WEST VIRGINIA PYS 2020-2023

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a unified plan

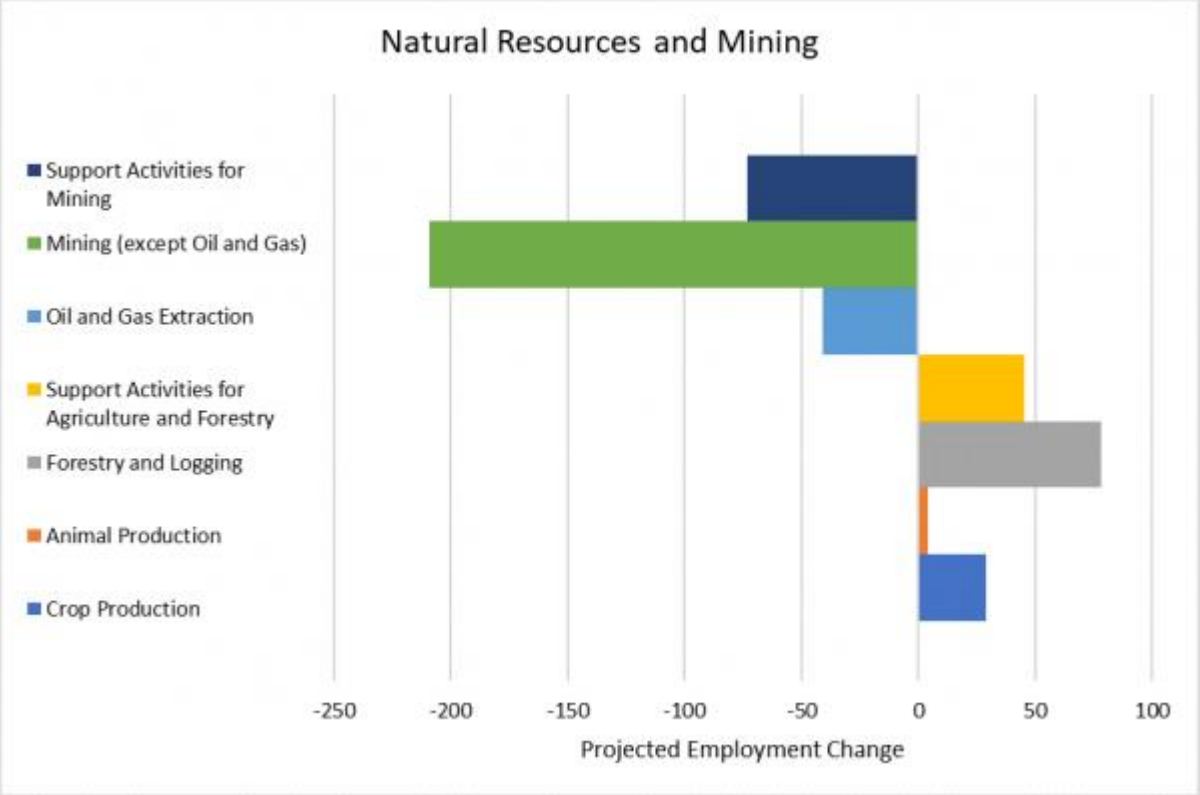
II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

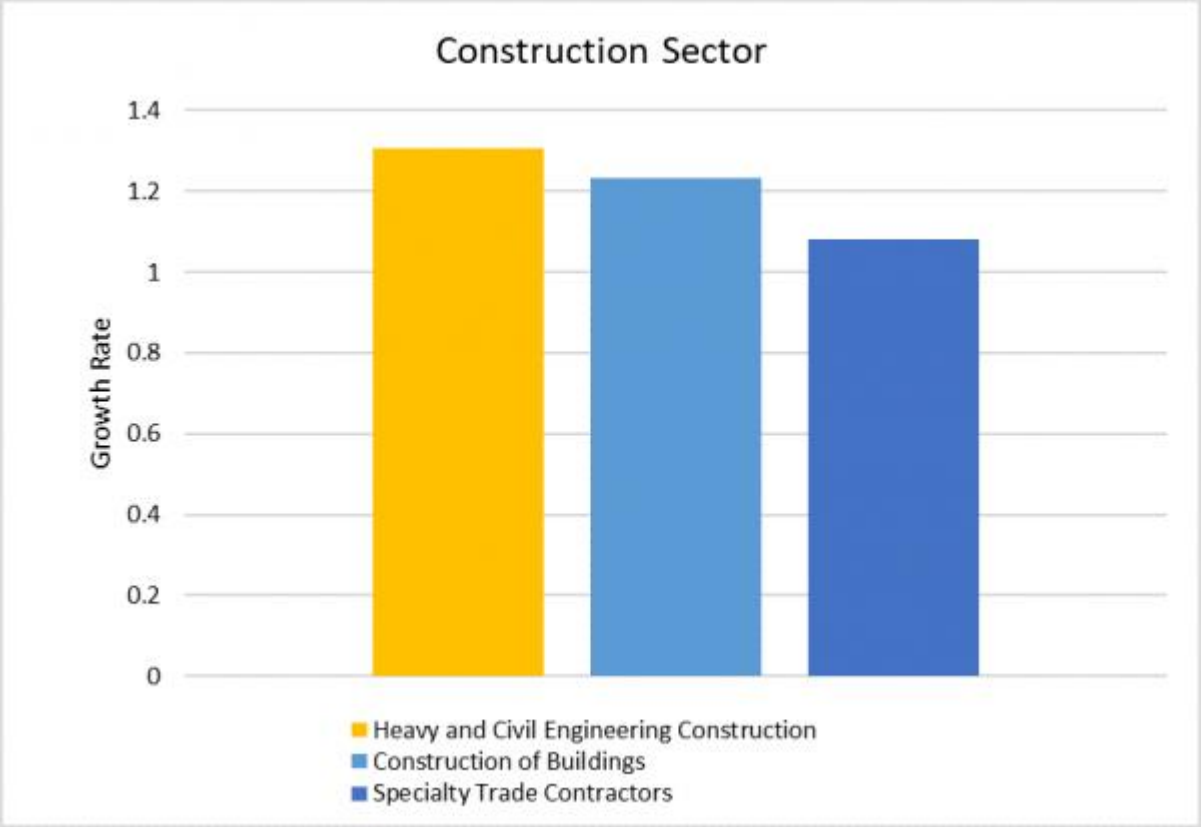
West Virginia's economy can be divided into 11 major sectors: mining and logging; construction; manufacturing; trade, transportation and utilities; information; financial activities; professional and business services; educational and health services; leisure and hospitality; other services; and total government. Between 2016 and 2026, many of these sectors will see strong employment declines while others will experience moderate growth.

Figure 1: Projected Employment for the Natural Resources and Mining Sector



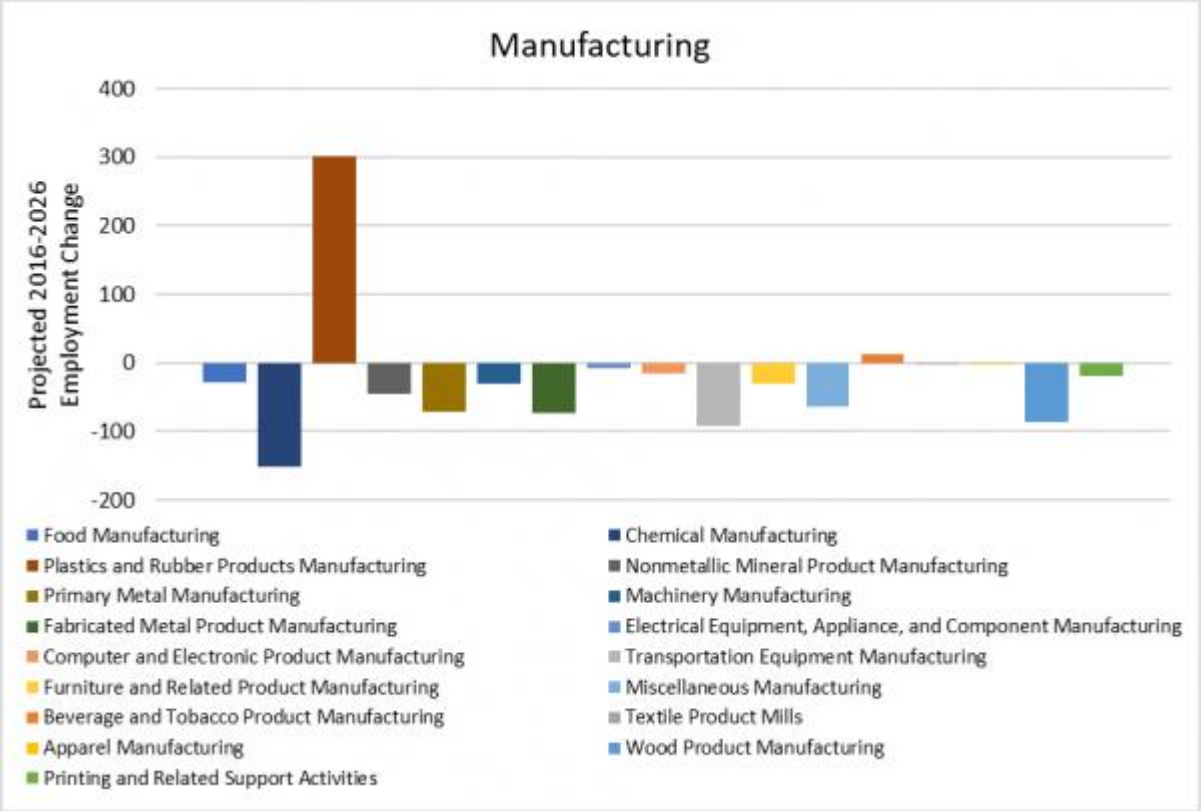
Several industries in the mining and logging sector are forecasting declines, with the most notable employment declines expected in Mining (except oil and gas) and Support Activities for Mining.

Figure 2: Projected Employment for the Construction Sector



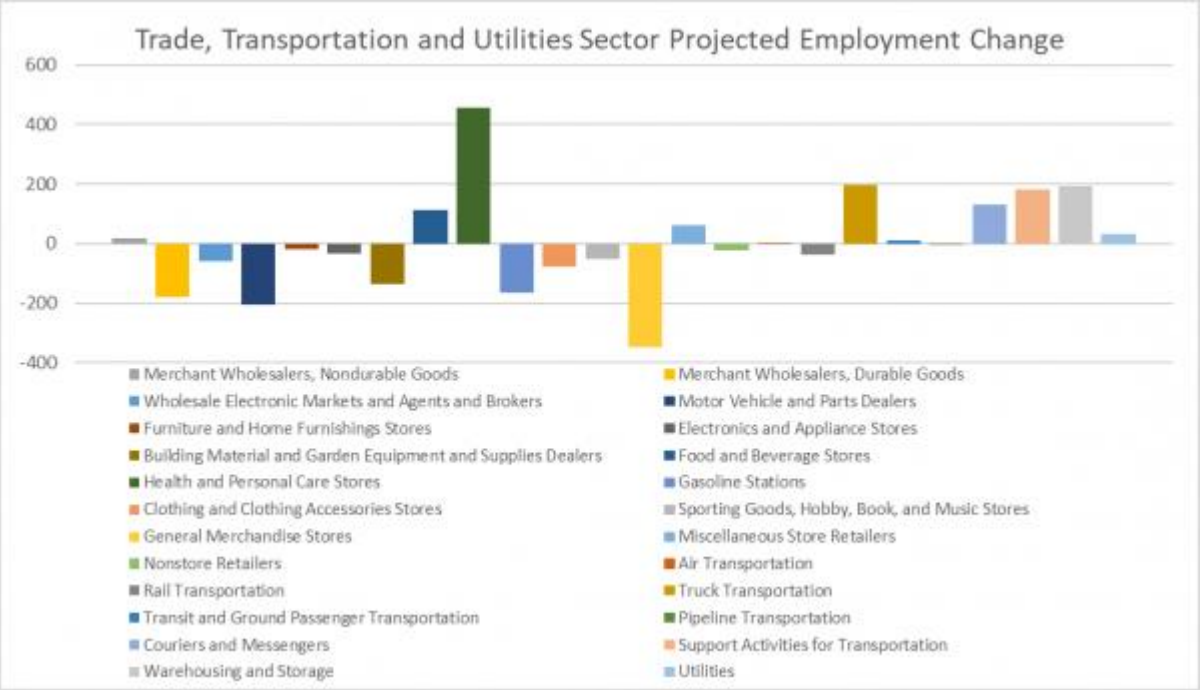
All industries of the construction sector are forecasting growth, the greatest in Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction.

Figure 3: Projected Employment for the Manufacturing Sector



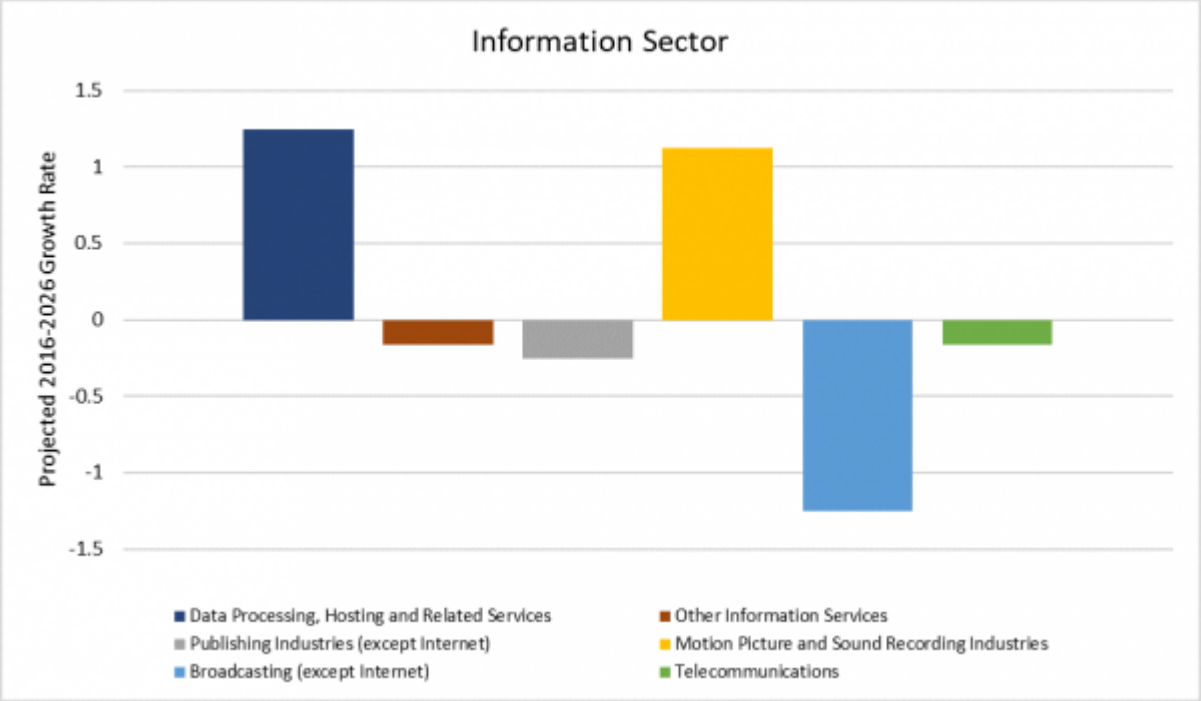
Employment in most manufacturing industries in the state is expected to continue declining through 2026, with the most considerable loss in Chemical Manufacturing. Employment in Plastics and Rubber Products manufacturing is projected to show sizeable growth, with only slight growth in Beverage and Tobacco Product manufacturing through 2026.

Figure 4: Projected Employment for the Trade, Transportation and Utilities Sector



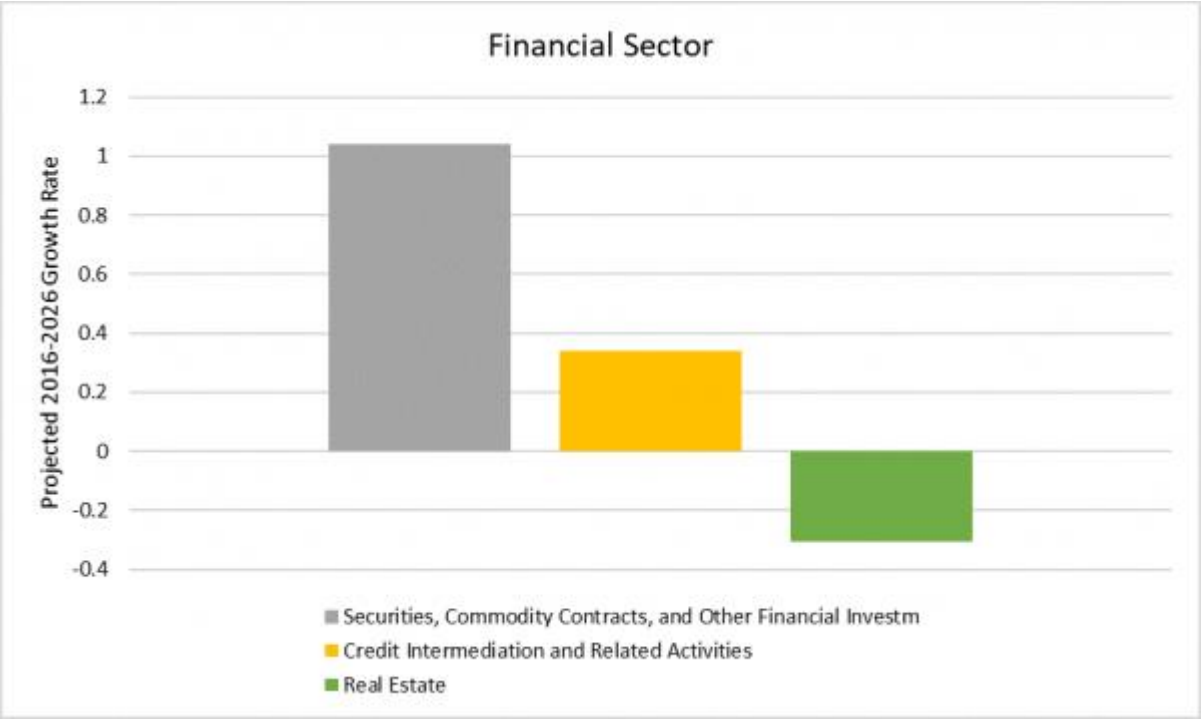
The major sector of trade, transportation and utilities appears a mixed bag of employment growth and decline. The strongest growth is anticipated in Health and Personal Care Stores, with lesser growth in Truck Transportation; Warehousing and Storage; Support Activities for Transportation; and Couriers and Messengers. The most notable employment declines are projected for General Merchandise Stores; Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers; Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods; and Gasoline Stations.

Figure 5: Projected Employment for the Information Sector



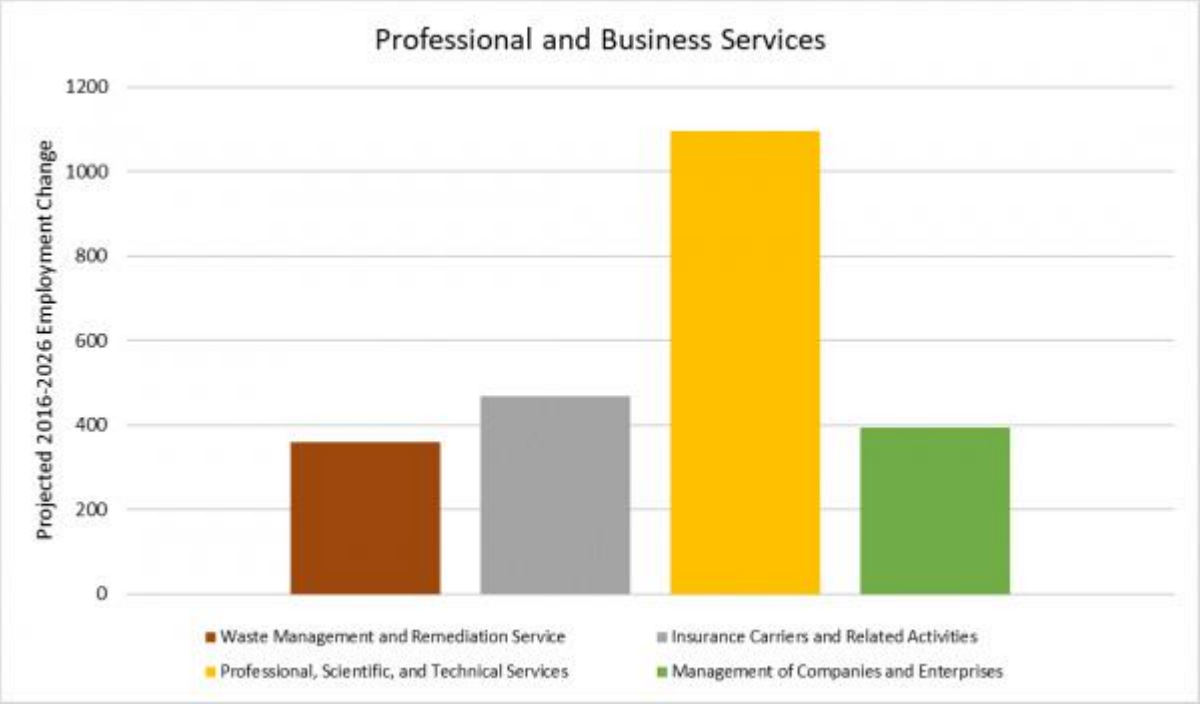
The information sector should see minor employment growth in both Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries and Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services. Employment declines are expected in Publishing Industries (except internet), Broadcasting (except internet), Telecommunications, and Other Information Services.

Figure 6: Projected for the Financial Sector



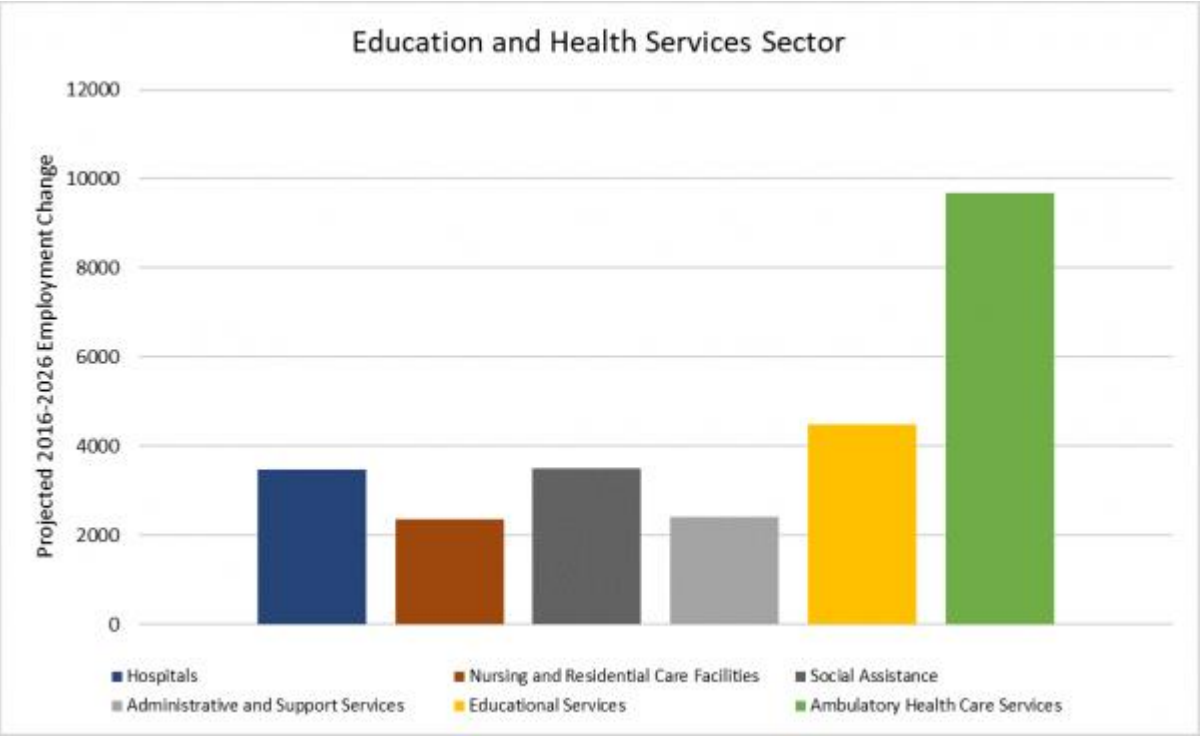
Within the financial services sector, employment growth is projected for Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investment; and Credit Intermediation and Related Activities. Real Estate employment is projected to decline.

