiness needs for individuals who are blind or experience significant visual loss.	Achieved We have included staff from the NDVS/SB with transition meeting and have coordinated with them with a weekend employment retreat for transition students who are blind or have a visual impairment. DVR also maintains 7 Vision Rehabilitation Specialists who provide services statewide.
Goal 4	Provide leadership that promotes competitive integrated employment (CIE) as the first choice for individuals who are of working age.	On-going DVR has planned and awarded contracts for the Expanded SEP project that will assist individuals with most significant disabilities who have an intellectual disability and are currently working for sub-minimum wage to become employed in a competitive integrated

Goal #	Description	Achievement Status
		job. Working with the Council on Employment of People With Disabilities on a survey for individuals who are currently in sheltered work to gain information on how many hours they are working and what their wage is. This information will be used to develop goals and strategies to address the needs of these same individuals to obtain CIE.

(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.

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The primary Supported Employment goals identified in Attachment (n) were to provide training and stabilization to an estimated 188 individuals and employ 50 individuals. We were able to provide training and stabilization to 157 individuals, missing the goal by 31. Forty-six individuals became employed, missing that goal by 4.

(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

DVR exceeded 5 of the 6 indicators, including 2 of the primary indicators, in Standard 1. We are estimating that DVR missed the earnings as a ratio to the State's average pay by 0.8% and missed Standard 2 by 8.3%. However, DVR had 137 more employment outcomes, the rehab rate was 71.37%, exceeded the percent with earnings at or above minimum wage by 26.847%, exceeded the percent with earnings at or above minimum wage with significant disabilities by 28.51%, and exceeded the difference between percentage of self-support at closure and application by 5.52%.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

During FFY 2014, innovation and expansion funds were spent on ADA, Business Services, Transition Services, Assistive Technology, and State Rehabilitation Council expenses.

ADA:

DVR continues to participate with on-going education. The regional offices have staff who are trained to support referrals and provide resources to employers and businesses in the community.

Business Services:

I & E funds were used to pay for civic and service organization membership, including Chamber of Commerce, for regional and state DVR staff. Funds were also used for booth registration at high-profile regional and state conferences and events. Both allow for higher visibility of DVR within the business community and by our individuals. They enable us to develop long-term partnerships with business owners and employers based on common goals, which should enhance recruitment and retention practices benefiting individuals with disabilities. We reclassified a position and assigned a Business Service Specialist (BSS) in Fargo and also reassigned counselor duties for a BSS in Bismarck.

Transition:

NDVR had transition contracts with providers and special education units where students were able to receive various work experience, including job shadows, as well as developing resumes and practicing interviewing skills.

Rehab Services Council:

Funds were used to advertise the SRC meetings and to provide travel and per diem to SRC members.

Assistive Technology:

The Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation controls and administers the funds made available through the federal Tech Act Grant and awards these federal grant funds to the Interagency Program for Assistive Technology. The Vocational Rehabilitation Director is a member of the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) for the Tech Act Grant. IPAT advocated for and received an additional \$160,000 for the biennium of additional state funds to expand services in western North Dakota, replicating successful programs in Eastern North Dakota to include the Home First Show Room and expanding the service of Certified AT Specialists. IPAT has a certification process for newly hired staff. Certified AT Specialists employed at IPAT are, in addition to their primary work duties, spending time to develop the knowledge and skill set of newly hired AT Specialist staff. The process of training can take up to 18 months. This process was developed due to a lack of educational opportunities in the state of North Dakota to produce trained AT Specialists.

(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.

(2) The timing of transition to extended services.

Supported employment services are available to individuals with the most severe disabilities in all disability categories including developmental disabilities, severe mental illness, traumatic brain injury, and physical disabilities. Services are provided by 21 providers. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation projects to serve 309 individuals with the most severe disabilities, using primarily individual placement in competitive employment.

Individuals with the most severe disabilities will be served and outcomes achieved through the implementation of the following activities:

Continued education and awareness activities for the business community, lawmakers, service providers, educators, family members, and the general public.