Figure 7: Projected Employment for the Professional and Business Sector



The professional and business services sector should see steady growth through 2026, particularly within Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

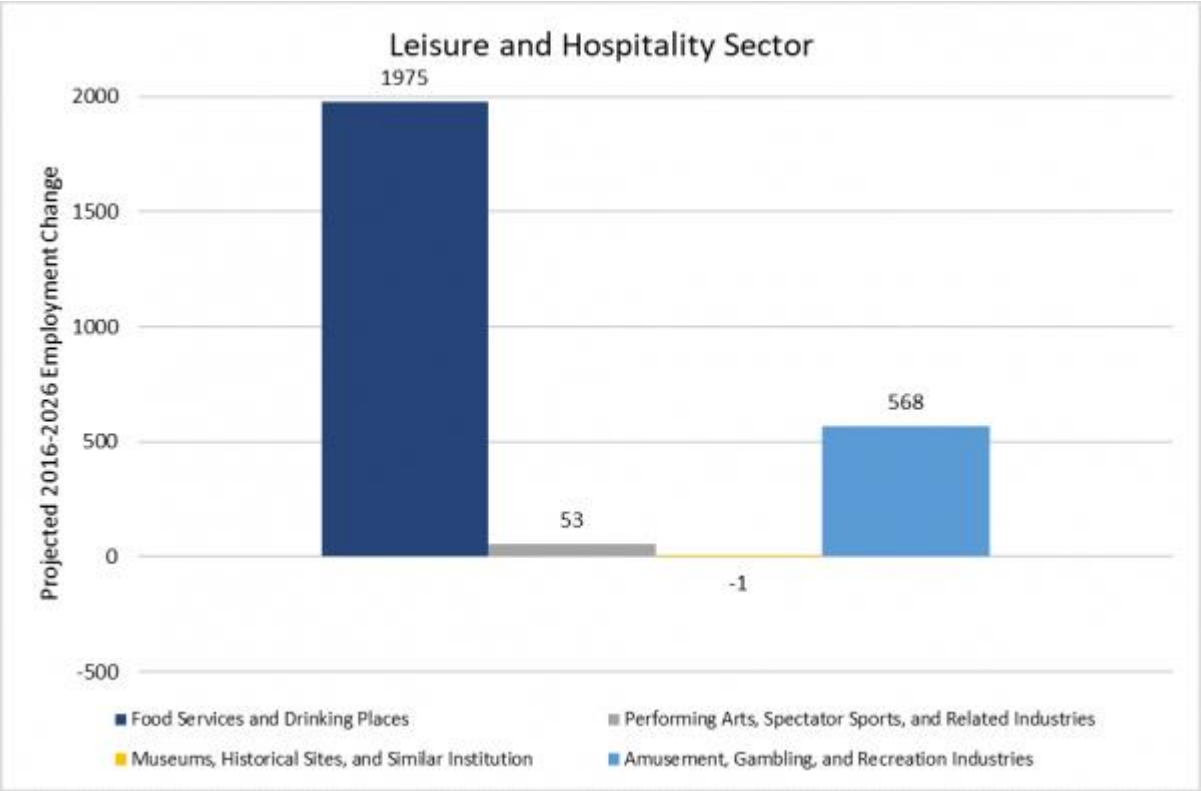
Figure 8: Projected Employment for the Education and Health Services Sector



The education and health services sector overall will see growth through 2026, with most employment growth in Ambulatory Health Care Services, followed by Educational Services. West Virginia's aging population as well as the opioid epidemic solidify the need for additional

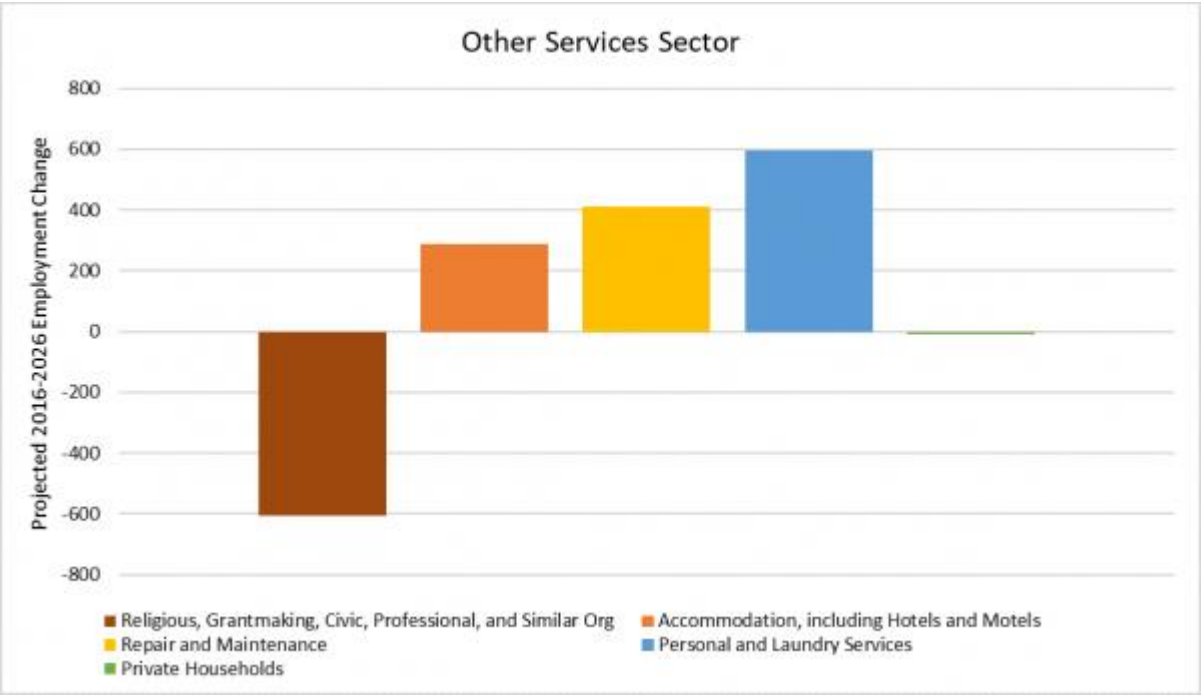
healthcare workers. Also, college enrollment numbers have increased since the state has legislated free tuition for some post-secondary education.

Figure 9: Projected Employment for the Leisure and Hospitality Sector



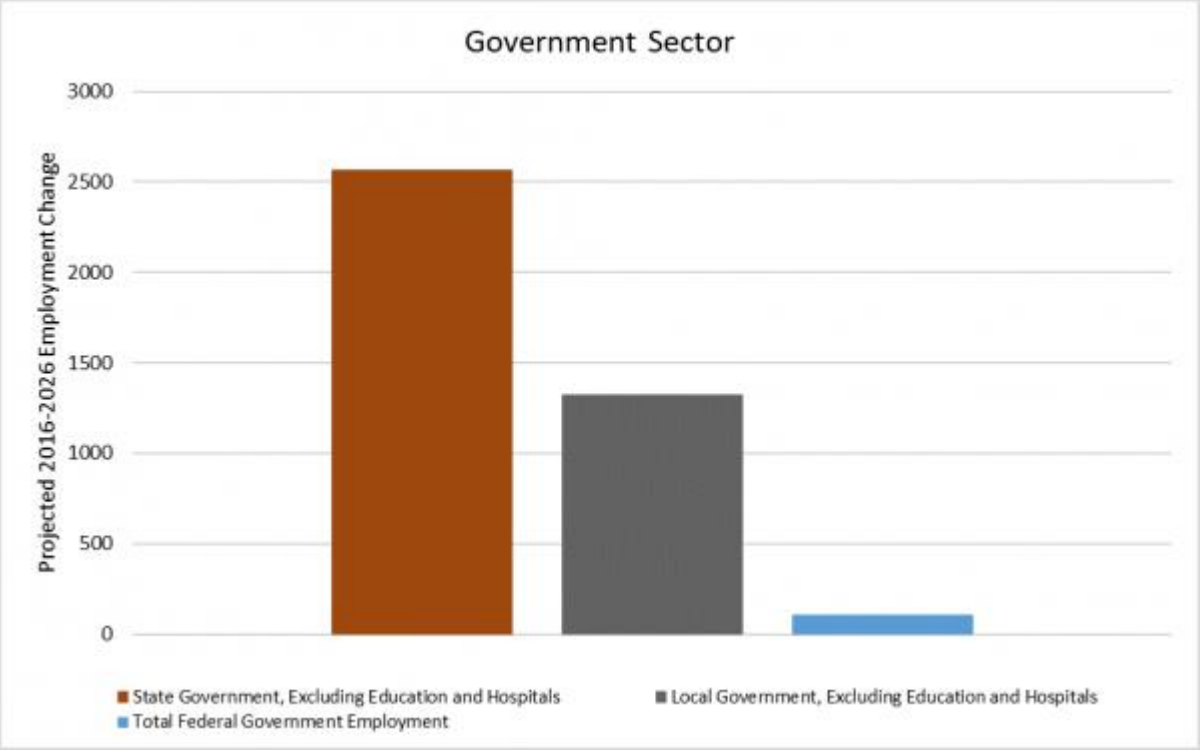
Within the leisure and hospitality sector, the strongest growth is anticipated in Food Services and Drinking Places, with lesser growth in Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries through 2026.

Figure 10: Projected Employment for the Other Services Sector



The other services sector should see notable growth in Personal and Laundry Services. Repair and Maintenance, and Accommodation, including Hotels and Motels. Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional and Similar Organizations employment is projected to decline.

Figure 11: Projected Employment for the Government Sector



Employment growth is expected in all major sectors of government through 2026, particularly in the State and local sectors.

Figure 12: Map of WIOA Regions in West Virginia



The Division of Research, Information and Analysis of WorkForce West Virginia produces both short-term and long-term occupational and industry projections. Short-term projections are produced annually, and long-term projections are produced biennially.

Figure 13: WIOA Region 1 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 1 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	7,921	9,814	2.2	1,893
Social Assistance	2,951	3,531	1.8	580
Waste Management and Remediation Service	393	451	1.4	58
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	358	408	1.3	50
Construction of Buildings	982	1,110	1.2	128
Declining Industries				
Broadcasting (except Internet)	259	228	-1.3	-31
Real Estate	604	586	-0.3	-18
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	261	255	-0.2	-6
Oil and Gas Extraction	99	97	-0.2	-2
Nonstore Retailers	153	150	-0.2	-3

Based on an annual growth rate, four of the top five growing industries in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Region 1 are found within healthcare and construction. The health services sector contains the greatest numeric growth of the industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Healthcare Services, and Social Assistance Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest declines in WIOA Region 1 are found in Broadcasting (except Internet), Real Estate, Publishing Industries (except Internet), Oil and Gas Extraction, and Nonstore Retailers.

Figure 14: WIOA Region 2 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.

WIOA Region 2 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,883	8,528	2.2	1,645
Social Assistance	2,969	3,553	1.8	584
Waste Management and Remediation Service	235	270	1.4	35
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,362	1,551	1.3	189
Construction of Buildings	969	1,095	1.2	126
Declining Industries				
Broadcasting (except Internet)	175	154	-1.3	-21
Real Estate	712	691	-0.3	-21
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	188	183	-0.3	-5
Oil and Gas Extraction	162	159	-0.2	-3
Telecommunications	470	462	-0.2	-8

Based on an annual growth rate, growing Industries in WIOA Region 2 are contained largely within healthcare and construction. The health services sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service,

Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest declines in the WIOA 2 region are found in Broadcasting (except Internet), Real Estate, Publishing industries (except Internet), Oil and Gas Extraction, and Telecommunications.

Figure 15: WIOA Region 3 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 3 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,459	8,003	2.2	1,544
Social Assistance	2,232	2,671	1.8	439
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	811	924	1.3	113
Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services	148	168	1.3	20
Construction of Buildings	821	928	1.2	107
Declining Industries				
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	82	78	-0.5	-4
Real Estate	781	757	-0.3	-24
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	309	301	-0.3	-8
Nonstore Retailers	91	89	-0.2	-2
Electronics and Appliance Stores	275	270	-0.2	-5

The top five growing Industries in WIOA Region 3 based on an annual growth rate are contained largely in health care and construction. The health care sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest declines in the WIOA 3 region are found in Miscellaneous Manufacturing, Real Estate, Publishing Industries (except Internet), Nonstore Retailers, and Electronics and Appliance Stores.

Figure 16: WIOA Region 4 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 4 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	3,478	4,309	2.2	831
Social Assistance	2,082	2,491	1.8	409
Waste Management and Remediation Service	438	503	1.4	65
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	672	765	1.3	93
Construction of Buildings	745	842	1.2	97
Declining Industries				
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	102	97	-0.5	-5
Real Estate	252	244	-0.3	-8
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	199	194	-0.3	-5
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	285	280	-0.2	-5
Support Activities for Mining	883	868	-0.2	-15

The top five growing Industries in WIOA Region 4 are contained largely within health care and construction. The health care sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest declines in the WIOA 4 region are found in Miscellaneous Manufacturing, Real Estate, Publishing Industries (except Internet), Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores, and Support Activities for Mining.

Figure 17: WIOA Region 5 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 5 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	3,498	4,334	2.2	836
Social Assistance	1,397	1,672	1.8	275
Waste Management and Remediation Service	292	335	1.4	43
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	156	178	1.3	22
Construction of Buildings	511	578	1.2	67
Declining Industries				
Broadcasting (except Internet)	96	85	-1.2	-11
Real Estate	283	274	-0.3	-9
Electronics and Appliance Stores	457	449	-0.2	-8
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	633	622	-0.2	-11
Oil and Gas Extraction	174	171	-0.2	-3

The top five growing Industries in WIOA Region 5 are contained largely within health care and construction. The health care sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering

Construction, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest industry declines in the WIOA 5 region include Broadcasting (except Internet), Real Estate, Electronics and Appliance Stores, Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers, and Oil and Gas Extraction.

Figure 18: WIOA Region 6 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 6 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Percent Change	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,247	10,218	2.4	1,971
Social Assistance	4,122	4,933	2.0	811
Waste Management and Remediation Service	620	711	1.5	91
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	2,070	2,357	1.4	287
Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services	251	284	1.3	33
Declining Industries				
Broadcasting (except Internet)	309	272	-1.2	-37
Real Estate	1056	1024	-0.3	-32
Publishing Industries (except Internet)	511	498	-0.3	-13
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	102	100	-0.2	-2
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	154	151	-0.2	-3

The Industries in WIOA Region 6 projecting the greatest growth are found largely within the Service- Providing Sector. These include Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Assistance, Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services. Declining industries include Broadcasting (except Internet), Real Estate, Publishing Industries (except Internet), Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, and Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing.

Figure 19: WIOA Region 7 Industry Projections 2016-2026

(Contains growing and declining industries by Annual Growth Rate.)

WIOA Region 7 Industry Employment Projections 2016-2026				
Industry Title	Estimated 2016 Employment	Projected 2026 Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Numeric Change
Growing Industries				
Chemical Manufacturing	307	607	7.1	300
Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,987	3,701	2.2	714
Social Assistance	1,998	2,391	1.8	393
Waste Management and Remediation Service	136	156	1.4	20
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	438	499	1.3	61
Declining Industries				
Real Estate	410	398	-0.3	-12
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	954	933	-0.2	-21
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	165	162	-0.2	-3
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	171	168	-0.2	-3
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	287	282	-0.2	-5

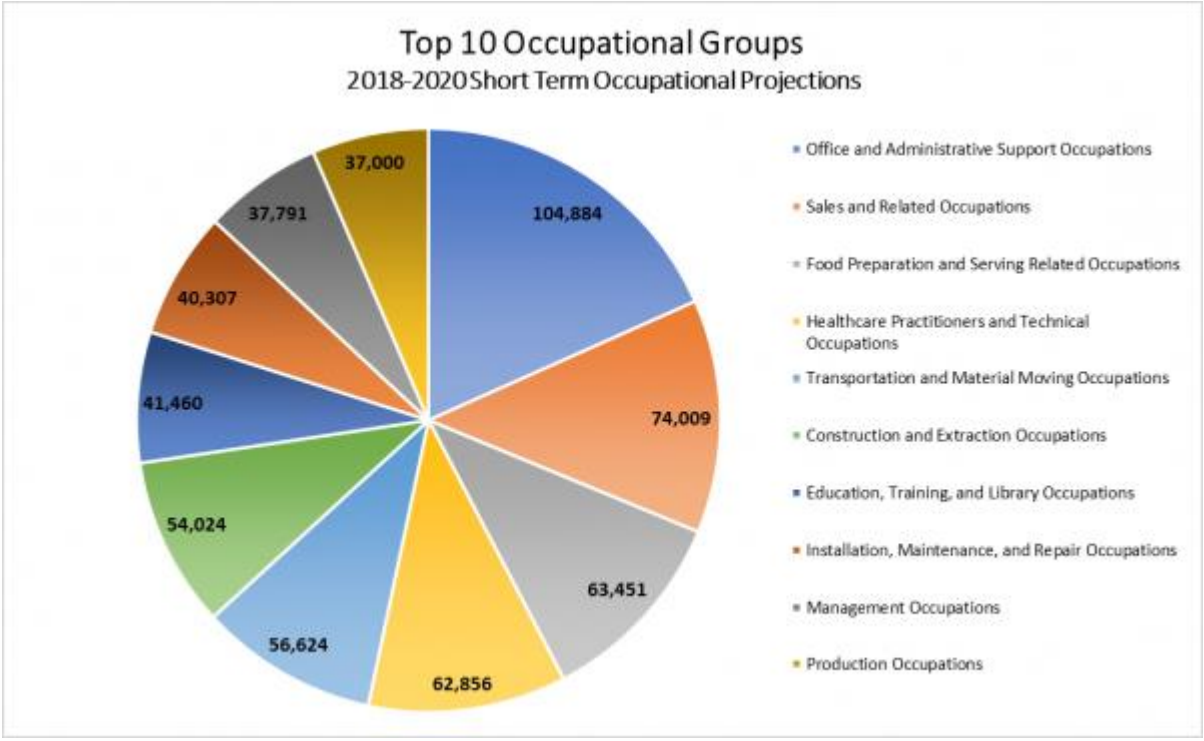
The top five growing industries in WIOA Region 7 are scattered throughout various economic sectors with the greatest increase within the Service-Providing sector. Chemical Manufacturing is projected to have the highest annual growth rate, while the health care sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service and Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction. The greatest declines in the WIOA 7 region are found in Real Estate, Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores, and Mining (except Oil and Gas).

Occupational Demand 2018-2020

Many outside of our state erroneously believe that most West Virginia workers are employed in the coal-mining industry, but this is hardly the case. Coal mining and other extraction occupations make up only a small part of the entire labor force. As a matter of fact, Construction and Extraction Occupations rank sixth among the top ten employment groups during the 2018-2020 period. Figure 8 shows that the largest employment group is Office and Administrative Support Occupations (104,884). This is followed by Sales and Related Occupations (74,009), Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations (63,451), Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (62,856), and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (56,624) rounding out the top five.

Figure 20: Pie Chart of Top 10 Occupational Groups 2018-2020

(Pie chart is divided into ten sections and contains employment numbers for these largest occupational groups.)

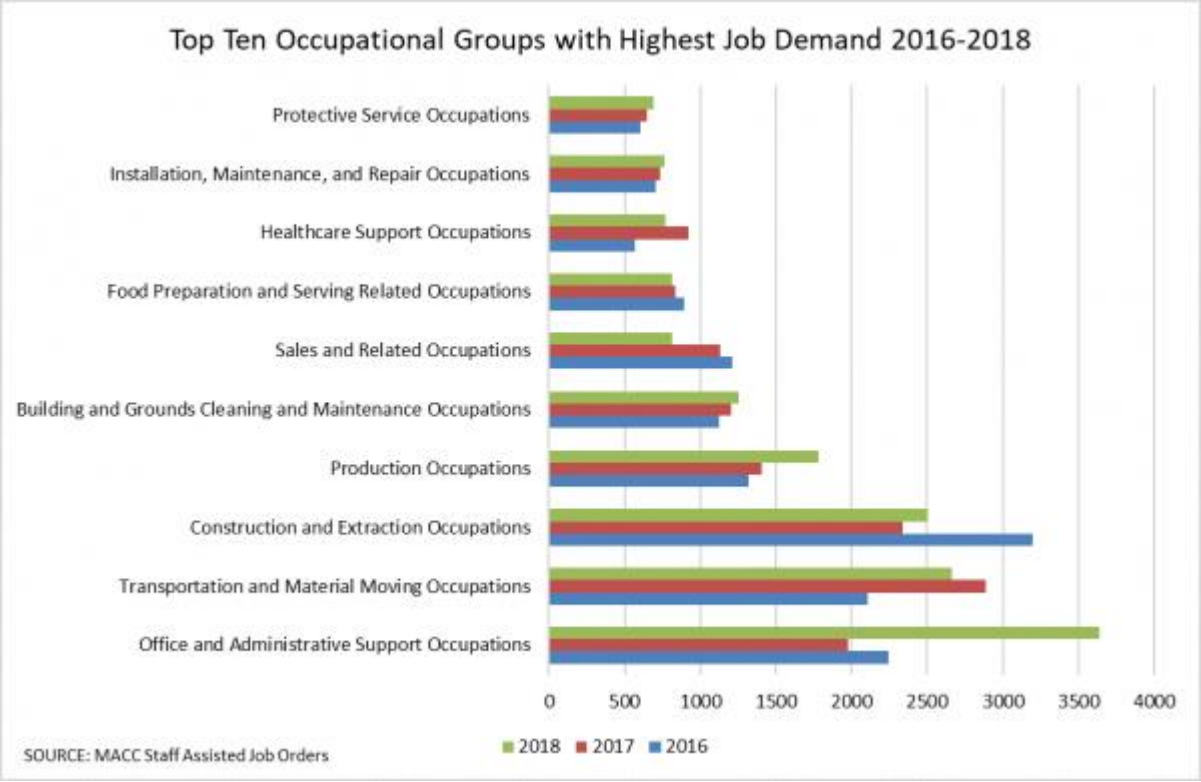


The years 2016 through 2018 have seen high demand for Office and Administrative Support Occupations (Customer Service Representatives, Stock Clerks,), Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (Driver/Sales Worker, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers), and Construction and Extraction Occupations (Construction Laborers, Extraction Workers).

Completing the list of top ten occupations with the highest demand are Production Occupations (Production Workers, Team Assemblers), Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations (Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners, Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers), Sales and Related Occupations (Retail Salespersons, Sales Representatives), Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations (Combined Food Preparation and Serving-Related Workers, Counter Attendants) , Healthcare Support Occupations (Medical Assistants, Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides), Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (Maintenance and Repair Workers, Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists), and Protective Service Occupations (Security Guards, First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers).

Figure 21: Occupational Groups with Highest Job Demand 2016-2018

(Bar graph reflecting demand for workers within Occupational Groups for the three-year period of 2016-2017-2018 according to MACC staff assisted job orders.)



Breaking down the data into greater detail, Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan were in greatest demand in Fiscal Year 2018, with 1,517 openings, followed by Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (983), Construction Laborers (874), Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (794), Customer Service Representatives (654), Production Workers, All Other (462), Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers (454), Stock Clerks and Order Fillers (411), Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse (411), and Security Guards (400). Rounding out the top 15 are Home Health Aides (395), Helpers-Production Workers (373), Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping (352), Personal Care Aides (348), and Team Assemblers (314).

Figure 22: Top 15 Demand Occupations in 2018

(Bar graph reflects the top 15 occupations requested by employers through WorkForce West Virginia in 2018.)



The top job openings by occupational group reported by WorkForce West Virginia in 2018 included Office and Administrative Support Occupations, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, Construction and Extraction Occupations, Production Occupations, and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations. West Virginia employers were seeking workers to fill such positions as Customer Service Representatives, Stock Clerks, Tellers, Medical Secretaries, Drivers/Sales Workers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Construction Laborers, Team Assemblers, Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners, Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers, and Janitors and Cleaners.

Figure 23: Job Openings by Occupation Group 2016-2018

(Table shows 22 Occupational Groups and the number of job openings within these groups for the years 2016-2017-2018.)

Job Openings by Occupational Group			
Fiscal Years 2016-2018			
Occupation Group	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	2244	1979	3641
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	2109	2884	2661
Construction and Extraction Occupations	3201	2337	2504
Production Occupations	1321	1403	1780
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	1124	1202	1253
Sales and Related Occupations	1209	1135	816
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	897	836	814
Healthcare Support Occupations	565	925	774
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	707	731	765
Protective Service Occupations	681	650	689
Personal Care and Service Occupations	595	402	464
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	748	852	451
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	517	510	446
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	411	389	378
Management Occupations	637	382	366
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	235	323	201
Community and Social Service Occupations	306	180	199
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	303	174	182
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	139	110	106
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	211	78	88
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	69	62	75
Legal Occupations	18	6	11
Source: MACC, Staff Assisted Job Orders			

The top five occupations with the largest annual openings through 2026 include Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food; Cashiers; Retail Salespersons; Office Clerks, General, and Personal Care Aides.

Figure 24: Annual Openings by Occupation 2016-2026

Table displays occupations with a high number of Total Annual Openings between 2016 and 2026. Includes Estimated and Projected Employment.)

Annual Openings by Occupation Occupational Projections 2016-2026					
Occupation	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	19,845	21,886	1,848	1,932	3,984
Cashiers	21,100	20,293	1,943	1,896	3,758
Retail Salespersons	25,343	25,837	1,620	2,031	3,700
Office Clerks, General	24,947	24,421	1,448	1,411	2,806
Personal Care Aides	13,024	17,274	1,209	911	2,545
Waiters and Waitresses	12,468	12,521	925	1,417	2,347
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	11,880	12,431	682	1,039	1,696
Customer Service Representatives	12,599	13,108	657	964	1,672
Registered Nurses	22,165	25,113	677	514	1,486
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	9,625	10,350	650	628	1,350
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	11,239	11,844	489	725	1,274
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	8,554	9,096	654	493	1,201

Nearly all of the top ten occupations (figure 13) ranked by annual growth rate are contained within three occupational clusters: Healthcare Support Occupations, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, and Computer and Mathematical Occupations. These clusters include such occupations as Home Health Aides, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Personal Care Aides, Statisticians; Physician Assistants, and Operations Research Analysts.

Figure 25: Annual Job Growth Rate for Select Occupations 2016-2026

(Table contains top ten occupations by Annual Growth rate for the years 2016-2026.)

Annual Job Growth Rate for Selected Occupations Occupational Projections 2016-2026				
Occupation	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings	Annual Growth Rate
Home Health Aides	261	217	616	3.3
Occupational Therapy Assistants	20	29	61	3.0
Nurse Practitioners	24	36	96	2.9
Personal Care Aides	1,209	911	2,545	2.9
Statisticians	3	7	14	2.7
Physician Assistants	14	29	64	2.6
Operations Research Analysts	6	12	26	2.6
Software Developers, Applications	20	72	129	2.6
Physical Therapist Assistants	38	65	125	2.5
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	70	73	187	2.3

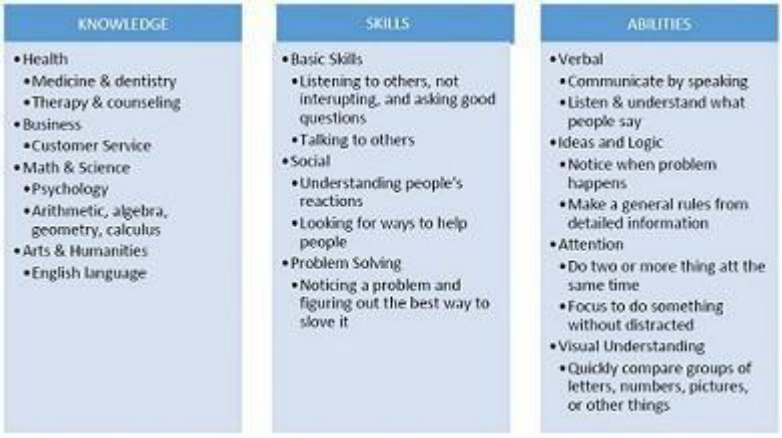
In general, employers assess employees based on three categories: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.

With fast growing technology and globalized trends dominating the workplace, knowledge is imperative. According to the late management guru Peter Drucker, "Today, knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement." It is always a basic need for everyone. If someone has a better knowledge base, he or she will acquire confidence and work more effectively. That's why employers prefer their employees to be knowledgeable in order to perform a job properly.

Employers are also willing to send employees to advanced training classes, because "An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest" (Benjamin Franklin).

Figure 26: Model Knowledge, Skills, & Ability for Registered Nurse

(Figure 26 shows the top Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities needed for Registered Nurses.)



With the intensive growth of Healthcare and Social Assistance industries through 2022, the need for education and higher—skill workers is anticipated. Figure 26 shows, that for a nurse, therapist, or physician assistant, knowledge of medicine is a must (ranks 86 to 98 out of 100). Fluent English is necessary to understand medical terminology and communicate with patients and medical staff.

Customer and Personal Services knowledge is also important for Registered Nurses and Licensed practical nurse (86 of 100) and Physical Therapists (87 of 100) because of the close relationships formed between nurse and patient.

Figure 27: Knowledge Assessment for Top 5 Healthcare Occupations

(Figure 27 assesses the knowledge needed for the top five healthcare occupations.)

Knowledge	Registered Nurses	Occupational Therapists	Licensed Nurses	Physical Therapists	Physician Assistants
Customer & Personal Services	86	76	86	87	83
English Languages	81	82	82	77	84
Psychology	84	92	82	83	87
Medicine & Dentistry	89	86	92	93	98
Therapy & Counseling	78	92	75	82	84

Similarly, figure 28 shows that Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Programming Skills are essential for people working in the computer science field (rank from 70—90 of 100). However, several skills in certain jobs are not evaluated depending on the field and skill value. Table 3 shows only the most required skills that rank from 70 to 100. The higher ranking, the more important the skill.

Figure 28: Skill Assessment for Top 5 Computer Occupations

(Figure 28 provides skills assessment for the top five computer-related occupations.)

Skills	User Support Specialist 15-1151	System Analysts 15-1121	Programmer 15-1131	Software developers 15-1132	Network Admins 15-1142
Analysis		70	70	75	75
Active Listening	80	70	70		70
Speaking	80	70			70
Critical Thinking	75	75	72	70	75
Reading Comprehension	78	70	80		75
Complex Problem Solving	70		72	78	72
Programming	n/a	n/a	90	78	70

Numerous occupations in West Virginia require licensing. This is to ensure the competency of those practicing these professions, and in many cases the safety of those utilizing their services. There are approximately 110 occupations that require licensure in the State of West Virginia, eleven of which are in-demand occupations. The majority of these In-demand occupations are found in the healthcare field, such as Physician Assistant, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Pharmacist, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiologic Technologist, and Dental Hygienist. The remaining in-demand occupations that require licensing include Accountant, Attorney, Elementary School Teacher, and Social Worker.

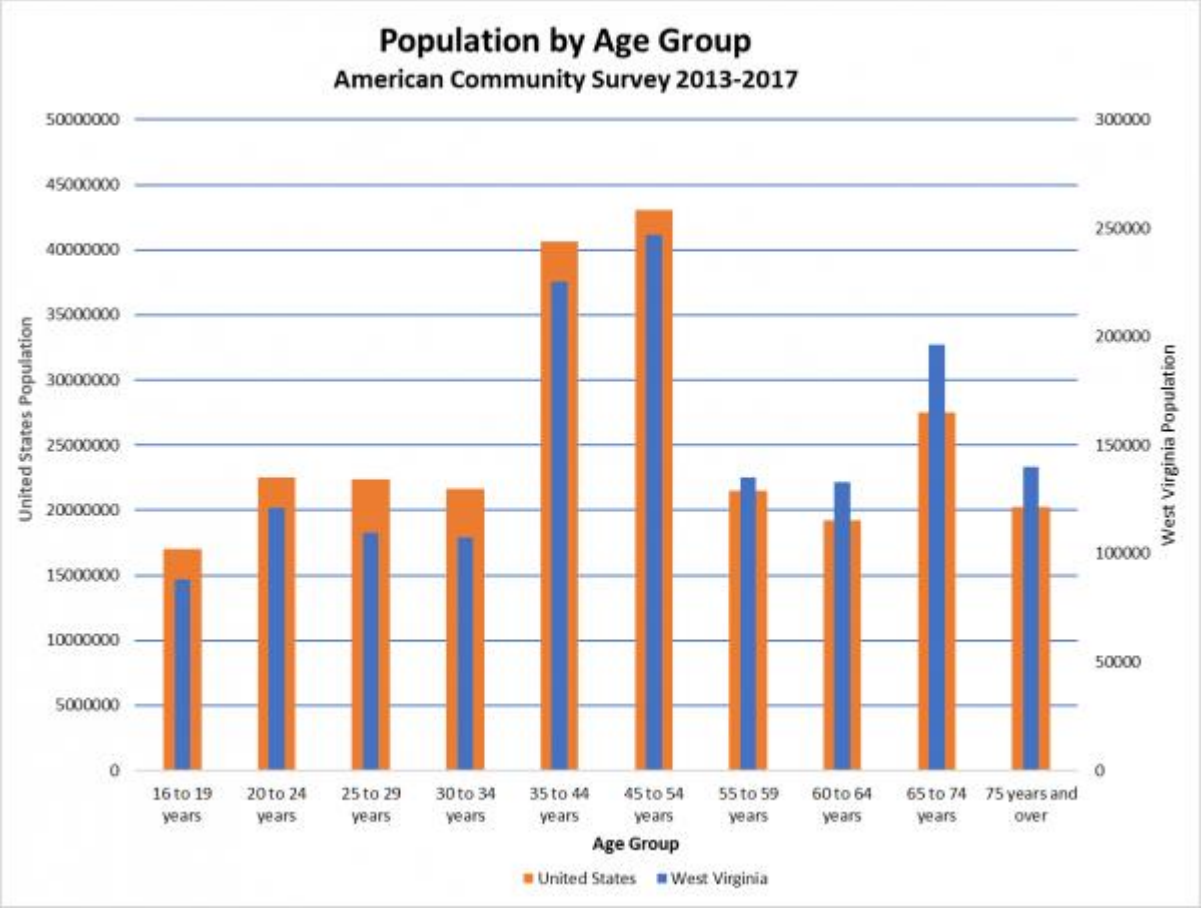
Employment and Unemployment

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

Demographics of the State's Economy

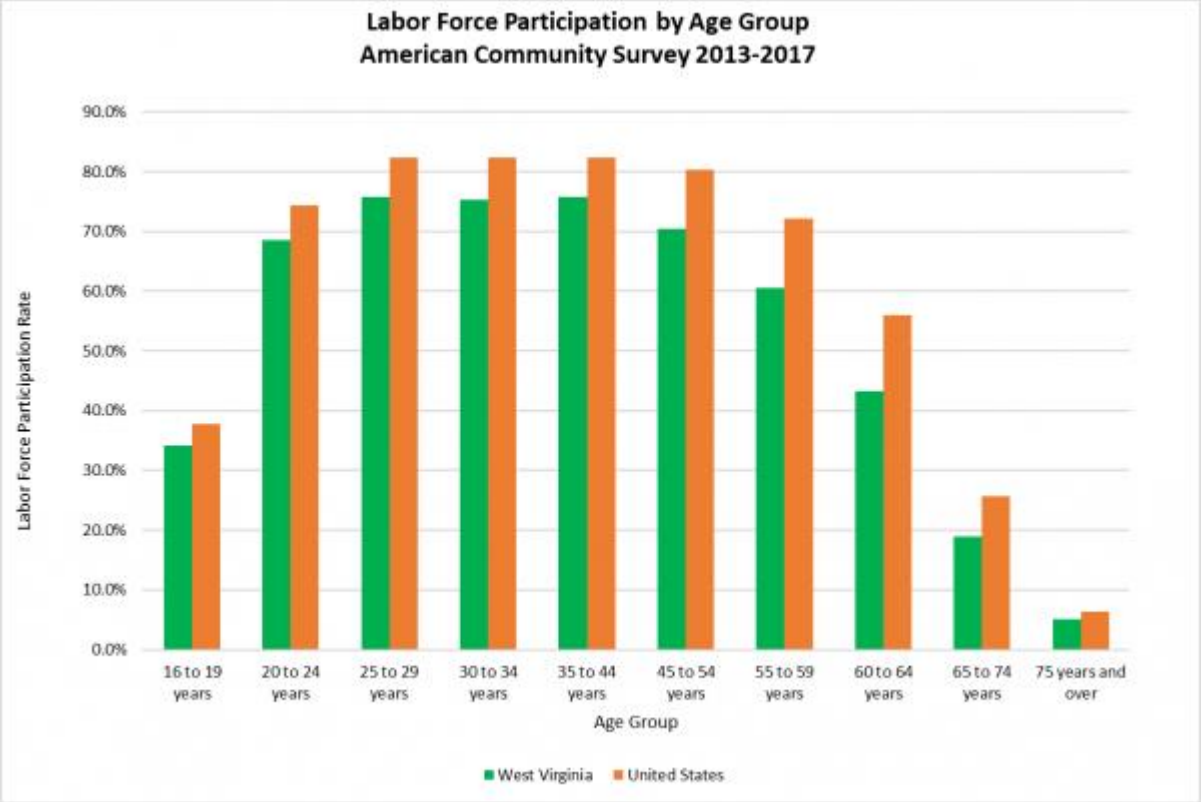
Age

Figure 29: Population by Age Group



The U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 5-year estimates American Community Survey lists West Virginia's population 16 years of age and older at 1,503,051. Approximately 53.6 percent of this total is in the labor force. The employment to population ratio is 49.7 percent, while the unemployment rate for this population is 7.2 percent.

Figure 30:Labor Force Participation by Age Group



West Virginians aged 16 to 19 are estimated to number 88,215, 34.2 percent in the labor force. The employment to population ratio for this group is 26.3 percent, and the unemployment rate is 23.0 percent, the highest unemployment rate among all age groups. Many teenagers have difficulty finding or keeping employment because of lack of work experience, and because some employers are unwilling to hire teens due to labor laws and the inconvenience of scheduling around school functions and extracurricular activities. According to WorkForce West Virginia, in 2016, the number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits was 31.This number fell to 18 in 2017.

The group containing those 20 to 24 years of age is estimated at 121,171. Of these, 68.5 percent are in the labor force. The employment to population ratio for this group is 59.3 percent, while the unemployment rate is 13.4 percent. In 2016, 937 unemployed in this age group exhausted their unemployment benefits. In 2017, the number fell to 508.

The group containing residents 25 to 29 years old is estimated at 109,573. The labor force participation rate is 75.7 percent, tied with the 35 to 44 years age group for the highest among the established age groups. The employment to population ratio is 67.8 percent, while the unemployment rate for this group is 10.2 percent. In 2016, the number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits was 1,690. This number fell to 991 in 2017.

West Virginians aged 30 to 34 years are estimated at 107,256. The labor force participation rate is 75.3 percent, and the employment to population ratio is 69.3 percent. The unemployment rate is 7.6 percent. The number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 1,791. This number fell to 1,141 in 2017.

The age group of those 35 to 44 years old contained 225,425 residents. The labor force participation rate is 75.7 percent. The employment to population ratio is 71.0 percent, the highest among the established age groups. The unemployment rate is 6.1 percent. The number

of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 3,844. This number declined to 2,497 in 2017 but remained the highest among all age groups.

The group containing those ages 45 to 54 years is estimated at 247,043. The labor force participation rate is 70.5 percent, and the employment to population ratio is 67.1 percent. The unemployment rate for this age group is 4.7 percent. The number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 3,617. This number fell to 2,479 in 2017.

The group containing residents ages 55 to 59 is estimated at 135,068. The labor force participation rate is 60.6 percent and the employment to population ratio is 58.3 percent. The unemployment rate is 3.8 percent. The number of unemployed in this age bracket who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 1,677. This number fell to 1,169 in 2017.

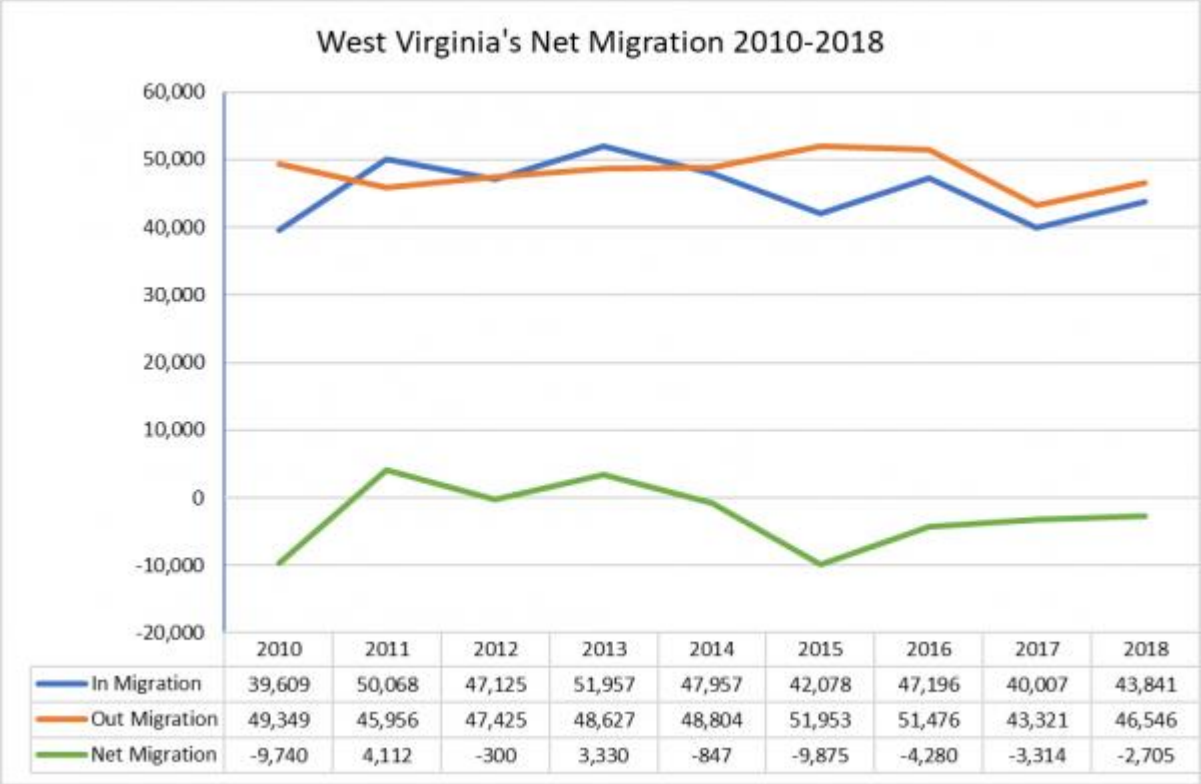
West Virginians aged 60 to 64 years numbered 132,974, with a labor force participation rate of 43.3 percent. The employment to population ration is 41.8 percent, with an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent. The number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 1,260. This number fell to 871 in 2017.

The group containing those ages 65 to 74 years of age is estimated at 196,401, with a labor force participation rate of 19.0 percent. The employment to population ratio is 18.4 percent, and the unemployment rate is 3.1 percent, the lowest among all the age groups. The number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 692. This number fell to 545 in 2017.

The number of West Virginia residents ages 75 and over is estimated at 139,925. The labor force participation rate is 5.1 percent, and the employment to population ratio is 4.9 percent. The unemployment rate is 3.2 percent. The number of unemployed in this age group who exhausted their benefits in 2016 was 83. This number rose to 93 in 2017, the only age group to see an increase.

West Virginia's Net Migration

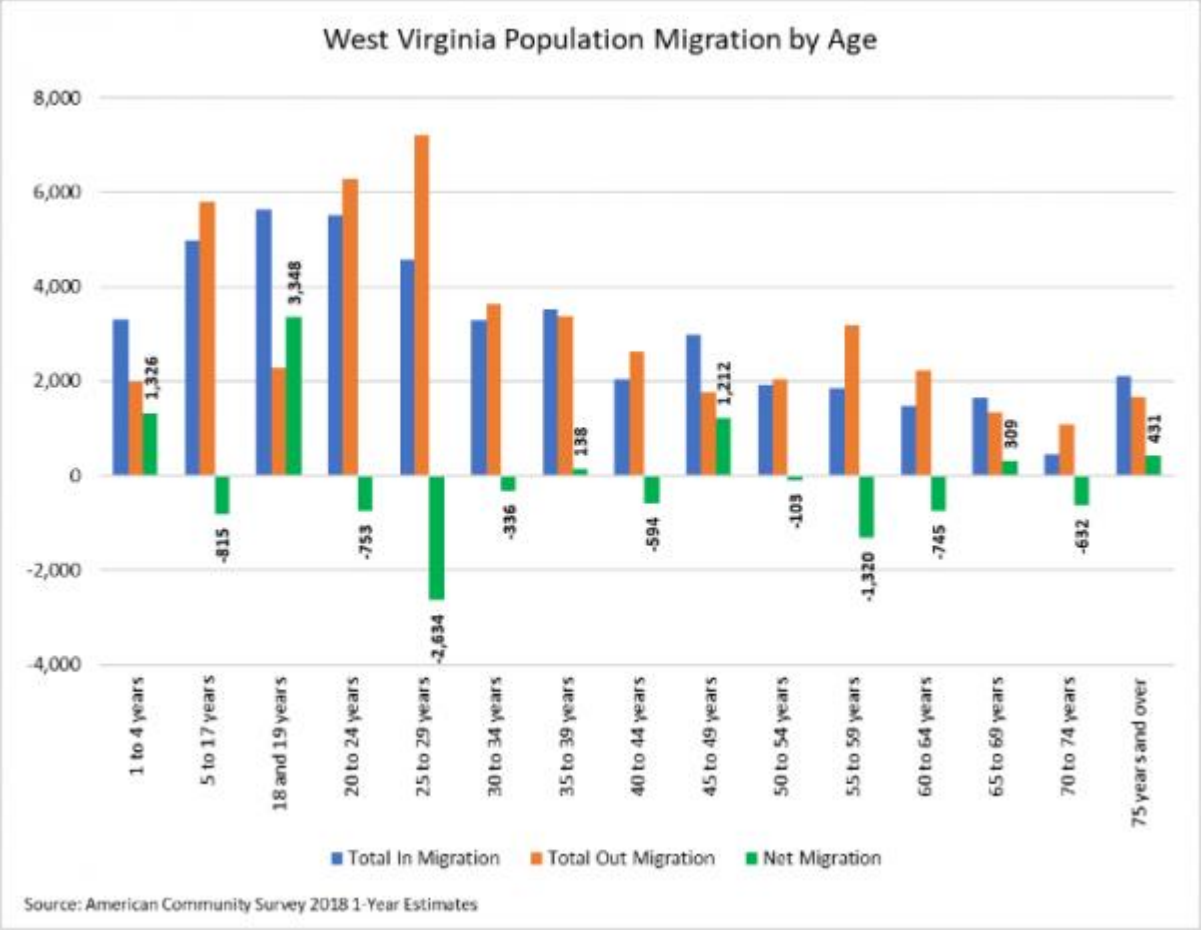
Figure 31: West Virginia's Net Migration 2010-2018



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In Migration	39,609	50,068	47,125	51,957	47,957	42,078	47,196	40,007	43,841
Out Migration	49,349	45,956	47,425	48,627	48,804	51,953	51,476	43,321	46,546
Net Migration	-9,740	4,112	-300	3,330	-847	-9,875	-4,280	-3,314	-2,705

Between 2010 and 2018, West Virginia experienced an increase of 4,232 in in migration and a decline of 2,803 in out migration. Despite this positive statistic, in 2018, out migration (46,456) was still greater than in migration (43,841)., with a difference of 2,705., thus contributing to the state's overall population decline.

Figure 32: West Virginia's Population Migration by Age



The age group of 25 to 29 year olds experienced the greatest out migration. It appears that many West Virginia residents leave the state to seek employment after completing their education.