Targeting supported employment as an outcome for students with the most severe disabilities transitioning from school-to-work through regional transition services.

Coordination of the departments, agencies, divisions, organizations and programs whose activities have a direct impact on Supported Employment Services.

Identification of training and technical assistance needs based on provider outcome data.

Continue to require licensing for all supported employment providers which will include accreditation by a national accrediting body.

Continue to have semi-annual meeting with providers to provide technical assistance and training.

Continue to work with Extended Service Funding sources to ensure individuals are able to utilize SEP and access supports once the DVR case is closed.

Supported employment training is provided up to 24 months, unless more time is necessary for the client. In order to ensure continuity and a smooth transition, documentation must demonstrate that the individual meets the criteria for transitioning to extended services.

Current criteria for transitioning to extended services is as follows:

1. Substantial progress towards hours per week goal.
2. Satisfactory performance of all job duties and reasonable expectation it will continue.
3. 20% intervention or less for 2 months or intervention at a consistent level above 20% but not greater than 50% for 4 months.
4. Extended services is immediately available from sources other than VI-B or 110.
5. Final approval of extended services is determined by the funding agency based on a team approach that includes the client, counselor, provider and funding agency.

At least 30 days prior to the anticipated transition to extended services, DVR counselors should notify extended service providers and funders. This will allow time to determine needed hours of extended services and to obligate funds.

Documentation must show that the individual was in employment for 120 days before the counselor closed the case rehabilitated, and that payment for extended services is available from sources other than 110 or VI-B. During the first 60 days in “stabilized” status, DVR will continue to pay for services. During the second 60 days the Extended Services funding unit (DD, Mental Health or other sources such as the TBI grant or State General Fund) will begin to pay for extended services. If the individual’s employment remains stable after the second 60 day period, the DVR case will be closed as successfully employed, rehabilitated. At that point the individual will be exclusively in Extended Services.

In the spirit of Employment First and the need for competitive integrated employment for individuals with the most-significant disabilities working for sub-minimum wage or in sheltered employment, DVR is piloting an Expanded Supported Employment Project. The project outcomes will influence the amendments to SEP policies, practices, guidelines and payment rates.

Grants were awarded to four community rehabilitation providers who had applied for the opportunity. DVR has contracted with Washington Initiative on Supported Employment (WISE) to provide intensive on-site training and will also be available for technical assistance and individualized coaching for employment specialists throughout the 3 year project. The project began on July 1, 2015.

Appendix 1

Projected Baseline	PY 2016/FY 2017			PY 2017/FY2018		
	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)						
<i>Adults</i>						
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>						
<i>Youth</i>						
<i>Wagner-Peyers/Labor Exchange</i>						
<i>Adult Education</i>						
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>						
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)						
<i>Adults</i>						
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>						
<i>Youth</i>						
<i>Wagner-Peyers/Labor Exchange</i>						
<i>Adult Education</i>						
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>						
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)						
<i>Adults</i>						
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>						
<i>Youth</i>						
<i>Wagner-Peyers/Labor Exchange</i>						
<i>Adult Education</i>						
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>						
Credentials Attainment Rate						
<i>Adults</i>						
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>						
<i>Youth</i>						
<i>Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange</i>						
<i>Adult Education</i>						
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>						
Measureable Skill Gains						
<i>Adults</i>						
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>						
<i>Youth</i>						

<i>Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange</i>							
<i>Adult Education</i>							
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>							
Effectiveness in Serving Employers							
<i>Adults</i>							
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>							
<i>Youth</i>							
<i>Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange</i>							
<i>Adult Education</i>							
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>							
Combined Federal Partner Measures							
<i>Adults</i>							
<i>Dislocated Workers</i>							
<i>Youth</i>							
<i>Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange</i>							
<i>Adult Education</i>							
<i>Rehabilitative Services</i>							
		PY 2016/FY 2017			PY 2017/FY 2018		
	Projected Baseline	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance
State/Governor Education and Workforce Measures							
1							
2							
3							
Etc							