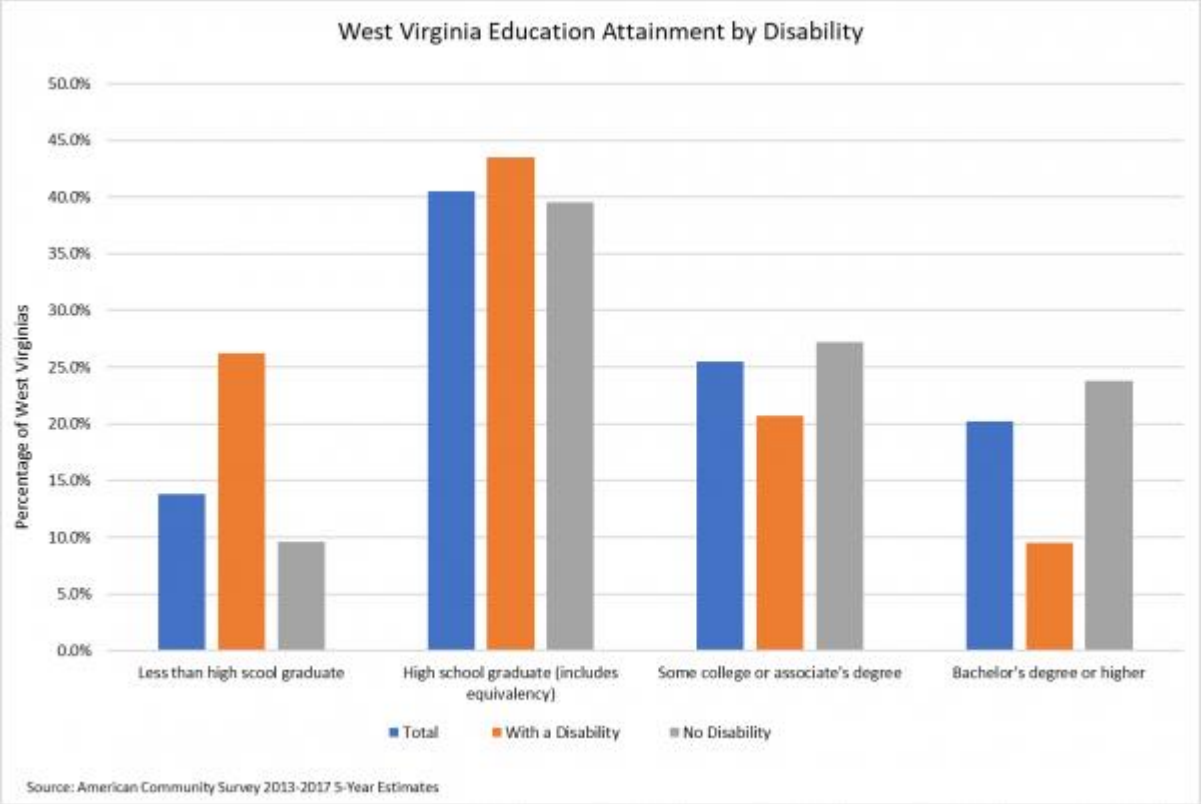
Disability

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 American Community Survey, West Virginia's total civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years of age and older is estimated at 1,474,814, with 337,478 having a disability and 1,137,336 having no disability. Of this total noninstitutionalized population, 50.6 percent are employed. The percentage of those with some form of disability who are employed is 17.9 percent. The percentage of those with no disability who are employed is estimated to be 60.4 percent.

The percent of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population not in the labor force is estimated at 45.4 percent. The percentage of those with some form of disability who are not in the labor force is 79.5 percent. The employed population age 16 and over is estimated to be 746,956. Of this number, 60,280 are estimated to have a disability, while 686,676 are estimated as having no disability.

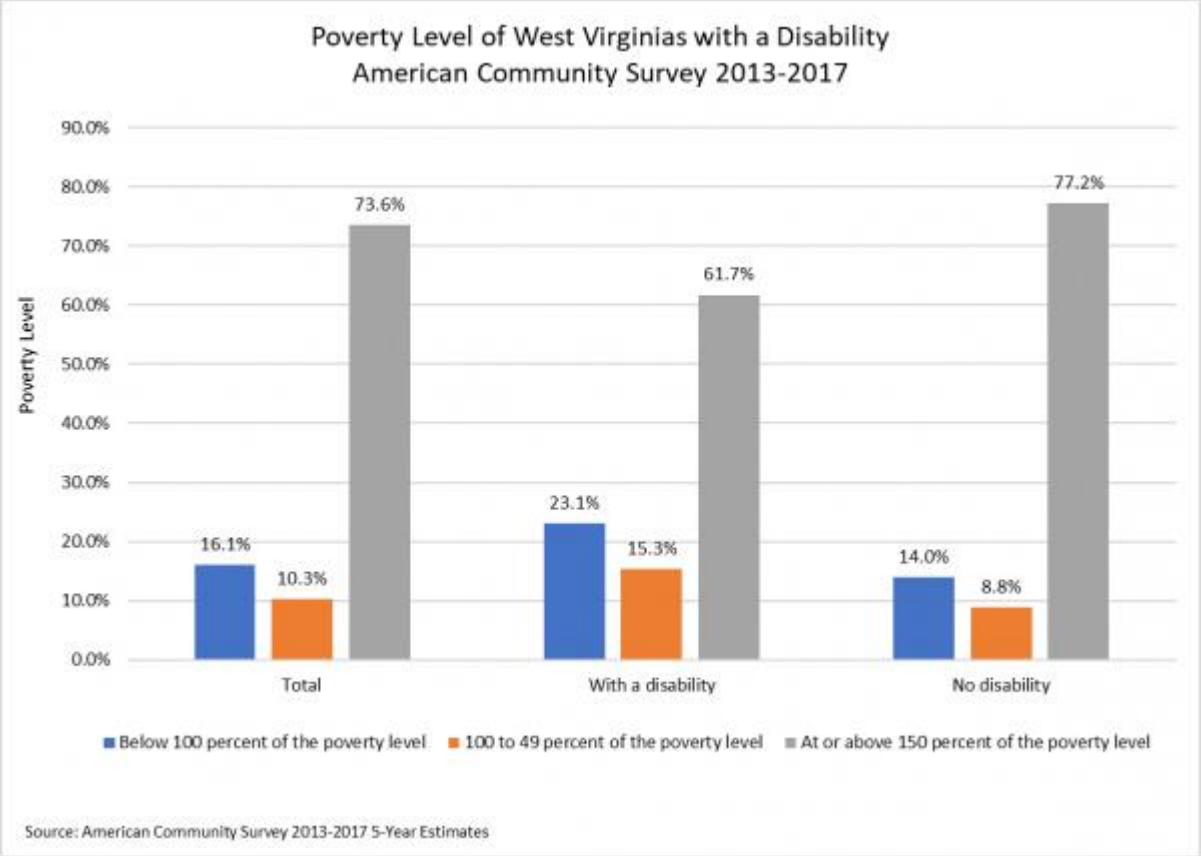
The total number of West Virginians age 25 and older is 1,267,870, with 321,147 having a disability and 946,723 having no disability. The number of West Virginians age 25 and older holding less than a high school diploma or its equivalent is approximately 13.8 percent. The percentage of West Virginians with a disability who did not graduate from high school is estimated at 26.2 percent.

Figure 33: West Virginia Education Attainment by Disability



Those state residents age 25 and older with a high school diploma, GED, or alternative are estimated at 40.5 percent. An estimated 43.5 percent of residents with a disability are contained in this group. The percent of the population age 25 and over with some college or an associate's degree is approximately 25.5 percent. An estimated 20.7 percent of residents with some college or an associate's degree also has a disability. The portion of the population age 25 and older who hold a Bachelor's degree or higher is 20.2 percent. An estimated 9.5 percent of West Virginians with a disability are contained within this group.

Figure 34: Poverty Level of West Virginians with a Disability



The West Virginia population age 16 and over for whom the poverty status is determined during the 2017 survey is estimated to be 1,458,229, with 336,541 estimated to have a disability and 1,121,688 having no disability. Approximately 16.1 percent of this total civilian noninstitutionalized population is below 100 percent of the poverty level. An estimated 23.1 percent in this group report a disability. Those West Virginians at 100 to 149 percent of the poverty level registered at 10.3 percent. An estimated 15.3 percent within this group report a disability. Persons at or above 150 percent of the poverty level are estimated at 73.6 percent. An estimated 61.7 percent of persons reporting a disability are contained within this category.

In 2016, the number of unemployed with a disability who exhausted their unemployment benefits was 135. In 2017, this number fell slightly to 124. Among this number, 39 individuals aged 25 to 44, and 74 individuals aged 45 to 64 exhausted their unemployment benefits in 2017.

Sex and Race

Figure 35: West Virginia Population by Sex and Race

West Virginia Population by Sex and Race			
Race	Total (Ages 20-64)	Male (Ages 20-64)	Female (Ages 20-64)
White alone	1,008,096	500,989	507,107
Black or African American alone	41,051	23,553	17,498
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2,256	975	1,281
Asian alone	9,863	4,758	5,105
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	419	168	251
Some other race alone	4,550	2,903	1,647
Two or more races	12,275	6,217	6,058
Total	1,078,510	539,563	538,947
Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates			

West Virginia's population 20 to 64 years of age is approximately 1,078,510, with an estimated 67.8 percent in the labor force. The employment to population ratio for this group is 63.1 percent. The estimated unemployment rate for those aged 20 through 64 is 6.8 percent.

The population age 20 to 64 years broken out by sex is 539,563 males and 538,947 females. It is estimated that 72.6 percent of males are in the labor force, while 62.9 percent of females are in the labor force. The employment to population ratio for males aged 20 through 64 is 66.9 percent and 59.3 percent for females. The estimated unemployment rate for males is 7.6 percent and 5.8 percent for females. In 2016, 11,631 males exhausted their unemployment benefits. The number plunged to 6,516 in 2017. The number of females who exhausted their unemployment benefits in 2016 was 3,991. That number fell slightly to 3,796 in 2017.

West Virginia's population 16 years and older broken out by race and Hispanic or Latino origin stood at 1,503,051 during the 2013-2017 estimate period. Of this total, 1,411,977 are White alone, 53,229 are Black or African American alone, 2,895 are American Indian and Alaskan native alone, 11,881 are Asian alone, 458 are Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone, 5,368 are Some other race alone, and 17,243 are Two or more races. The total of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race stood at 19,349, and White alone, not Hispanic or Latino stood at 1,398,029.

In 2016, the number of unemployed who exhausted their unemployment benefits was as follows: White 14,411, Black 524, Asian 59, American Indian/Alaskan Native 53, Pacific Islander 10, and Hispanic 273. In 2017, these numbers were as follows: White 9,373, Black 482, Asian 40, American Indian/Alaskan Native 32, Pacific Islander 5, and Hispanic 153.

Race and the Labor Force

The estimated racial breakout of the West Virginia labor force is as follows: 53.6 % of the White alone population is in the labor force and 49.8 % is employed. 53.0% of the Black or African American alone population is in the labor force, and 46.9 % is employed. 65.5% of the Asian alone population is in the labor force, and 62.4% is employed. 36.9% of the American Indian and Alaska Native alone population is in the labor force, and 34.1% is employed. 65.1% of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone population is in the labor force and 51.3% is employed. 59.3% of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) is in the labor force, and 54.8% is employed. 56.4% of some other race alone population is in the labor force, and 51.4% is employed. 49.2% of two or more races population is in the labor force and 42.7% is employed.

Education and the Labor Force

Figure 36: Population and Labor Force Participation Rate by Educational Attainment

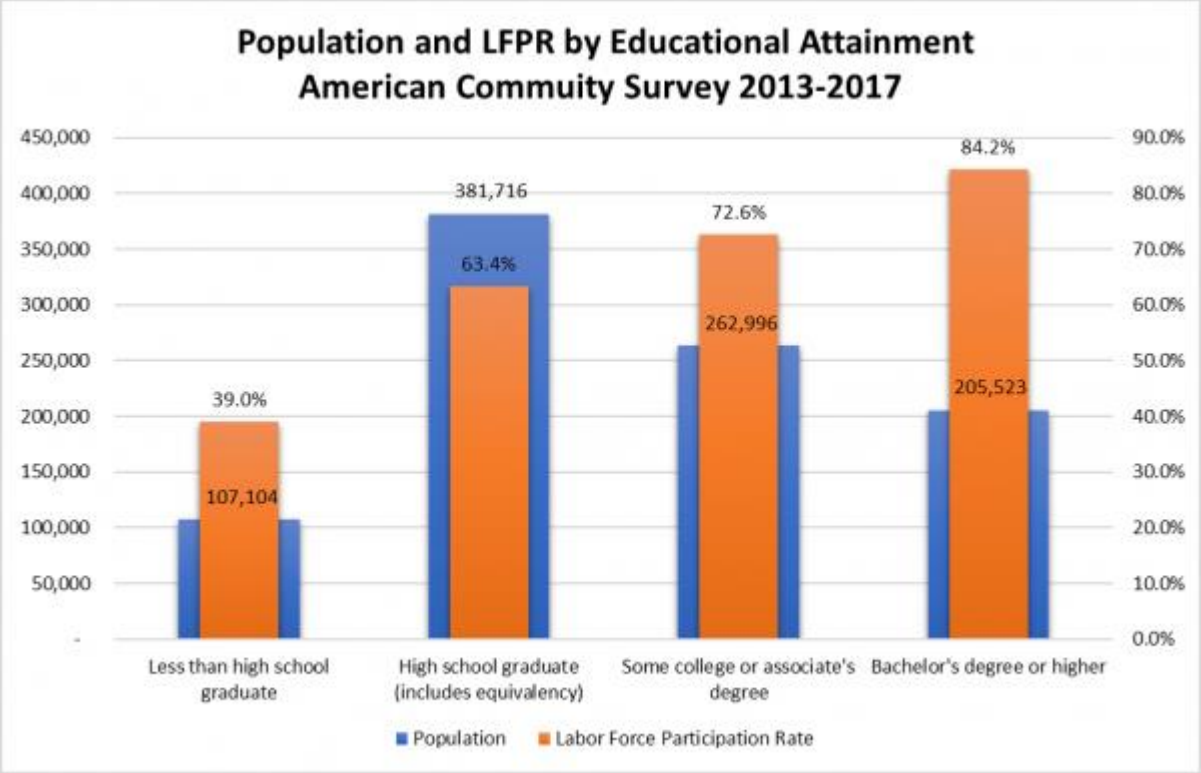
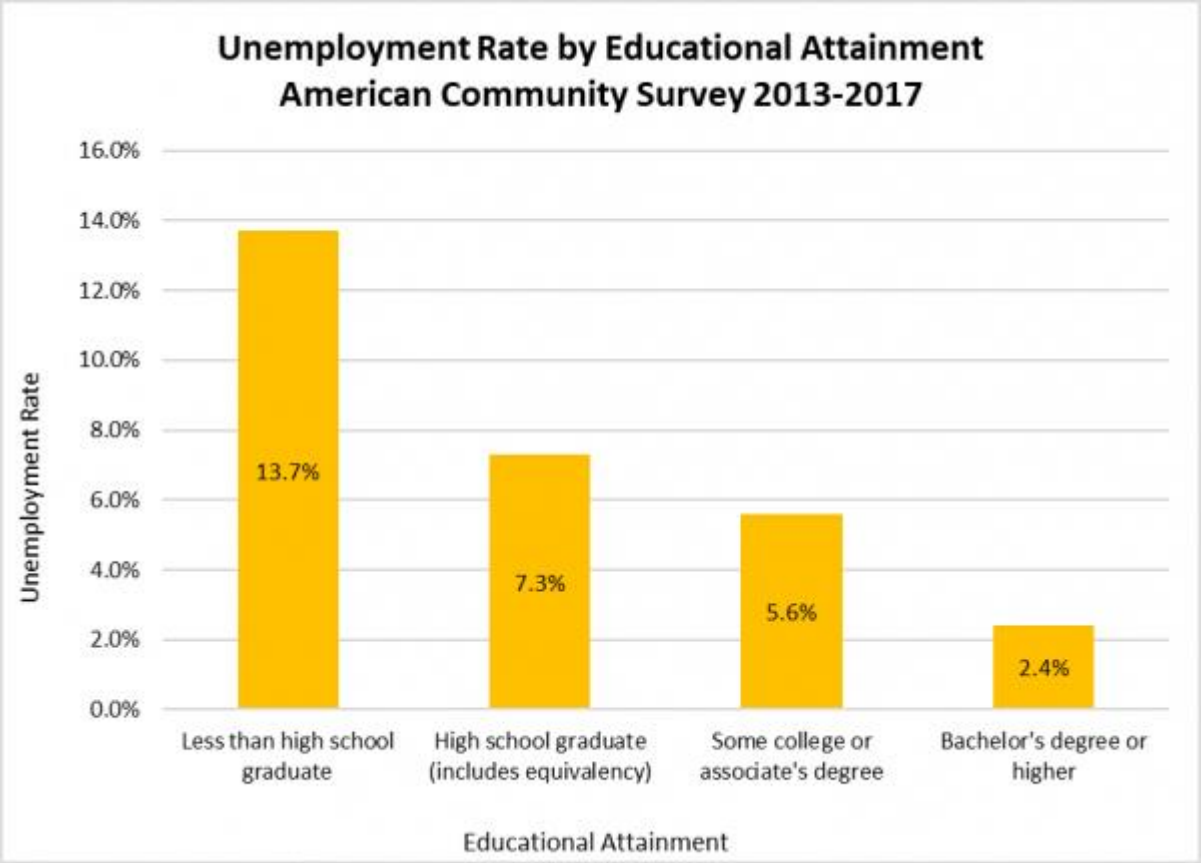


Figure 37: Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment



According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2013-2017), the total number of West Virginians ages 25-64 is 957,339. The estimated number who did not graduate from

high school is 107,104 (11.2%) with 39.0% in the labor force, and 33.6% employed. This group exhibits the lowest amount of employment among the categories of educational attainment.

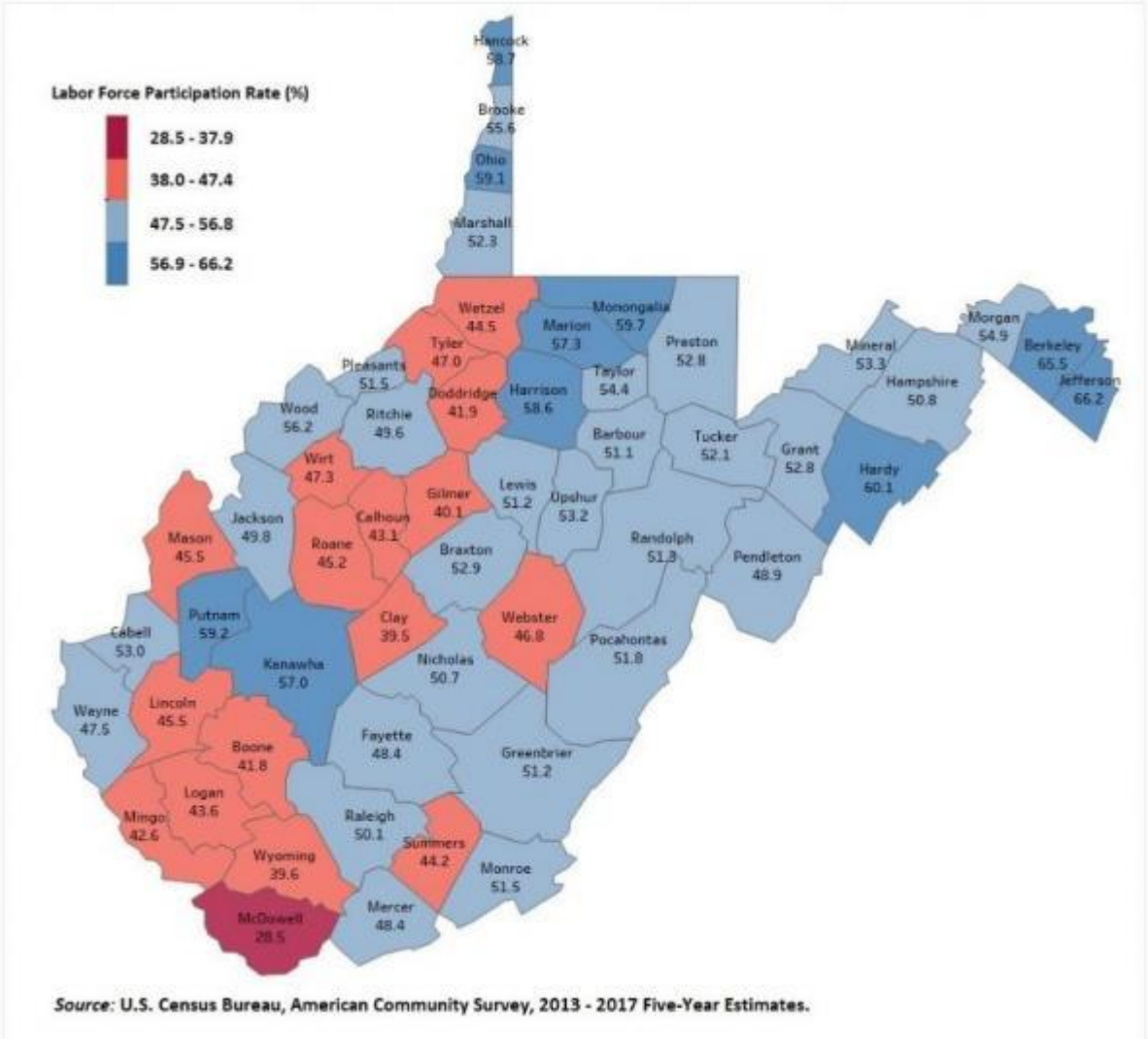
Those with a high school or equivalent education number 381,716, with 63.4% in the labor force and 58.8% employed. Those with some college or an associate degree number 262,996, with 72.6% in the labor force and 68.4% employed. 205,523 have a Bachelor's Degree or higher with 84.2% in the labor force and 82.0% employed. The unemployment rate runs from 2.4% for those who have a Bachelor's degree to 13.7% for those who have less than a high school diploma.

Population Forecast

West Virginia's overall population is expected to decline by approximately 20,000 or 1.1 percent from 2010 to 2030. Regionally, it is anticipated that the most significant population decreases will occur primarily in southern and southwestern West Virginia and the Northern Panhandle, while portions of the Eastern Panhandle and northeastern West Virginia are expected to grow. Correspondingly, the greatest employment gains are expected in the regions experiencing population growth.

Labor Force

Figure 38: Labor Force Participation Rate by County

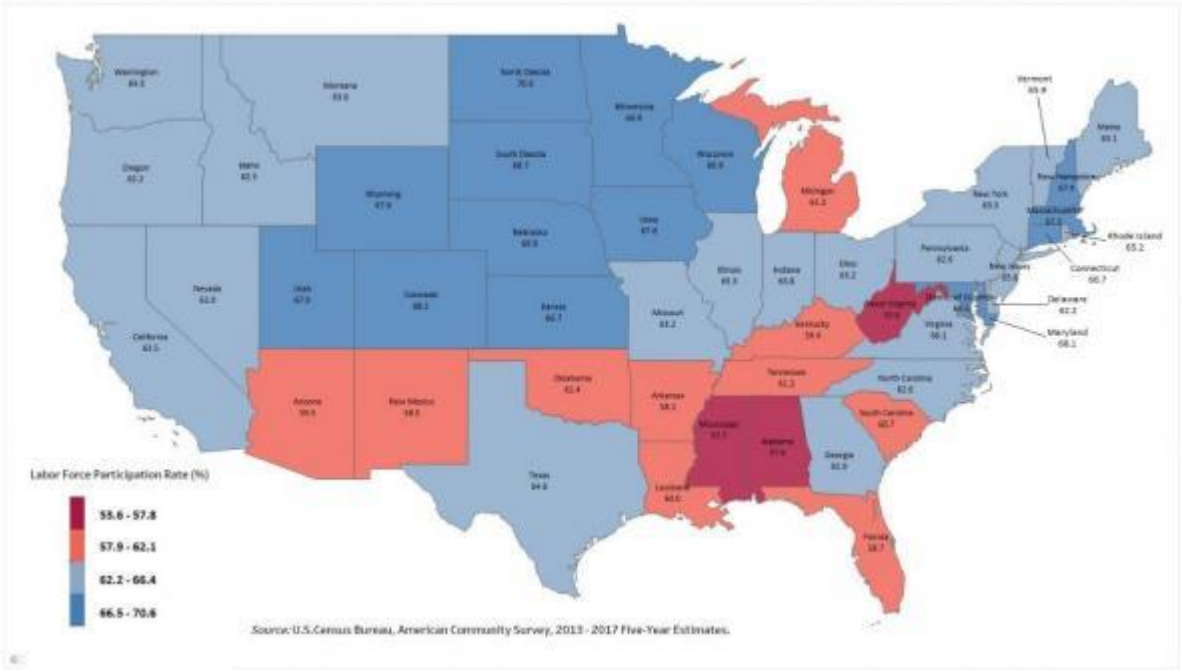


The labor force participation rate (LFPR) in West Virginia increased slightly from 53.3% in 2017 to 53.8% in 2018. The national labor force participation rate stalled at 62.9% between 2017 and 2018. For several decades, the state's LFPR has been significantly (about 9%) lower than the nation but generally follows the national pattern.

Less than one-half (41.8%) of West Virginia counties recorded a labor force participation rate less than 50.0 percent during the 2013-2017 period. Several of these counties are located in the southern coalfields of West Virginia. McDowell County recorded a labor force participation rate of 28.5 percent, the lowest in the state. Other southern counties with a labor force participation rate less than 50 percent included Wyoming (39.6%), Boone (41.8%), Mingo (42.6%), Logan (43.6%), Summers (44.2%), Lincoln (45.5%), Wayne (47.5%), Fayette (48.4%), and Mercer (48.4%).

Three counties, all in the eastern panhandle of the state, recorded a labor force participation rate greater than 60.0 percent. Hardy County recorded a labor force participation rate of 60.1 percent, while Berkeley (65.5%) and Jefferson (66.2%) recorded labor force participation rates greater than that of the United States (62.9%).

Figure 39: Labor Force Participation Rate by State



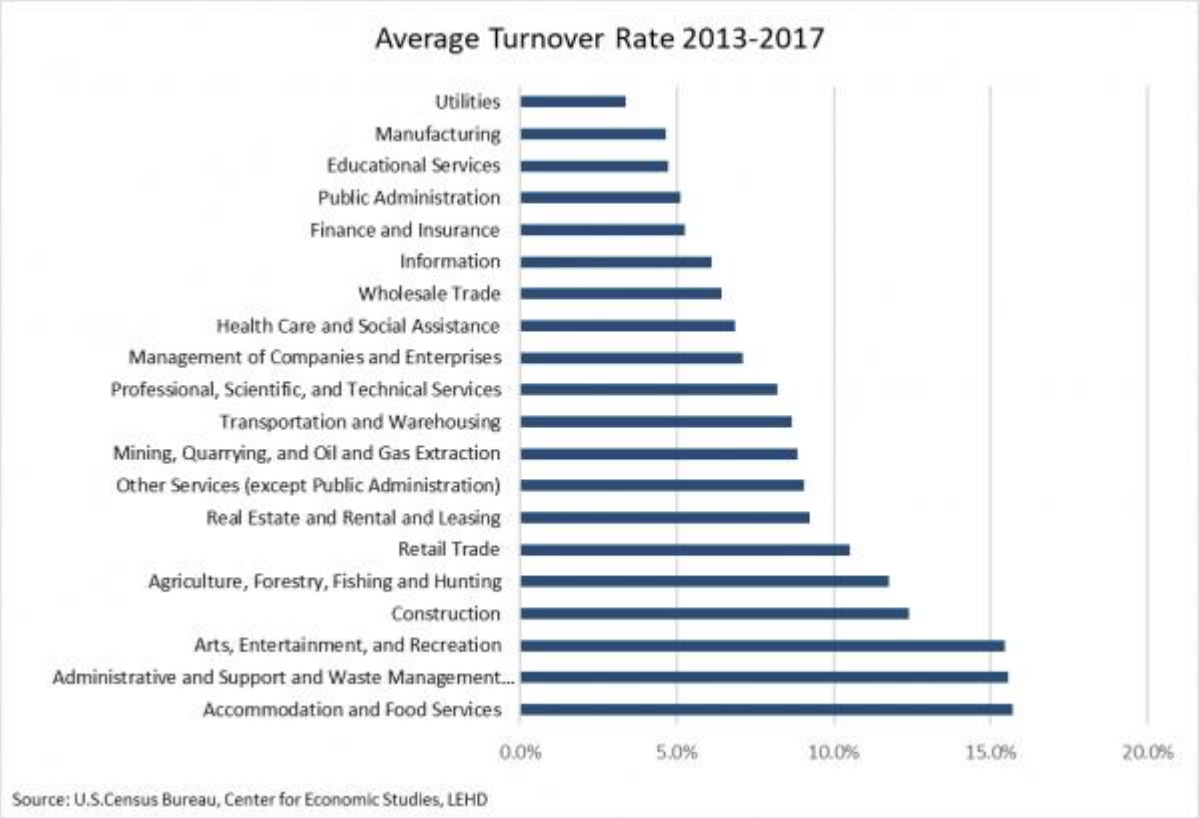
According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. labor force is projected to grow at an annual rate of 0.6, from 159.2 million people in 2016 to 169.7 million people in 2026, an increase of about 10.5 million people, slightly higher than the 2006-2016 decade. Several factors, including population decline, uncertainty around population migration patterns in the coming decade, and age composition continue to affect the state's projected LFPR. Workforce-related factors include the discouraged worker effect, health-related limitations, education, and retirement. Educational attainment and social factors such as the state's opioid epidemic present challenges as well. As of 2018, West Virginia's LFPR was the lowest among all states.

Turnover rates are another important aspect to consider in reviewing employment trends. Turnover rates can vary by industry and by a variety of demographic characteristics, such as education, race, sex, and age. In West Virginia, between 2013 and 2017 industry sectors with the highest average turnover rates include Accommodation and Food Services., Administrative

and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. Sectors with the lowest turnover rates include Utilities, Educational Services, and Manufacturing. High turnover rates in industry sectors can indicate a number of possibilities, including, but not limited to, seasonality, short business cycles, part-time employment status, employee dissatisfaction, and health risks.

Figure 40: Average Turnover Rates 2013-2017

(Bar graph reveals a list of industries ranked from lowest to highest turnover rates for the period 2013-2017.)



Between 2013 and 2017, turnover rates were higher among males (8.9%) compared with females (8.2%).

Figure 41: Average Turnover Rates 2013-2017 by Sex

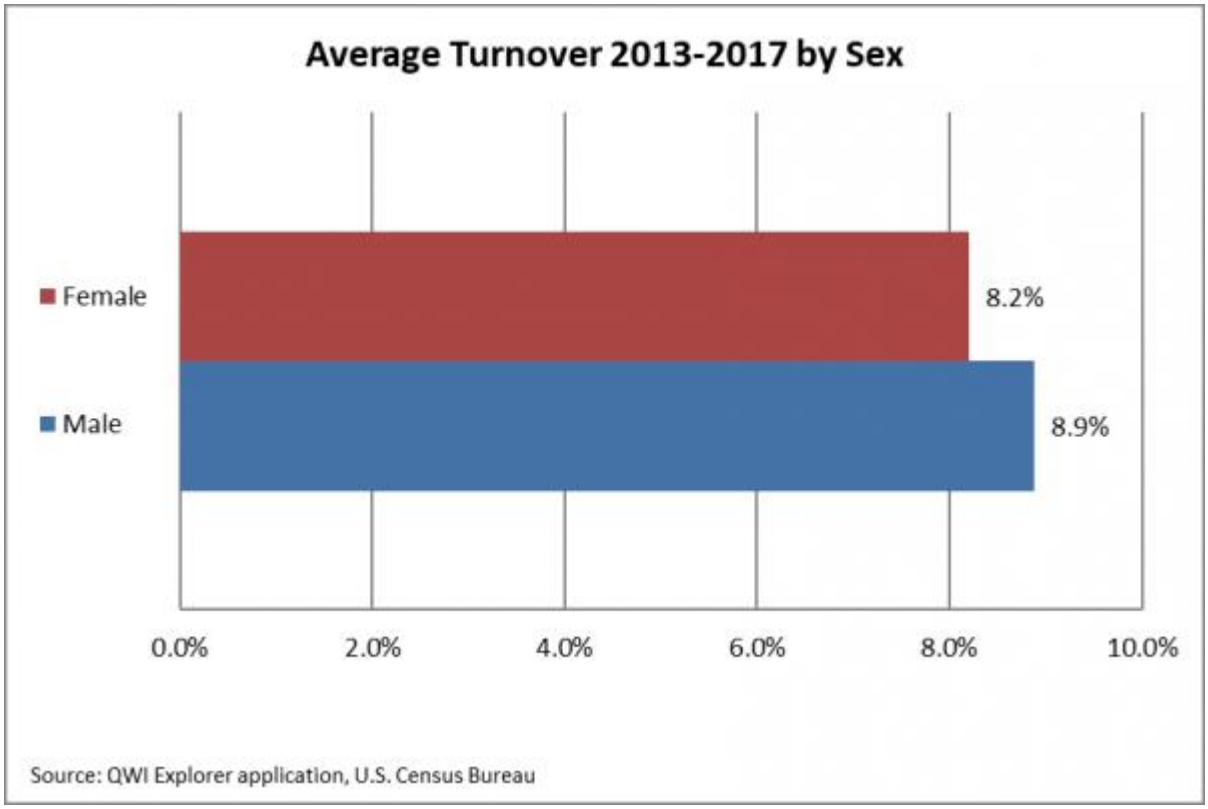
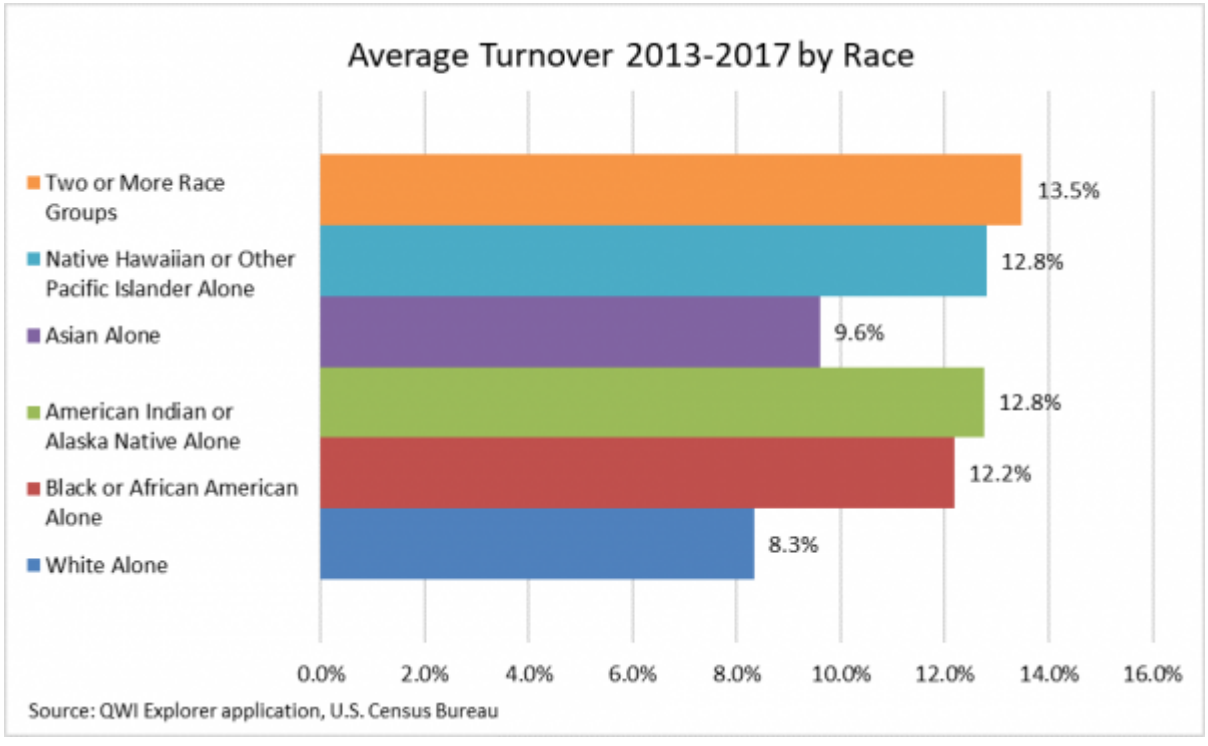
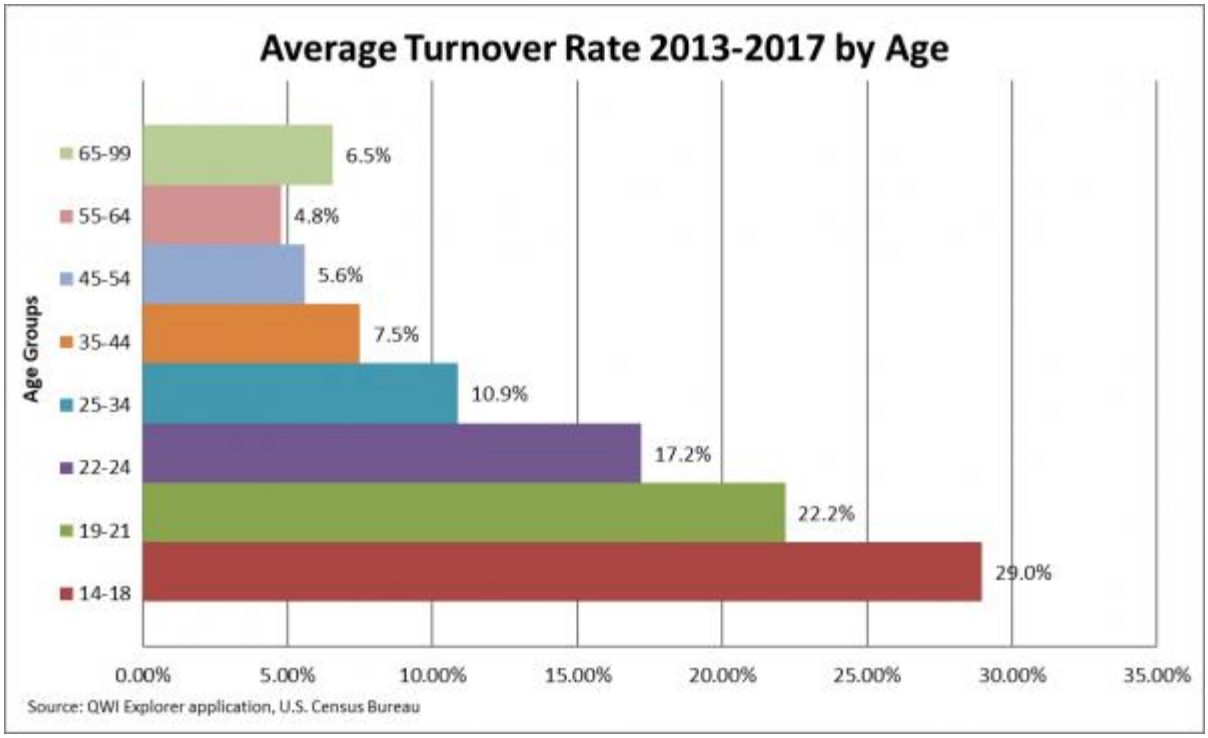


Figure 42: Average Turnover Rates 2013-2017 by Race



Regarding race, turnover rates were lowest among Whites (8.3%) and Asians (9.6%); The highest turnover rate was among Two or More Races (13.5%), followed by American Indian/Alaskan Native (12.8%) and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (12.8%), and Black or African-American (12.2%).

Figure 43: Average Turnover Rates 2013-2017 by Age



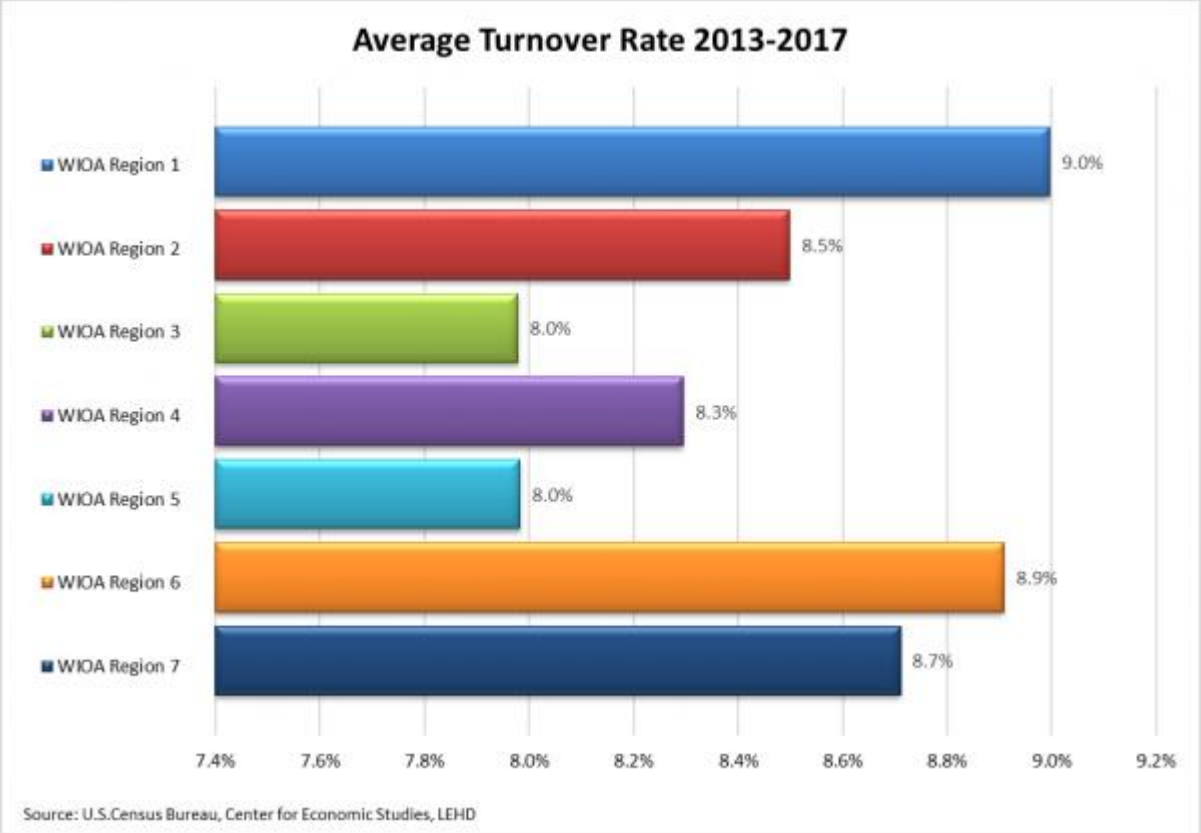
Turnover rates were highest among the age group of 14-18 years of age (29.0%) and lowest for the age group of 55-64 years of age (4.8%).

Also, higher levels of education correspond with lower rates of job turnover, where in 2017, the average turnover rate of those with less than a high school diploma was 9.2 percent compared with 6.4 percent for those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

From a regional perspective, overall employment turnover rates ranged from 9.0 percent in WIOA Region 1, to 8.0 percent in WIOA Regions 3 and 5.

Figure 44: Average Turnover Rates for WIOA Regions 2013-2017

(Bar graph reflects turnover rates for the seven regions for the years 2013-2017.)



Occupations

Among the seven WIOA regions in West Virginia, occupations anticipating the greatest annual growth rates between 2016 and 2026 are largely healthcare related. This trend can be attributed to the state's aging population, as well as the state's high concentration of health issues including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Many of the occupations with declining growth rates are those linked to changing technologies and declining industries. Occupations such as Telephone Operators and Data Entry Keyers are declining due to advances in technology, while declines in occupations such as Mine Shuttle Car Operators and Continuous Mining Machine Operators are due to both technological advances and competition from alternative forms of energy production.

WIOA Region 1 Occupational Employment Projections 2016-2026

Figure 45: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 1

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 1	
Greatest Growth Occupations	Greatest Declining Occupations
Home Health Aides	Photographers
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Data Entry Keyers
Nurse Practitioners	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service
Physician Assistants	Legal Secretaries
Personal Care Aides	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants

The top five occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate within WIOA Region 1 are all healthcare related. These include Home Health Aides; Occupational Therapy Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, and Personal Care Aides.

Occupations with the greatest rate of annual decline in the region include Photographers; Data Entry Keyers; Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service; Legal Secretaries; and Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants.

WIOA Region 2 Occupational Employment Projections 2016-2026

Figure 46: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 2

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 2	
Greatest Growth Occupations	**Greatest Declining Occupations**
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Legal Secretaries
Nurse Practitioners	Mine Shuttle Car Operators
Physician Assistants	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service
Physical Therapist Assistants	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
Massage Therapists	Labor Relations Specialists

All of the top five occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate within WIOA Region 2 are healthcare related. The top five consists of Occupational Therapy Assistants; Nurse Practitioners; Physician Assistants; Physical Therapy Assistants; and Massage Therapists.

The five occupations with the greatest annual rate of decline include Legal Secretaries; Mine Shuttle Car Operators; Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service; Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants; and Labor Relations Specialists.

WIOA Region 3 Occupational Employment Projections 2016-2026

Figure 47: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 3

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 3	
Greatest Growth Occupations	**Greatest Declining Occupations**
Personal Care Aides	Computer Operators
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Legal Secretaries
Nurse Practitioners	Medical Transcriptionists
Physician Assistants	Data Entry Keyers
Operations Research Analysts	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service

Healthcare Occupations lead the pack in the list of occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate in WIOA Region 3. This group contains Personal Care Aides; Occupational Therapy Assistants; Nurse Practitioners; Physician Assistants; and Operations Research Analysts.

Occupations leading declines in WIOA Region 3 include Computer Operators; Legal Secretaries; Medical Transcriptionists; Data Entry Keyers; and Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service.

WIOA Region 4 Occupational Employment Projections 2016-2026

Figure 48: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 4

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 4	
Greatest Growth Occupations	Greatest Declining Occupations
Home Health Aides	Legal Secretaries
Personal Care Aides	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
Nurse Practitioners	Medical Transcriptionists
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Labor Relations Specialists
Respiratory Therapists	Floral Designers

Occupations with the most projected annual growth in WIOA Region 4 include Home Health Aides; Personal Care Aides: Nurse Practitioners; Occupational Therapy Assistants; and Respiratory Therapists.

The greatest annual rate of decline will be seen among Legal Secretaries; Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants; Medical Transcriptionists; Labor Relations Specialists; and Floral Designers.

WIOA Region 5 Occupational Projections 2016-2026

Figure 49: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 5

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 5	
Greatest Growth Occupations	Greatest Declining Occupations
Home Health Aides	Data Entry Keyers
Personal Care Aides	Legal Secretaries
Nurse Practitioners	Mine Shuttle Car Operators
Physician Assistants	Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service
Software Developers, Applications	Labor Relations Specialists

Occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate within WIOA Region 5 include Home Health Aides; Personal Care Aides; Nurse Practitioners; Physician Assistants; and Software Developers, Applications.

Occupations with the greatest declines in the annual growth rate include Data Entry Keyers; Legal Secretaries; Mine Shuttle Car Operators; Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service; and Labor Relations Specialists.

WIOA Region 6 Occupational Projections 2016-2026

Figure 50: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 6

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 6	
Greatest Growth Occupations	Greatest Declining Occupations
Home Health Aides	Data Entry Keyers
Personal Care Aides	Legal Secretaries
Nurse Practitioners	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
Software Developers, Applications	Mine Shuttle Car Operators
Statisticians	Medical Transcriptionists

Occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate in WIOA Region 6 include Home Health Aides; Personal Care Aides; Nurse Practitioners; Software Developers, Applications; and Statisticians.

Occupations with the greatest declines in the growth rate include Data Entry Keyers; Legal Secretaries; Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants; Mine Shuttle Car Operators; and Medical Transcriptionists.

WIOA Region 7 Occupational Projections 2016-2026

Figure 51: Occupational Projections 2016-2026 for WIOA Region 7

Occupational Projections 2016-2026	
WIOA 7	
Greatest Growth Occupations	Greatest Declining Occupations
Nurse Practitioners	Legal Secretaries
Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
Personal Care Aides	Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other
Healthcare Social Workers	Team Assemblers
Software Developers, Applications	Floral Designers

The top five occupations with the greatest projected annual growth rate in WIOA Region 7 include Nurse Practitioners; Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders; Personal Care Aides; Healthcare Social Workers; and Software Developers, Applications.

Occupations with the greatest declines in annual growth in the region include Legal Secretaries; Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants; Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other; Team Assemblers; and Floral Designers.

Education and skiII leveIs of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skiII leveIs of the workforce.

Education

Figure 52: Percent of Population Age 25 Years or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Percent of Population Age 25 Years or Older With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher				
State	Percent		State	Percent
West Virginia	19.9		Georgia	29.9
Mississippi	21.3		North Carolina	29.9
Arkansas	22.0		Pennsylvania	30.1
Kentucky	23.2		Maine	30.3
Louisiana	23.4		Nebraska	30.6
Nevada	23.7		Montana	30.7
Alabama	24.5		Delaware	31.0
Oklahoma	24.8		Hawaii	32.0
Puerto Rico	24.9		Oregon	32.3
Indiana	25.3		Kansas	32.3
Tennessee	26.1		Utah	32.5
Wyoming	26.7		California	32.6
Idaho	26.8		Rhode Island	33.0
New Mexico	26.9		Illinois	33.4
South Carolina	27.0		Washington	34.5
Ohio	27.2		Minnesota	34.8
Iowa	27.7		New York	35.3
South Dakota	27.8		New Hampshire	36.0
Michigan	28.1		Vermont	36.8
Missouri	28.2		Virginia	37.6
Arizona	28.4		New Jersey	38.1
Florida	28.5		Connecticut	38.4
Texas	28.7		Maryland	39.0
North Dakota	28.9		Colorado	39.4
Wisconsin	29.0		Massachusetts	42.1
Alaska	29.0		District of Columbia	56.6
United States	30.9			
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates				

Over the coming decade, West Virginia's job market will continue its demand for jobs that require more postsecondary education. Presently, based on 2017 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), West Virginia ranks last in percent of population age 25 years or older with a Bachelor's degree or higher. As of 2017, 19.9 percent of West Virginians 25 and older have a Bachelor's degree or better compared to 30.9 percent nationally.

Based on WorkForce West Virginia's employment projections (2016 - 2026), it is expected that jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher will increase 5,489 (Figure 53). While projected growth in occupations through 2026 tips slightly towards jobs requiring a high school diploma or less, growth in all occupations is well balanced between these and jobs requiring postsecondary education. Figures C and D show poverty rates among West Virginians dramatically declining and wages increasing as education levels increase. Categorically, occupations requiring a High School Diploma or less are anticipated to grow by 21,299, while jobs requiring formal education beyond high school will expand by 20,227.

Figure 53: Projections by Level of Education

(Figure 53 shows employment projections based on eight education levels for the year 2026.)

2016 – 2026 Occupational Projections by Level of Education				
Education Level	2016 Employment	2016 % of Workforce	2026 Projected Employment	2026 % of Workforce
Less than high school	204,905	27.18%	217,467	27.34%
High school diploma or equivalent	321,770	42.68%	330,507	41.55%
Some college, no degree	935	0.12%	1,036	0.13%
Postsecondary non-degree award	27,534	3.65%	29,974	3.77%
Associate's degree	29,988	3.98%	32,412	4.07%
Bachelor's degree	75,584	10.02%	81,073	10.19%
Master's degree	12,755	1.69%	14,523	1.83%
Doctoral or professional degree	10,027	1.33%	11,012	1.38%
Not applicable	70,476	9.35%	77,496	9.74%
Total	753,974		795,500	

Beyond formal secondary and postsecondary education, some occupations require additional on-the-job training. The greatest growth through 2026 is expected for jobs requiring short-term on-the-job training. Figure 54 depicts the expected change by job training between 2016 and 2026. For most other categories, the relative share of employment is expected to change only slightly.

Figure 54: Projections by Training

(Figure 54 shows projected employment based on six levels of job training for the year 2026.)

2016 – 2026 Occupational Projections by Training				
Education Level	2016 Employment	2016 % of Workforce	2026 Projected Employment	2026 % of Workforce
Not Applicable	176,017	23.35%	188,176	23.66%
Short-term on-the-job training	315,776	41.88%	330,137	41.50%
Moderate-term on-the-job training	126,167	16.73%	130,228	16.37%
Long-term on-the-job training	34,396	4.56%	35,687	4.49%
Apprenticeship	12,104	1.61%	13,122	1.65%
Internship/residency	19,038	2.53%	20,654	2.60%
Not Available	70,476	9.35%	77,496	9.74%
Total	753,974		795,500	

Education attainment scales with both poverty status and median annual earnings. As education levels increase, earnings increase, and, consequently, poverty decreases. In Figure 55, data from the U.S. Census Bureau depict the relative poverty levels by education attainment. Poverty rates are higher for females than for males in every category, although the gap closes considerably for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 55: Poverty Rate by Education Level

(Figure 55 depicts the poverty rate for West Virginians broken out by sex and four levels of education.)

West Virginia Poverty Rate by Education Level			
Education Level	Total	Male	Female
Less than high school graduate	29.2	26.6	32.1
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	15.3	12.8	17.9
Some college or associate's degree	12.4	9.3	14.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.6	4.2	4.9
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates			

Similarities can be observed when comparing median annual earnings by educational attainment (Figure 56). Higher levels of education correlate to higher levels of earnings, with females earning comparatively less in all categories.

Figure 56: Median Annual Earnings by Education Level

(Figure 56 depicts median annual earnings for West Virginians broken out by sex and levels of education.)

West Virginia Median Earnings by Education Level			
Education Level	Total	Male	Female
Population 25 years and over with earnings	$32,781	$40,957	$26,522
Less than high school graduate	$20,791	$25,706	$14,143
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	$27,435	$35,521	$21,393
Some college or associate's degree	$31,469	$41,877	$25,561
Bachelor's degree or higher	$43,617	$53,152	$37,322
Graduate or professional degree	$55,387	$68,907	$50,305
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2013-2017 5-year estimates			

Based on 2017 Census data, levels of unemployment correlate with levels of education (Figure 57). The higher the level of education, the higher the level of participation in the labor force and, conversely, the lower the rate of unemployment. Individuals with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate (13.7%), nearly six times higher than individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher (2.4%), more than twice the unemployment rate of individuals with only some college or an Associate's degree (5.6%), and nearly twice the unemployment rate of individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent (7.3%).

Figure 57: Employment Status by Education Level

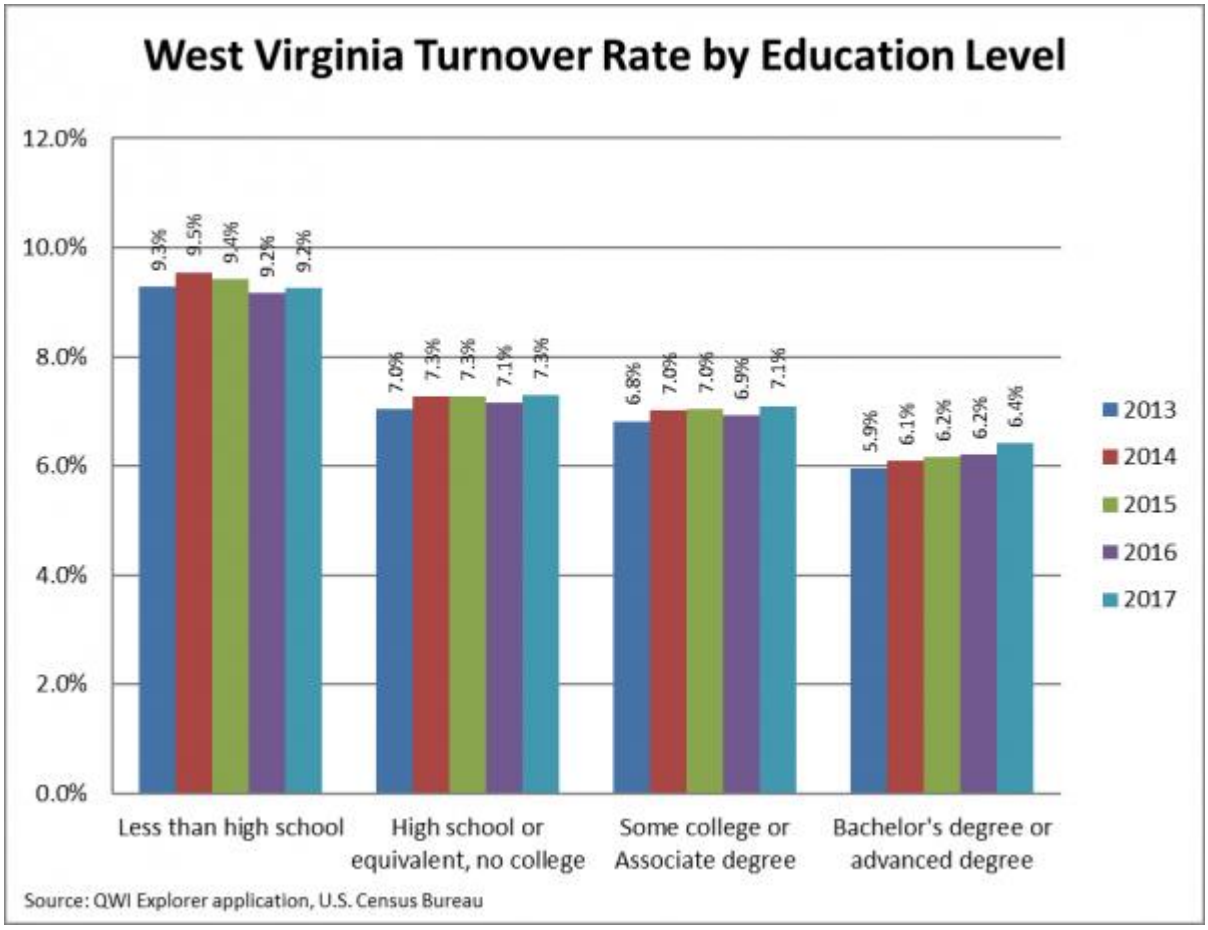
(Figure 57 depicts employment status of West Virginians based on educational attainment.)

West Virginia Employment Status by Education Level				
Educational Attainment	Total	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employment/ Population Ratio	Unemployment rate
Less than high school graduate	107,104	39.0%	33.6%	13.70%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	381,716	63.4%	58.8%	7.30%
Some college or associate's degree	262,996	72.6%	68.4%	5.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher	205,523	84.2%	82.0%	2.40%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

Also, as education levels increase, job turnover rates decrease. Using combined Census and BLS data for years 2013 through 2017, an average turnover rate was calculated (Figure 58).

Figure 58: Turnover Rate by Education Level

(Figure 58 depicts turnover rates for West Virginians based on four levels of educational attainment.)



The education levels of West Virginians in the labor force, specifically those who were employed between 2013 and 2017 varies considerably by region of the state. During this five-year period, turnover rates for individuals with less than a high school diploma registered over nine percent each year, although it stayed at 9.2 percent in 2016 and 2017. Turnover rates for individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent and with no college remained over seven percent

during this period, climbing to 7.3 percent in 2017. Turnover rates for job holders with either some college or an Associate degree hovered around the seven percent level, climbing to 7.1 percent in 2017. Job holders with a bachelor's degree or higher saw turnover rates hovering around the six percent level, although the rate has been steadily climbing during this period and registered at 6.4 percent in 2017.

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.
The term Skills Gap, defined as "a significant mismatch between the needs of employers for skills and the current capabilities of available workforce", has been a constant source of conversation and debate for many years. The unemployment rate is relatively high in West Virginia, and businesses have expressed concerns about finding skilled workers to fill vacancies.

Communication Skills

Communication skills are expected to have the greatest demand in West Virginia through 2026. Those specific skills are Active Listening, followed by Speaking, Social Perceptiveness, Reading Comprehension, and Service Orientation (Figure 59). Active Listening may be defined as "giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions appropriately, and not interrupting at inappropriate times". This simple and basic skill is necessary in many occupations, especially in healthcare and other service-related fields that require good communication and comprehension between service provider and customer. Over the next ten years, employers will need at least 177,102 employees with this skill, while the current supply is 165,045. This means we need over 10,000 people to acquire or develop this skill to meet the expected demand.

Figure 59: Skills Gap 2012-2026

(Figure 59 depicts the current and projected demand for selected skills through 2026.)

Skill	Current Employment (2016)	Projected Demand (2026
Active Listening	165,045	177,102
Speaking	161,400	174,607
Social Perceptiveness	81,363	88,617
Reading Comprehension	73,334	78,587
Service Orientation	45,897	49,965
Critical Thinking	45,820	51,039
Monitoring	43,294	45,910
Writing	40,854	42,611
Coordination	36,153	38,166
Instructing	30,669	33,442
Learning Strategies	25,599	28,005
Judgment and Decision Making	20,800	22,927
Repairing	14,550	15,405
Equipment Maintenance	14,083	14,913
Time Management	12,200	13,238
Complex Problem Solving	11,632	12,687
Operation and Control	9,118	9,718
Management of Personnel Resources	8,988	9,634
Persuasion	7,825	7,874
Operation Monitoring	6,778	7,002

The state will require nearly half of its workforce to develop Social Perceptiveness, Speaking, and Service Orientation skills by 2026. These communication skills depict a substantial need, particularly in the healthcare support industry, in which occupations related to customer services are in high demand. Reading Comprehension is an issue for many West Virginians in the workforce. This skill refers to the person's ability to read and understand information presented in written form. Good readers interact with text, making and validating predictions, and connecting the text events to their knowledge and experiences. Generally, this skill, together with Critical Thinking and Writing are acquired during K-12 education.

Figure 60: Skills Gap Distribution

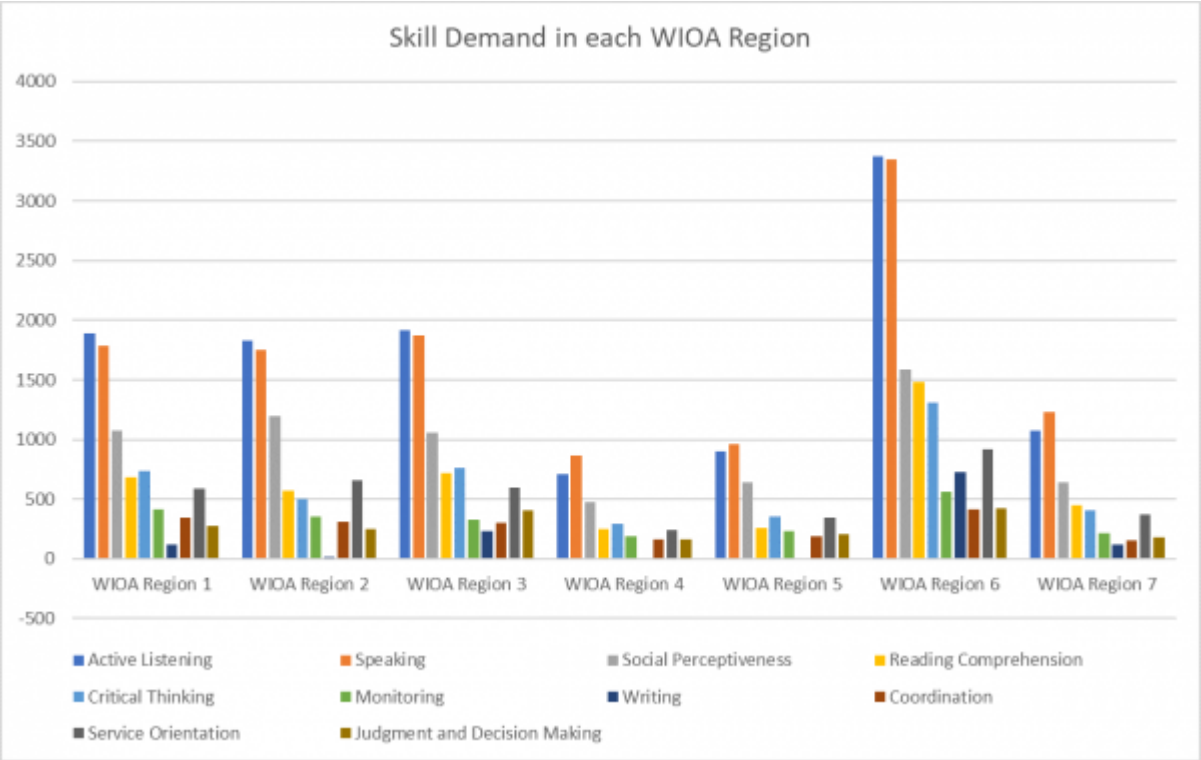


Figure 60 presents skill gaps distribution by region. Both Active Listening and Speaking rank highest among the WIOA regions, particularly in WIOA Region 6, while Social Perceptiveness ranks third among the skill gaps. Other skills ranking high in some regions include Reading Comprehension, Critical Thinking, and Service Orientation.

Figure 61: Gain/Loss of Workers in Each WIOA Region/Statewide by Educational Attainment Level, 2009-2018

Gain/Loss of Workers in Each WIOA Region/Statewide by Educational Attainment Level, 2009-2018

Educational Attainment	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	West Virginia
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	-708	-976	-1,134	-356	-339	-714	101	-4,106
Some college or Associate degree	-1,033	-1,405	-1,410	-487	-335	-742	237	-5,156
High school or equivalent, no college	-1,570	-1,934	-1,683	-694	-543	-1,063	33	-7,431
Less than high school	-309	-349	-234	-18	100	139	291	-358
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 24 or younger)	5,850	6,147	5,665	3,446	3,528	10,491	4,583	39,735

Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau, qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov

Figure 61 displays gains and losses of workers by education level for the state and the seven WIOA regions. Losses far outweigh gains, and this can be attributed to the persistent population loss West Virginia has experienced recently and will continue to experience through 2030 (See Population Forecast). Region 7, the sole area of the state to see consistent population gains, is the only WIOA region with gains in all education levels.

Knowledge and Ability also create a big effect on Skill gaps.

As we examine the skill gaps, it will be important to understand the relationship among Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. Knowledge is a level of information or experience that an individual must have to be qualified for a position. Skills are learned or trained and can be developed through the transfer of knowledge. Abilities are the enduring attributes of the individual that influence performance. A person's ability can affect his or her capacity to perform the job. Many recruiters use KSAs (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) to determine who the best applicants are among candidates.

Among West Virginia's workforce, the greatest gap in knowledge is Customer and Personal Service (see Figure 25). By 2026, more than 300,000 positions will require competency with the principles and processes for providing customer and personal services, including customer needs assessment and evaluation of customer satisfaction. English Language, surprisingly, is the second-highest knowledge gap requirement. The growing healthcare sector needs at least 100,000 employees who have knowledge in Psychology and Medicine and Dentistry.

Figure 62: Knowledge Gaps

(Figure 62 depicts projected knowledge gaps for the period 2016 through 2026.

Knowledge	Curent Employment (2016)	Projected Demand (2026)
Customer and Personal Service	299,286	315,281
English Language	**151,004**	**162,514**
Clerical	67,234	65,797
Education and Training	**59,300**	**65,907**
Psychology	52,117	58,855
Medicine and Dentistry	**48,751**	**55,751**
Administration and Management	43,957	46,492
Mechanical	**31,207**	**32,902**
Building and Construction	29,853	32,503
Sales and Marketing	**24,692**	**25,313**
Mathematics	22,165	23,687
Computers and Electronics	**17,553**	**18,827**
Law and Government	16,067	16,933
Public Safety and Security	**15,507**	**16,627**
Engineering and Technology	10,489	11,484
Economics and Accounting	**9,916**	**10,598**
Therapy and Counseling	9,209	10,935
Transportation	**7,688**	**8,196**
Biology	6,618	8,023
Production and Processing	**6,296**	**6,433**

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required [6] and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[7]

The State of West Virginia is comprised of seven local workforce development areas. A minimum of one comprehensive American Job Center of West Virginia (AJCWV) is located in each area.

- Region 1: The Region 1 Workforce Development Board, headquartered in Beckley, administers workforce activities in an eleven-county region covering the southeastern portion of the State.
- Region 2: The Southwestern West Virginia Workforce Development Board, located in Huntington, governs a seven-county region in the southwestern portion of the State.
- Region 3: The Workforce Development Board of Kanawha County oversees activities in the State's only single-county workforce development region from its office in Charleston.
- Region 4: Nine counties are served by the Workforce Development Board Mid-Ohio Valley, which is located in Parkersburg.

- Region 5: The Northern Panhandle Workforce Development Board provides services in six counties and is based in Wheeling.
- Region 6: The Region 6 Workforce Development Board, located in Fairmont, provides services in a thirteen-county region in the north-central portion of the State.
- Region 7: Eight counties in the easternmost portion of West Virginia are served by the Region 7 Workforce Development Board located in Moorefield.

All core programs are participating either by physical presence or part of a shared electronic referral system. Further, required partners participating include:

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**-Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps people who became unemployed due to layoffs as a result of foreign imports or a shift of production out of the United States. TAA eligible workers are provided services and training to assist them in returning to the workforce. Services and training provided ensure that TAA recipients have the skills needed to find reemployment within the industry they were laid off from or to enter a new industry where employment opportunities exist.
- **WIOA Title I Adult**-The Adult program serves participants age 18 or older in need of employment or career advancement, with priority of service given to participants deemed to be recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. If a participant is also an eligible Veteran or spouse of a Veteran, the priority of service will be extended to the covered person. Individuals deemed ready for work are provided career services to assist them in finding existing employment opportunities. Individuals not ready for employment or looking for employment in a new field are provided training to prepare them with the skills necessary to meet the needs of employers.
- **WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker**-The Dislocated Worker program assists workers before or after a layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment. Dislocated Workers with requisite skills may be directly referred to employers with hiring needs. Other Dislocated Workers may require training and other services to meet the skill requirements of employers.
- **WIOA Title I Youth**-The Youth program serves eligible youth and young adults through high-quality case management support toward educational attainment that includes career guidance and exploration, the provision of summer and/or year-round work experience opportunities such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, and skills training along a career pathway for in-demand industries and occupations, along with any necessary supportive services. The attainment of education, skills, and work experience can make youth participants more attractive candidates for employers to hire.
- **WIOA Title II Adult Education**-Adult Education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways for adults who lack basic skills. Funded programs provide a full range of Adult Education services from beginning level literacy through high adult secondary and transition activities to support college and career readiness, including English language acquisition activities if needed. Programs provide basic skills instruction in the context of work readiness, incorporate workplace preparation activities, and career awareness and planning in instruction and services. Adult Education program administrators and other staff develop relationships and partnerships at the local level

to support alignment of Adult Education services with the services of the other programs and workforce development system partners to include working with local Business Service Teams (BSTs). Funded programs provide integrated education and training whenever possible and appropriate. Integrated education and training require three components offered concurrently and contextualized to an occupation or occupational cluster: Adult Education, workforce preparation, and workforce training. Integrated education and training activities will be aligned with local workforce needs, prepare students for realistic, existing employment opportunities, and be developed in consultation with LWDBs, employers, and training providers.

- **WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser**-Wagner-Peyser staff provides employment services to both job seekers and employers with the goal of placing individuals in employment and helping employers recruit workers.
- **WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation**-The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) helps people with disabilities establish and reach their vocational goals. The primary goal for all DRS clients is to become productive working citizens. DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors who assist clients with evaluating their skills and interests to obtain vocational success. Rehabilitation counselors work one-on-one with clients to develop a plan for employment that is based on their interests, needs and abilities.
- **Jobs for Veterans Grant (LVER/DVOP)**-Through the JVSG program, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists assist veterans with significant barriers to employment including homelessness, previously incarcerated, and low-income status. Another element of the program is carried out by Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) who meet with employers, plan and participate in job and career fairs, and conduct job development with employers on behalf of job-ready veterans. LVERs work with the BSTs in promoting qualified veterans to employers seeking candidates.
- **Job Corps**-Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a good job. For eligible young people at least 16 years of age that qualify as low income, Job Corps provides the all-around skills needed to succeed in a career and in life.
- **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**- To provide resources and support for a community of partners working to improve the lives of West Virginians. Community Services Block Grant is a federal anti-poverty program administered by the Community Advancement and Development office. The purpose in West Virginia is to aid a network of 16 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and other statewide organizations in the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and to provide economic opportunities for low-income families.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**- The TANF program provides temporary financial assistance to low income families. While receiving TANF benefits, recipients will look for employment to try and achieve self-sufficiency.
- **National Farmworker Jobs Program**-The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) provides eligible farmworkers and their dependents with the means to reach self-sufficiency through better employment.

- **Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)**- The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based training program for persons age 55 or older with limited incomes. The SCSEP program is a grant funded program that has a two-fold approach: 1. Helping the communities that they are in, 2. Providing eligible seniors with hands on training experience that will be needed to eventually obtain employment

- **Unemployment Compensation**-Unemployment insurance benefits provide temporary financial assistance to workers unemployed through no fault of their own that meet West Virginia's eligibility requirements.

- **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**-HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination, and transform the way HUD does business.

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**-Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are changing, evolving and innovating to better serve West Virginia's needs by preparing students to help drive our success and vitality. Further, CTE is creating an educational environment that integrates core academics with real-world relevance. CTE is transforming expectations and making a difference for students, for businesses and industry, for West Virginia and for the global community.

- **Indian & Native American Programs**-Our purpose is to reduce unemployment among American Indians, traditionally the least serviced and poorest group in the United States.

- **Youthbuild**-At YouthBuild programs in the United States and across the globe, low-income young people learn construction skills to help build affordable housing and other community assets such as community centers and schools.

The Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) was established under the state Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to ensure coordination between the agencies engaged in workforce development activities, the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV). ICT serves as a forum for the LWDBs to seek information or recommendations to fulfill their responsibilities. WFWV convenes the team at least monthly to provide administrative assistance, information, and other services.

Customers entering the Workforce Development System (WDS) through any of the core partner's services will be provided a common intake process that will allow all of the partners to access information and provide referrals. WFWV often serves as the entryway into the WDS. As the provider of unemployment services and Wagner-Peyser services, WFWV is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the WDS via the AJCWV service delivery model and provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other core partners.

Customers receive career services through core partners within the WDS. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving career services, WFWV staff assists the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, WFWV staff refers the customer to the other core partners based on the needs of the customer. Training services are provided to the customer through WFWV, West Virginia

Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), and/or Adult Education Services (Adult Education).

With integration of service delivery, it is anticipated that more WIOA customers will access core partner services. Core partners have gathered data about the current strategies and resources devoted to basic skills development; researched the current and projected need; learned about promising practices for system redesign; and engaged diverse stakeholders in conversations about improving adult learning opportunities and results.

The WIOA core partners work, in tandem, on many workforce development activities. The partners all have memorandums of understanding (MOU) at the state and regional levels and also collaborate on specific projects at local levels. WFWV, DRS, and Adult Education collaborate in all workforce development regions as part of WIOA AJCWV Management Partner meetings with local development groups to better identify and facilitate needed services for the local area.

Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success (SPOKES) is a robust partnership between Adult Education and DHHR. DRS works within this partnership to increase efforts to reach potential Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers being served by Adult Education and the SPOKES program.

The State understands the importance of having a recognized postsecondary degree from the perspectives of both employers and job seekers. The core partners have always strived for quality, career-based employment outcomes for its consumers, when appropriate. A wide range of education and training paths are offered by the partners. DRS for example, offers individuals with disabilities opportunities to prepare them for the West Virginia (WV) economy. Pre-employment transition services, including job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences; counseling on post-secondary enrollment opportunities; workplace readiness training; and instruction in self-advocacy, are provided to students with disabilities (ages 14-21) who need assistance in finding a career path that matches their interests and abilities. Once a career path has been selected, post-secondary education and training programs are made available with DRS funds to help individuals get the specialized college, apprenticeship, or employment supports they need to be successful in the workplace.

In the Labor Market Information (LMI) analysis section of this plan, the subsection on education presents occupational projections by both level of education and by training through 2026, as well as poverty rate, median earnings, employment status, and turnover rate by education level. Compared with the United States, WV has a much lower percentage of the population aged 25 and older with a Bachelor's degree or higher. WV ranks last in this category at 19.9 percent, with the national rate of 30.9 percent.

Communication skills, such as Active Listening, and Speaking, along with other skills such as Social Perceptiveness, Service Orientation, and Reading Comprehension are projected to be in the highest demand throughout the decade. It is imperative for the vast majority of the State's workforce to continuously upgrade, expand, and improve their existing job skills to remain competitive as technology becomes even more entrenched in the workplace environment over the coming years.

Given the low level of formal education in the state, WV will concentrate on training for "middle skill" occupations that require additional training or education beyond high school, but not a four-year college degree. This graduated approach will target certifications, and 12 to 24-month programs in highly transferrable technical skills.

This approach will allow the state to meet workers "where they are" in their skill sets and build on that base. One example of this approach is the partnership with education on the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) to train coal miners impacted with mass dislocation.

The State will encourage LWDBs to engage in partnerships with local educational entities, businesses, community-based organizations, etc. in order to communicate the benefits of technical training and the development of robust and comprehensive career pathways models.

WFWV partners with Adult Education, CTEs, and the Community and Technical College System (CTCS) to develop and promote streamlined training courses for individuals who already possess some transferable skills. These streamlined programs will have multiple points of entry and lead to nationally recognized credentials in technical occupations and will allow individuals to enter the workforce more quickly.

WFWV promotes technical training through our website and through activities such as workshops, job fairs, rapid response activities, youth programs, social media, informational meetings, etc. We support efforts to better understand the connections between technology-based economic development and education and skills development for existing workers.

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.

WV's WDS partners are historically successful in serving customers and putting its populace to work. These alliances can be amplified at the state and local level to identify and overcome any areas of weakness that emerge. The strength of WV's WDS is demonstrated by the relationships already formed through the ICT and the identified prospects for coordinated service delivery.

WV's MACC system provides a powerful tool to assist the workforce development system with the coordination of service delivery. The MACC is an integrated case management, referral, and federal reporting system that supports WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, TAA, Veteran Employment and Training Services (VETS), NDWG, and Rapid Response programs. The MACC's capacity to support integrated case management, data sharing, and reporting, allows career planners to see the full range of services participants have received from any covered program.

WV's CTCS offers grants and programs that link companies with colleges. Whether it's customized training, skill enhancements, certificate or associate degree programs, if a company needs education or training to get the right workforce-WV's CTCS is prepared to deliver.

<u>Learn & Earn</u>

This program is the leading workforce development, economic development, and educational partnership in the Mountain State. Learn & Earn connects employers with students through colleges, allowing students to take technical courses while gaining paid work experiences. The student pay is shared by the company and the college, and students receive at least $10 per hour to work in the field they are studying.

- 1-year or 2-year degree programs
- Co-op experience must pay no less than $10/hour
- Employer gains a highly qualified employee and a future skilled labor pool
- Students earn valuable OJT while attending school

- 50/50 employer & college matching reimbursement

Rapid Response Advance Grant

This grant is awarded to colleges to partner with industries on projects that address the state's workforce needs - including pre-employment programs, pre-preparation programs, skills upgrades, new and expanding companies, and job retention.

Tech Program Development

This program supports the creation and development of technical programs that are in high demand, lead to high-wage careers, and enhance economic development efforts across the Mountain State. Eligible programs must target high-demand occupations that will result in wages averaging at least $12 per hour with benefits.

Tech Scholars Program

This program provides scholarships to students who enroll in high-demand, applied technology programs.

50/50 employer & community college matching contribution

- Must lead to a Certificate of Applied Science (CAS) or Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
- Employer benefits by investing in a skilled workforce
- Students gain much-needed financial assistance while attending school

WV's WDS partners have discovered that overlaps and duplication of efforts are warranted. That overlap and duplication is contributed to focused eligibility requirements for some program and open enrollment to others. To illustrate, DRS has identified a weakness. The issue is a lack of human resources caused, in part, by vacant positions and increased retirements. DRS is currently under an Order of Selection (OOS) and has closed OOS Categories2, 3 and 4; these individuals may still apply for services and be placed on a waitlist. While Rehabilitation Services is unable to serve these individuals, referrals will be made, as appropriate, to WFWV and Adult Education for services. If additional resources become available, DRS may serve individuals from the waitlist. The system is complex and takes a coordinated effort among all program partners to develop a skilled workforce able to meet the diverse demands of business and industry.

WV's WDS partners agree to sustain an integrated comprehensive workforce development system for the delivery and information sharing of the core partner program services. The creation of this system will ensure universal access by all customers by providing a program that is uniform, consistent and responsive to the job seeker and employer communities. The system will encourage cross-training of mandated partners to ensure true integration of the core programs within the system. As a result, programs will remain flexible; yet, they will be expandable in the AJCWV. Through input from customers and core partners, the program will promote continuous improvement.

Collaboration, coordination, and constant reexamination by partners will ensure continuous improvement of how the system serves customers. Working together to overcome identified issues such as accessibility of network computer systems, better alignment of efforts and policies, community visibility and infrastructure costs will be key to stay ahead of the ever-changing economy and the diverse needs of workers and employers.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

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

The WDS is comprised of three primary entities: WFWV, DRS, and Adult Education. The WDS provides career and training services statewide to over 100,000 West Virginians each year. In Program Year (PY) 2018 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), WFWV served 98,162 individuals, while Adult Education enrolls approximately 12,000 students annually. DRS served 8,191 individuals with disabilities during Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 (October 1, 2018-September 30, 2019). The WDS assists participants in gaining employment by virtue of resourceful and committed personnel, statewide coverage via a plethora of convenient locations, a wide variety of services, and continuing relationships with businesses.

Personnel

The WDS employs a number of professional staff throughout the state to fulfill its mission to put West Virginians to work by providing career and training services to the various participants in the labor market.

WFWV employs 299 permanent employees and 82 temporary employees statewide. Staffing includes the positions of Employment Program Interviewers, Veterans Representatives, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Deputy's, Administrative/Supervisory staff, and Support Staff of various job categories. The AJCs provide work force resources, including job opportunities, unemployment compensation, training, tax incentives, veteran's services and labor market information. WFWV staff play a vital role in providing services at 18 AJCs located strategically throughout the state. WFWV services are available to claimants, job seekers, and employers using the largest online database of job seekers and job openings in the state.

Adult Education employs approximately 120 full/part-time instructors to provide educational services to adult learners in the State. Over 55 percent of the Adult Education instructors have more than three years of teaching experience. Adult Education employs six Regional Coordinators around the state to provide technical assistance to program administrators and instructors in the areas of student retention, professional development, data management, partnership development, curriculum, and instruction.

DRS employs 80 rehabilitation counselors statewide currently serving approximately 8,100 individuals with disabilities. DRS anticipates serving a projected 6,466 individuals in FY 2021. DRS also has, as part of its 80 rehabilitation counselors, a subset of 59 counselors assigned to high schools throughout the State to provide pre-employment transition services, as well as other services, to students with disabilities. Additionally, DRS has nine Employment Specialists throughout the State maintaining relationships with businesses, providing job placement and job development services, and acquiring labor market information.

Locations

WV's WDS provides convenient coverage for all 55 counties of the State. Workforce development services are provided from over 100 locations, with higher concentrations in more densely populated areas.

WFWV consists of seven geographic regions, with each having at least one comprehensive AJC, at minimum. In total, the seven regions hold 10 comprehensive centers, 5 satellite centers and 17 affiliate sites throughout the State. One of the goals of the AJCWV is to offer job seekers and

employers ready access to the many workforce development resources available in a local region.

Adult Education programs are established in all 55 counties in WV with some counties having multiple locations. There are approximately 100 class locations statewide. Programs are located in various sites such as Adult Learning Centers, Career Technical Centers, Community College Campuses, Libraries, Community-based Organizations, Workforce Centers, and Correctional Facilities.

DRS is comprised of 6 geographic districts, with multiple branch offices within each district. In total, DRS has 26 branch offices, including offices at AJCWV and co-location (within the same building) with WFWV at several sites. Additionally, DRS holds office space within some of the largest high schools in the State, to facilitate service provision to students with disabilities.

Services

The WDS provides a wide array of career and training services to promote quality employment outcomes to job seekers in WV and assist WV employers with their labor needs. These services are provided not only at AJCs and field offices, but also at homes, in schools, at places of business, and even online.

WFWV provides a number of services to the people of WV, including Job Seeker Services, Veterans Services, Dislocated Workers Services, Employer Services, Unemployment Compensation, and Labor Market Information.

Adult Education services include Orientation, Assessment, On-Site Classes, Customized Training (conducted in cooperation with employers), and Technology Training designed to enhance student transition and retention.

DRS is fully committed to providing comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities, who seek to obtain, retain, or maintain competitive, integrated employment. These services are highly individualized. DRS services together with pre-employment transition services, cover a spectrum of individualized needs, including Medical, Educational, Employment, Career and Training, and other Support needs.

Business Relations

A key component of the success of the WDS is the success that the system has had in maintaining strong relationships with businesses and employers across the State.

DRS employs nine Employment Specialists who provide statewide coverage in their task of maintaining business relations in the State of West Virginia. These relations entail not only placement of individuals with disabilities into positions, but also the acquisition of labor market information, complementing the information acquired by WFWV. DRS and WFWV work together to provide the most comprehensive labor market information available.

WFWV is able to produce and provide extensive labor market information to its participants, and to the public in general, thanks to communication and exchange of information with employers regarding opportunities, expected growth, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities that these employers expect from potential employees.

<u>New Business Services Unit</u>

While WFWV has always offered and continues to offer many and varied services to employers, 2019 has seen the implementation of a new Business Services Unit and approach proposed by Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-16 WIOA Operating Guidance. WFWV has chosen to focus on "Retention" and "Repeat" as pilot approaches and primary indicators of performance for measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

- Approach 1: Retention with the Same Employer which addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers. In 2018 our retention rate was 63.5 percent (see attached report "WIOA-Effectiveness in Serving Employers" for PY 2018 and dated 10/1/2019).

- Approach 2: Repeat Business Customers which addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time. In PY 2018, the repeat rate was 13.1 percent.

In establishing a WFWV Business Services Unit, we are using indicators to show areas needing improvement and focusing on indicators at quarterly meetings. Our members include:

- Employer Representatives from our seven LWDBs
- WFWV Local Veteran Employment Representatives
- DRS
- Adult Education
- Senior Services

Programs and initiatives offered by the Business Services Unit are available to employers and which will enhance the labor force by utilizing these programs and services include:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Federal Bonding
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs
- Apprenticeship promotion
- Recruiting employers to American Job Centers (AJC)
- Connecting jobseekers by facilitating relationships
- Rapid Response
- Veterans Services
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW)
- Facilities usage for recruiting and interviews
- Assistance with job fairs
- Assistance in providing accommodations for employees (DRS)

- Educational assistance programs
- Labor Market Information
- Employer engagement in unemployment adjudication
- Resume workshops
- Interviewing workshops
- Job Development assistance
- Early intervention strategies for layoff aversions (WV Development Office)
- Industry and Sector Strategies

The West Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWFDB) is structured to satisfy both federal and state requirements maintaining a majority of business representation and additional needs set forth by State legislation.

Continued emphasis on the improvement of service delivery through organizations such as the WVWFDB and the ICT will result in a more responsive and responsible system that will meet the needs of its customers. This will also promote increased economic development through the attraction, retention, and growth of businesses by providing properly trained workers who will equip businesses to compete in today's economy.

The ICT includes policy making representatives of all State agencies involved in workforce development. Monthly meetings are conducted to discuss new initiatives, collaborations, and provide cross training information on respective partner programs. These regular meetings ensure strong coordination of policies relating to workforce programs and activities.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

1. Vision

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

West Virginia's Governor Jim Justice understands the vital importance of West Virginia's employers having a well—trained, workforce—ready labor force. He also is equally aware of the critical need to provide more individuals with the opportunity to be productive members of the state's labor force and, thereby, to improve the state's labor participation rate.

As part of this, West Virginia is taking a comprehensive approach to improving its workforce development. In 2019 Governor Justice signed an executive order establishing the Governor's Downstream Jobs Task Force to build an infrastructure for manufacturing operations in West Virginia to support the anticipated expansion of the petrochemical industry in the region. This Appalachian Petrochemical Renaissance could lead to significant growth in the state with more than 100,000 steady jobs and $28 billion in economic expansion for the State.

Jobs & Hope West Virginia was established by Governor Jim Justice and the West Virginia Legislature to provide a comprehensive response to the substance use disorder crisis in West Virginia by providing residents all-inclusive services to overcome barriers that have impeded their ability to obtain and maintain employment. While the target population is individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, Jobs & Hope West Virginia is open to any eligible participants who wish to eliminate barriers to employment. Jobs & Hope West Virginia plays a

critical role in the recovery process as individuals rebuild their lives which ultimately leads to building and sustaining a healthy and thriving state economy. Those who participate in the program are assessed individually to identify employment and education goals, detect barriers and receive support and assistance with reaching those goals and overcoming identified barriers. Participants have access to a wide array of services to include job placement, assistance securing transportation and childcare, reinstatement of driver's license, and if needed, assistance applying for expungement.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Enacted in July 2014, WIOA is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the nation's public workforce system. WV is well positioned to benefit early from WIOA's provisions given that the state has been implementing key provisions, including:

1. Alignment of unified strategic planning across "core" programs, which include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth programs; Adult Education and Literacy programs; the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; and Title I of the Rehabilitation Act programs, and;

2. Implementation of a business-led statewide sector strategy project that includes state/local workforce boards and community colleges. The law is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

WIOA emphasizes employers' engagement across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers. WIOA adds flexibility at the local level to provide incumbent worker training and transitional jobs as allowable activities and promotes work-based training, for example by increasing OJT reimbursement rates to 75 percent. The law also emphasizes training that leads to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

Simulated Workplace

This is an innovative, new statewide educational initiative that is restructuring the state's career-technical schools and implementing workplace and business learning protocols that align with general requirements and expectations of WV's workplace, including teamwork, random drug testing, professionalism, attendance and safety. The education of the students in done in a business environment where the students manage the enterprise, review performance, collaborate on the objectives and develop work-ready skills and aptitudes (punctuality, attendance, teamwork, effective communications, etc.).

WV Advanced Career Education

The WV Department of Education's (WVDE) Advanced Career Education program (WV ACE) offers credentials, certifications, and licenses in growing industries across the state high school graduates (and adults) so they can better prepare and position themselves for employment. WV ACE-Your Future, Your Career, Your Way.

Learn & Earn

This program is the leading workforce development, economic development, and educational partnership in the Mountain State. Learn & Earn connects employers with students through colleges, allowing students to take technical courses while gaining paid work experiences. The

student pay is shared by the company and the college, and students receive at least $10 per hour to work in the field they are studying in.

- 1-year or 2-year degree programs
- Co-op experience must pay no less than $10/hour
- Employer gains a highly qualified employee and a future skilled labor pool
- Students earn valuable on-the-job training while attending school
- 50/50 employer & college matching reimbursement

National Health Emergency Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant

This grant addresses the Opioid Crisis in West Virginia. This grant is being used to create disaster relief employment as well as to provide employment and training activities, including supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction and overdoses.

Adult Education: Career and Technical Education (WVDE-CTE) & Industry Credential Certificate Programs

Adult students in WV have the opportunity to complete industry credentialed certificate programs at career and technical schools across the state. The adult CTE programs are offered at the public career and technical centers throughout the state and aligned with the WVDE CTE curriculum. Adults can enroll in secondary programs if space is available at no cost or in stand-alone adult programs that are nationally accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) for financial aid access to those who qualify. Approximately 2,500 adults graduate annually from these programs with technical skills and credentials.

- Health
- Architecture and Construction
- Transportation
- Human Services
- Information Technology

Adult Education: Veterans

Inventoried existing Veterans workforce training and education programs available in WV provided strong support for tuition assistance (Veteran's Re-Education Act Fund, Veterans Upward Bound, etc.) and educational support programs for veterans, particularly for those who have exhausted the GI Bill and need a new vocation due to dislocation or unemployment. Special emphasis also was placed on programs to facilitate re-employment of returning active duty and reserve personnel.

Adult Education: Transitioning from Welfare Assistance to Self-Sustainability West Virginia Works

Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF): DHHR is implementing changes to the state's temporary assistance benefits program (West Virginia Works) for families in need. The changes by the department are designed to reform this welfare program and restructure programs so they focus much more on incentivizing and transitioning these families into greater

employment outcomes and, ultimately, self-sufficiency achievement. The best long-term outcome for everyone is if we align the direct assistance to these families so they can prepare themselves to realize the benefits of a job and a stable paycheck.

Juvenile Justice Reform: This program has been spearheaded by the West Virginia Intergovernmental Task Force on Juvenile Justice that in 2014 conducted a comprehensive, data-driven study of the state's juvenile justice system. The analysis showed that the vast majority of youth removed from their homes and placed in state facilities are lower-level offenders-such as "status" offenses-behavior that would not even be considered a crime if committed by adults. Not only is this costly, but also has the potential to undermine these youths from becoming future workers and productive members of society. Many of the task force's recommendations were enacted into law in early 2015.

Offender Reentry Initiative

The Offender Reentry Initiative addresses prisoners' health, mental health, job skills, education, substance abuse and other issues. The goal is to help prisoners succeed when they are released.

Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Under Title IV, DRS provides services that help allow individuals with disabilities to avail themselves of work-based learning (work-based training and OJT). Title IV emphasizes the need to provide pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities prior to their exiting the school system.

Additionally, the new federal act emphasizes creating employer engagement within the community by creating work-based learning experiences for individuals, thus allowing employers to be matched with skilled workers.

DRS is already providing services that will allow individuals with disabilities to avail themselves of work-based learning. DRS partners with employers to provide work-based training and OJT. This training is provided across all sectors of employment and ensures OJT rather than erroneous skills training.

Other:

- Development of apprenticeship training programs
- Alignment and expansion of entrepreneurship/start-up ventures
- Promotion of youth entrepreneurship in our school system

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 must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment[8] and other populations.[9]

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

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS).

For WIOA to continue to be successful the workforce development system must be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible. Partners in the workforce development system will work

together in order to maximize benefits to our customers and improve WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers.

Collaborate with employers utilizing a variety of methods to develop solutions to their workforce needs.

Goal 3 Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals.

Identify employment barriers of individuals and develop solutions. The removal of barriers is a key component to improving WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways.

Emphasize career pathways to assist individuals entering and moving within the labor force and to educate employers on the advantages of career pathways.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth.

Identify employment challenges faced by youth and provide access to postsecondary training/education and employment opportunities to improve WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 6: Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate.

WV has the lowest Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in the United States. Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring that West Virginia's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to expand.

Serving Veterans and Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The WV WDS goals were developed to benefit all consumers of the WV WDS, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with other barriers to employment. Goal 1 will allow the WV WDS to increase its efficiency, resulting in additional resources available to serve individuals with barriers to employment. Goal 2 will enhance opportunities for employment for all consumers. Goal 3 is a direct focus of the WV WDS to channel fiscal and human resources to assist individuals with overcoming barriers to employment. Goal 4 allows consumers, including veterans and individuals with barriers to employment, to better navigate with more flexibility in the timing of their educational, training, and employment needs. Goal 5 represents a channeling of personnel and fiscal resources to ensure younger WV WDS consumers, including youth with disabilities and/or other barriers to employment, have an increased ability to achieve measurable skills gains and recognized postsecondary credentials that will increase the quality of employment outcomes of youth consumers. Finally, Goal 6 will reignite the focus of obtaining employment outcomes for WV WDS consumers, including veterans and individuals with barriers to employment.

3. Performance Goals

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, 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 table.

4. Assessment

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

The state will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce system and those educational programs that support and work with it on the basis of their collective ability to produce career pathways leading to industry-valued, recognized postsecondary credentials and apprenticeship enrollments.

To match the supply and demand of the State's labor market, the WV WDS gathers employment needs data provided by employers and subsequently generates and disseminates LMI, both at the statewide and local level. This LMI, published by WFWV, provides short- and long- term projections of high demand occupations throughout the State of West Virginia, at both the state and local level. From these projections, the State is able to recognize the credentials, certifications, and enrollments needed by its citizenry to achieve placement in the labor force in the coming years. Similarly, the State is able to identify the institutions of such enrollment and credentialing that the citizenry may utilize. One of the goals of WV's WDS is to develop career pathways for individuals seeking employment, particularly in high demand occupations. In order to do this, it is vital for the WIOA core partners to provide to those individuals: LMI, including information regarding projected high demand occupations; an enhanced sense of informed choice regarding their opportunities for employment; and information about how to obtain qualifications for employment, especially in projected high demand occupations. The WDS will assess effectiveness in this goal by monitoring enrollment and achievement at institutions related to these projected high demand occupations and use this assessment to determine where any underserved areas lie.

An emphasis will be placed on high-demand, job driven skills attainment. Specifically, the state will emphasize "demand-driven skills-attainment" in the policies it sets pertaining to local and regional workforce plans. For example, in setting performance standards for Local Boards, the state will give great weight to WIOA performance measures related to program completion and credential attainment and will validate the labor market value of programs by examining the employment and wage outcomes of the individuals served.

The WVWFDB will work with regionally organized LWDBs and other state plan partners to determine the extent to which persons receiving training and education services aligned with regional industry needs are actually obtaining employment in occupations and sectors directly related to their programs of study.

Developing the capacity for tracking employment related to training and education programs of study will require the study and development of an operational plan for collecting the relevant information. The WVWFDB will work with the three core partners and all mandatory partners to build this capacity.

<u>General Policy Framework for Program Alignment State Plan Policies</u>

The state will employ and will require state plan partners to adopt or participate in (to the extent appropriate for each program), seven policy strategies that frame, align, and guide program coordination at the state, local, and regional levels. These policies (discussed in further detail in the section on strategies, tactics, and resources) will include the following:

- Sector Strategies: Aligning workforce and education programs with leading and emergent industry sectors' skills needs.
- Career Pathways: Enabling of progressive skills development through education and training programs, using multiple entry and exit points, so that each level of skills development corresponds with a labor market payoff for those being trained or educated.
- Regional Partnerships: Building partnerships between industry leaders, workforce professionals, education and training providers, and economic development leaders to develop workforce and education policies that support regional economic growth.
- Earn & Learn: Using training and education best practices that combine applied learning opportunities with material compensation while facilitating skills development in the context of actual labor market participation.
- Supportive Services: Providing ancillary services like childcare, transportation, and counseling to facilitate program completion by those enrolled in training and education courses.
- Creating Cross-System Data Capacity: Using diagnostic labor market data to assess where to invest, and also, the use performance data to assess the value of those investments.
- Integrated Service Delivery: Braiding resources and coordinating services at the local level to meet client needs.

The State Plan provides the policy framework and direction for day-to-day operations of WIOA funded programs. The role of state agency and state department plan partners under the plan is to provide policy direction, program oversight, support, and technical assistance for and to local and regional service providers covered by the plan. State plan partners include the following:

- WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV)
- West Virginia Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)
- West Virginia Community and Technical College System (CTCS)
- West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE)
- West Virginia State Board of Education (SBE)
- West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR)
- Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development

<u>Regional Plans and "Regional Sector Pathways</u>

Regional plans and partnership required by WIOA will function under the State Plan as the primary mechanism for aligning educational and training provider services with regional industry sector needs.

Alignment at the regional level will be accomplished through the regional implementation of three of the seven policy strategies emphasized by the State Plan. These include sector strategies, career pathways, and organized regional partnerships. All three of these policies will be required under the regional planning guidance issued by the WVWFDB to LWDBs organized into the regional planning units required under WIOA Section 106.

A primary objective and requirement of regional plans will be to work with community colleges and other training and education providers, including the state's Adult Education Block Grant regional consortia to build "regional sector pathway" programs, by which we mean, career pathway programs that result in the attainment of industry-valued and recognized postsecondary credentials aligned to regional industry workforce needs. The WVWFDB, working alongside other state agencies, will provide technical assistance to regional partnerships comprised of industry leaders, workforce professionals, and regional training and education providers to help align programs and services delivered with industry sector workforce needs.

Under the State Plan, the key regional partners involved with the development and implementation of regional plans will include the following:

- Industry sector leaders, associations, and business organizations
- Regionally organized LWDBs
- Local economic development organizations
- Regional consortia of community colleges
- Regional consortia of adult basic education providers (including both WIOA Title II and other state-funded basic education programs)
- Representatives of K-12 CTE programs funded by either Perkins V funds or various state-specific CTE funding streams, when relevant county offices of education and other local educational agencies determine that participation will benefit the students participating in their CTE programs.

Regional efforts under WIOA are expected to build upon the WVWFDB's regional Sector Strategies Project discussed later in the State Plan.

<u>Local Plans and American Job Centers of West Virginia</u>

Under the State Plan, the purpose of local workforce plans and partnerships is to facilitate access to workforce services at the local level.

Local workforce development plans will ensure a baseline level of WIOA core program alignment compliant with federal regulations at the local level, in and through the AJCWV, the state's One-Stop system, so that program services are coordinated, and when appropriate, integrated to make accessible a menu of customizable services available to clients on the basis of client needs.

Under the State Plan and all relevant policies issued by the state concerning One-Stop design, operations, and partnerships, LWDBs will be directed to operate AJCs as an access point for

programs that provide for “demand-driven skills attainment.” From this perspective, AJCs will be operated as an “on ramp” or “gateway” to the “Regional Sector Pathways” programs either built-out or identified through the regional planning process described above.

AJCWV will continue to provide the full menu of services as they have historically provided and the AJCs will continue to function as labor exchanges but there will be much greater emphasis on treating AJCs as an access point for education and training services for those who want and need it. Further detail on ACJ design and the operation of the AJC is provided in the body of the State Plan.

C. STATE STRATEGY

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23)

We will continue an approach based on the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the employer. Our WDS must examine the needs of the employer, assess the skills and skills gaps of the workforce and then create solutions to ensure maximum benefit to both customer groups.

Strategy 2.1: Partner with employers to identify workforce needs.

Strategy 2.2: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of employers.

Strategy 3.1: Assess needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training.

Strategy 3.2: Use the Employment First framework to ensure competitive, integrated employment as the priority option for individuals with significant disabilities.

Strategy 3.3: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of individuals.

It is imperative that the workforce development system provide education and training for skills that lead to quality employment in high-demand jobs or entry-level occupations that lead to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways. The State will support career pathways that help adults and youth enter the labor force and/or advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation.

Strategy 4.1: Adhere to WIOA career pathways development.

Strategy 4.2: Enhance current career pathways system.

Strategy 4.3: Educate individuals and employers to encourage career pathways in training and employment environments.

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

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS)

For WIOA to continue to be successful the WDS must be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible. Partners in the WDS will work together in order to maximize benefits to our customers and improve WV's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR).

Strategy 1.1: Core partners will collaborate to align program initiatives and processes.

Region 1 LWDB has developed and implemented our MOU/Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) with our core, required and additional partners.

Regular quarterly partner meetings are held in each of our counties to encourage collaboration. A unified referral form has been developed for inter-organizational use to provide maximum resources to individuals served in Region 1.

Region 2 LWDB continues to work with partners to create a better understanding of what a truly integrated workforce looks like. This begins with the MOU with all partners in agreement to cooperate. We agree that the main purpose is service to all customers of the WDS.

Region 5 LWDB core and required partner staff jointly developed, and have in place, operational policies and procedures for regional AJCs that reflect an integrated system of performance, communications and case management services. The Region 5 LWDB, core and required partner staff jointly developed, and have in place, a "Participant Common Referral" form and a "Participant Information Release" form for customer use at regional AJCs. These efforts have helped decrease duplication of efforts with participant data and information collection. Additionally, the Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners staff jointly developed, and have in place, strategies, goals and objectives for regional AJCs. Strategies, goals, and objectives are reviewed by all staff no less than twice a program year for updates and/or additions. A "One Stop Center Partner Service Matrix" is in place that details core and required partners' programs and services and is made available for use by all core partners, required partners, AJC staff, and customers.

The Region 6 LWDB annually updates the required partner MOU to include the process for cooperation among partners in providing services to all customers of the Region 6 service area. The MOU includes the details of infrastructure costs of each partner.

Region 7 LWDB updates MOUs on an annual basis and has a signed IFA with partner agencies. Region 7 also conducts quarterly Management Consortium meetings with the core partners.

Annually update MOU with all partners.

Conduct regularly scheduled meetings to discuss workforce development. The meetings consist of members from each agency subject to the reporting provisions of WIOA. Meetings with partners will promote program integration to eliminate duplication of efforts.

- ICT (monthly)
- WVWFDB (quarterly)

DRS maintained and continues to maintain a presence with each of WV's seven LWDBs. DRS has signed MOUs and IFAs with each LWDB. Each LWDB has a DRS representative who is active in the Board's activities and decision-making process.

Strategy 1.2: Ensure cross-training of all workforce development system partners.

Partners are invited to attend webinars on relevant WIOA topics, e.g., Youth Programs and Business Services. The Region 1 LWDB hosted partner training on Stigma Reduction and Awareness and DRS included partners in trainings such as Suicide Prevention. A region-wide Active Shooter Training was conducted for the safety of our customers and staff at the AJCs. Quarterly partner meetings provide an opportunity for cross-training on new programs/services which focus on the joint goal of training and employment for our customers.

The Region 1 One-Stop Operator, along with each organization, developed a comprehensive Resource Guide for each county. The Resource Guide was compiled to aid customers and staff in finding services that are beneficial.

Region 1 LWDB partners have been trained to utilize a unified referral form to assess customers' needs and ensure they receive the services needed. Referrals may be made to organizations/programs such as DRS for those who have disabilities, Adult Education for those who may need additional basic education or Empowered Employment for those who have barriers to employment.

Region 1 will participate in training on the state management information system (MACC).

Region 2 LWDB will ensure cross-training of local workforce development staff. Promote and use the proposed state developed on-line training program for all workforce staff. Develop team based customer service for all customers of the AJC. Staff will continue training to serve individuals with barriers, and when applicable, refer customers to our partners at DRS.

Region 3 LWDB shares a PowerPoint presentation with all partners that includes information on services and partners at the Charleston AJC. This PowerPoint plays on a continuous loop on the television in the lobby for individuals.

Region 3's One-Stop Operator trains workforce partners and regularly shares information with engaged partners.

Region 3 participates in all available trainings on the MACC system.

Region 5 AJC front-line staff is provided with intensive training no less than twice a program year by Region 5 LWDB, core and/or required partner staff to ensure they are knowledgeable about basic WIOA eligibility requirements and core and required partner programs and services so they can effectively and efficiently serve eligible individuals. Training typically focuses on: customer service; direction/guidance on how to adequately serve individuals with disabilities; effective assessment of individuals with barriers to employment; how best to assist eligible individuals with accessing outside resources; and, introduction of any new regulations, policy, procedures, etc. Core and required partners, as well as non-required partners, and front-line staff are all encouraged to participate in regular cross-training sessions that are offered at the Wheeling AJC no less than four times a program year. Cross-training sessions typically include various community speakers who familiarize staff about community programs and services and grant funding available.

Region 6's One-Stop Operator has developed a partner resource book for distribution to all partner offices. The partners provided a description of the agency and the services they provide, which has then been compiled into a resource book for front-line staff to use when customers inquire about services available within the Region 6 One-Stop Partner Network.

Region 6's One-Stop Operator has developed an online cross training program for all One-Stop staff to take as part of the commitment by Region 6 WDB to ensure that the One-Stop staff have the information they need to better serve the customers of Region 6. After quarterly partner

meetings, at which a different partner highlights their services each meeting, the PowerPoint is sent to all One-Stop staff in the region to look over and then take a short online survey to measure their understanding of that partner's services.

Region 6 will promote the use of the proposed state-developed on-line training program for all workforce development staff.

Region 6 will follow the state's lead in moving toward team-based customer service. Region 6 will engage in team-based system management for the customers at our AJCWV. A high priority will be placed in staff training on serving individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, and lacking adult basic education.

Region 6 will promote regional One-Stop Partner Network workforce staff to participate in state-led training on the use of the MACC system.

Region 7 has developed a comprehensive case management manual as a resource guide for all AJC staff. Region 7 holds weekly staff meetings that include the One-Stop Director where cross training and other staff needs are continuously discussed. Quarterly One-Stop meeting with partners also address cross-training needs that may exist and how we can better serve mutual clients.

As data integration across the core partners' systems is being completed, training will be conducted for staff that utilize the system. Staff will be able to access relevant consumer data shared from partner programs in order to coordinate and improve service delivery and employment outcomes for all WDS consumers.

Cross-training for partner agencies is conducted at the local level at each AJCWV across the state. The agencies will strive to continue these cross-trainings.

DRS will train partner staff regarding service to individuals with disabilities, including etiquette, accessibility, accommodations, resources, and other relevant topics, as appropriate.

Deploy a comprehensive on-line training program to provide exposure to WDS services.

Engage in team-based system management for the customers at our American Job Centers of West Virginia (AJCWV).

Train staff to serve individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities and lacking adult basic education.

- DRS will train partner staff regarding service to individuals with disabilities, including etiquette, accessibility, accommodations, resources, and other relevant topics, as appropriate.

Technical assistance and training will be provided on the state management information system to all workforce development staff, both regionally and locally.

Strategy 1.3: Communicate with all partners within the workforce development system.

Region 1 LWDB posts weekly updates that are shared with dozens of partners within our region.

Region 1 LWDB hosts quarterly partner meetings throughout the region.

Region 2 will communicate with all partners within the workforce development system. Partners will continue to meet quarterly, monthly meeting for the core partners. The One-Stop

Operator schedules and coordinates the meetings. Region 2 LWDB's website and Facebook page are updated with messages and other information from partners.

Region 3 LWDB posts information on the website and Facebook page, including upcoming events, job and resource fairs, and operational policies. Important news, policies, and information are shared via email for board members, staff, partners and/or employers

Region 3 holds monthly staff meetings, bi-monthly board meetings and quarterly partner meetings (training providers, One-Stop partners, and youth partners).

Region 4's One-Stop Coordinator continues to conduct monthly One-Stop manager team meetings to identify areas of collaboration and share information about agency specific updates. One-Stop Coordinator will continue to conduct Partner Staff meetings at the Affiliate and Satellite office throughout the region to communicate program updates as well as events, such as career/Job fairs and schedule workshops.

Meetings between the Region 5 LWDB, core partners, required partners, and One-Stop Operator staff are held once a quarter during the program year. The purpose of meeting is to discuss daily operations, processes, procedures, etc. at regional AJCs and development of/updates to policies and procedures that govern regional AJCs, etc. Frequent daily communications also occurs between Region 5 LWDB, AJC, core and required partner staff. Core and required partner staff are co-located at regional AJCs. The quarterly partner meetings are held at a central location in the region and are well attended by the partners. Cross training and upcoming partner activities are highlighted at each meeting.

Region 6 will continue email blasts to provide a means of keeping partners updated on activities and events happening in the region in between the quarterly partner meetings.

Region 6 maintains a regional website at www.regionviwv.org with policies and program information on a regional level and links to state and federal websites as a means of providing employers and job seekers with valuable information they need in order to make informed decisions about hiring and job search and training opportunities.

Region 6's Executive Director attends the state-convened monthly meetings with LWDB directors.

Region 6 Facebook page for One-Stop Partner Network will continue to provide another means of communication between partners and the public.

Region 7 maintains a website with a calendar that is updated weekly. Region 7 has quarterly Management Consortium meetings with One-Stop partners and quarterly Business Services/Implementation Team meetings with employers and partners who deliver business services in the region. Region 7 has quarterly training provider meetings with all approved educational institutions that deliver demand occupational training to WIOA clients without our region. Sector Partner Strategy meetings are held in conjunction with the CTCS (Blue Ridge CTC and Eastern WV CTC).

Each LWDB has a DRS representative who is active in the LWDB's activities and decision-making process.

DRS has maintained regular communication with WFWV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This has been accomplished through regular meetings of the WDS, written communications, teleconferences, and other media. DRS, particularly through its Employment Specialists, stayed informed of

emerging careers and occupations via WFWV's LMI website. DRS Employment Specialists have also continuously collected employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS. DRS registers its job-ready consumers with WFWV in order to better serve employers by providing them with a base of potential employees.

Strategy 1.4: Maintain integrated state management information system utilized by core partners.

Through the Re-employment Systems Integration Dislocated Worker Grant, the core partner agencies continued to develop an integrated data sharing system until December 31, 2018. The development of a common Information and Technology (IT) system to be used by core partners continues to be a priority for WFWV. Representatives from the core partners met on a regular basis to create a document outlining the required data elements to be shared and how those elements will be exchanged. WFWV modified the MACC system to extend the integrated registration and case management system to incorporate sharing of customer information with DRS and Adult Education programs. Each partner can query data in real time to obtain information for the customer to review and correct as necessary prior to program enrollment. In addition, ongoing service delivery can be reflected in all partner systems by utilizing additional real time data exchanges. Each partner integrated the data from the other systems into their current case management system in ways that are familiar to their case managers reducing the need to retrain front-line staff.

Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners share a common participant tracking system (MACC system). Using the MACC system helps decrease duplication of efforts on participant data and information collection for all parties, and more importantly, makes the service delivery process more effective and efficient for customers. When an individual accesses the local WDS, AJC staff assists him/her with identifying goals and the service needed to achieve desired goals. AJC staff provides intake, eligibility, registration, skills and initial needs assessment services. Data collected during the intake and initial service delivery is entered into the MACC system. This action results in integrated data collection that core and required partners can access and view at any given time and vice versa. Participant referrals do not require a separate intake process since core and required partner staff is co-located at AJC and because of the shared database. Because this process is so seamless, in many cases, customers won't even be aware that they have been transferred from one program to another. The same holds true when customers are receiving services simultaneously. In these cases, transfers are made, and services are provided uninterrupted.

The Region 6 LWBD will continue to utilize the integrated state management information system to monitor and evaluate performance of core partner programs in relation to the state goals.

Region 7 LWDB will continue to input all WIOA-related data into the MACC system.

Provide user training on the integrated state management information system to workforce development staff, both regionally and locally.

Maintain the integrated state management information system for co-enrollment of individuals receiving services from the core partners.

Utilize the integrated state management information system to monitor and evaluate performance of core partner programs in relation to the six state goals.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers.

Collaborate with employers utilizing a variety of methods to develop solutions to their workforce needs.

Strategy 2.1: Partner with employers to identify workforce needs.

The Region 1 LWDB Business Services Unit uses a broad approach to identify workforce needs. This includes collaborating with economic development authorities, local chambers of commerce, community and technical education centers, community and technical colleges and conducting comprehensive business visits.

The Region 1 Business Services Unit promotes and develops sector strategies by participating in roundtable events that are industry specific.

The Region 2 LWDB will continue communications with employers to identify their needs. Continue to work not only with employers but with economic development groups to identify needed skills in future and current employees.

Region 2 adopts state standards to provide products and services to employers through agency coordination. State agencies will communicate and organize outreach to employers and Region 2 will respond to their stated needs.

Region 2 will promote Out of School Youth (OSY) individuals who have at least a high school diploma, to employers. This encourages the OSY participants to continue their education.

The Region 2 LWDB will continue to encourage and promote the apprenticeship model and where possible Region 2 will continue to partner with the CTCS to share training for apprenticeships.

The Region 3 LWDB analyzes various employment related surveys conducted by employer groups and partners, such as, Charleston Area Alliance, Governor's Guaranteed Workforce, City of Charleston etc. to guide business services initiatives.

Region 3 attends events targeting employers, such as, business after hours, Rotary Club, Economic Development agency meetings and others.

Region 4 LWDB's sector strategy meetings provide an opportunity to listen to the needs of employers for specific skill sets, competencies, and required certifications/trainings.

The Region 4 Employer Solutions Team interview model will help gather regional employer needs.

Region 4's Employer Solutions Network connects resource partners with employers providing information on services available to meet their needs.

Region 5 LWDB is also a partner in the Business Resource Network (BRN). The BRN includes LWDBs from eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and northern WV. The BRN's mission is to help regional businesses strive, grow and create jobs by bringing a strategic and collaborative approach to solving their problems and expanding their opportunities. A "client-centered" approach is used to promote available Region 5 LWDB, core and required partner programs and services so we can meet the complete service needs of employers while delivering measurable results for communities.

The Region 6 LWDB will use a variety of data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment.

Region 6 will solicit employer feedback to identify the skills and competencies necessary for attaining family-sustaining employment. The One-Stop Operator is in the process of developing a Business Customer Satisfaction Survey which will be utilized by the LWDB to assist in improving the types of and delivery of business services.

Region 6 will continue to promote and develop sector strategies based on LMI and employer needs.

Region 6 will adopt state proposed standards for providing products and services to employers through enhanced agency coordination in providing business services and expanded partnerships with economic development providers, local chambers of commerce and other associations serving the needs of employers.

Region 6 will continue to encourage employers to participate in business-education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and youth-serving community organizations with students and OSY to provide career-related experiences and exposure opportunities for youth and young adults through soft skills development, internships, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring. When possible, business-education partnerships will recruit business representatives from industry partnerships, apprenticeship programs, or multi-employer groups that identify common workforce needs of businesses that provide jobs that pay living wages.

The Region 7 LWDB has quarterly Business Services/Implementation Team meetings as well as Eastern Panhandle Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) meetings with employers and partners who deliver business services in the region. Sector Partner Strategy meetings are held in conjunction with the CTCS (Blue Ridge CTC and Eastern WV CTC).

DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WFWV, Adult Education, LWDBs, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has nine employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in WV. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Solicit employer feedback to identify the skills and competencies necessary for employment.

Promote and develop sector strategies based on labor market information and employer needs.

The WVWFDB will set policies for providing services to employers through enhanced agency coordination. State agencies will act as intermediaries for organizing outreach to employers on a wider geographical basis than local regions.

Connect employers to participate in business-education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and community organizations with individuals to provide career-related experiences and employment opportunities such as soft skills development, internships, OJT, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring.

Strategy 2.2: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of employers.

The Region 1 LWDB, in connection with Adult Education, piloted a Certified Nursing Assistant Apprenticeship class utilizing WIOA funding and supportive services. Region 1 also works with the WV Laborer's Training Trust Fund to assist WIOA customers with funding to enter their apprenticeship programs. Region 1 is currently working with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Apprenticeship and Training Representative to develop new apprenticeships throughout the region.

Through participation with employer advisory boards at local community and technical colleges and working with the USDOL Apprenticeship and Training Representative and other organizations, the Region 1 LWDB assists with the development of training programs that offer certifications and employability skills as identified by employers.

The Region 1 LWDB will promote and offer training assistance through programs such as OJT and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). Employers in Region 1 can access OJT to train individuals to meet specific needs and IWT to upgrade skills of current employees to increase the competitiveness of the business.

The Region 1 LWDB Business Services Unit will provide information on multiple training programs to businesses through comprehensive business visits and follow-up communication.

The Region 2 LWDB will assess skill gaps and provide training and counseling to determine any supportive services necessary. The career planner will also determine the willingness level and follow through, once a plan is established. Identify other partners who can assist and assess needs and a direction toward programs of study, at the community college level or through technical training programs.

Region 3 LWDB offers OJT, Transitional Jobs, Incumbent Worker Training and is open to developing customized training opportunities for employers.

Region 5 LWDB core and required partners believe that coordinating with businesses, especially small businesses and businesses in "high demand" industries, is crucial to improving the local WDS. The priority is to increase training and education for job seekers, including those with barriers to employment, to meet the needs of employers, existing and emerging, small, mid-size or large, in "high demand" industries. To do this, it is imperative to remain informed of trends in employment including changes in education and training requirements.

Employers typically need access to qualified individuals and need assistance with recruitment, retention and upgrading skills of their existing workforce. The Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners work to customize services for employers in an effort to meet their needs and demands at any given time. Career Pathways Services for individuals are employer-driven and consist of required skills and credentials needed for "high demand" occupations. Core partners provide programs and services that assist individuals, including those with disabilities, with job development and placement efforts that meet employer needs.

The Region 6 LWDB will encourage expanded access to online education and training programs that result in industry-recognized credentials.

The Region 6 will continue to maintain partnerships with employers, community colleges, and secondary and post-secondary certificate granting schools, with the aim of developing micro-credentials that demonstrate skill development.

The Region 6 will promote the development of Registered Apprenticeship programs, with a focus on non-traditional industries and occupations. The LWDB will refer employers to the Office of Apprenticeship for technical assistance in establishing an apprenticeship.

The Region 6 will continue to foster relationships between the WDS and Adult Education post-secondary and secondary education systems to ensure system alignment, programs of study that support job seeker and employer needs and leveraging of resources to provide students with the best possible chance for success. This includes continuing to look for ways to partner with education through competitive grant opportunities.

The Region 6 Business Services Unit provides information on the public workforce development system when working with new or current employers who are being funded through LWDB funds and or state funding from economic development. It is emphasized to the businesses that it is in their best interest to utilize the free services available through the system.

Region 7 encourages local employers to access workforce development funds in order to facilitate their training needs. Customized Training as well as Incumbent Worker funds are two broad-based avenues in which the Region 7 partners with local employers to enhance the workforce skill set within our region. In addition, the Region 7 continues to partner with local training providers and their state-approved training programs when more traditional occupational or classroom-based training is warranted.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has nine employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in WV. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS–employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job–ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

Maintain partnerships with employers, community colleges, secondary and post- secondary certificate granting schools, and LWDBs to continue micro-credentials that demonstrate skill development. This allows for the attainment of employability skills and measurable skill gains to align career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities.

Promote the development of Registered Apprenticeship programs focusing on non- traditional industries and occupations.

Maintain relationships with the secondary, postsecondary, and adult education systems to ensure that programs of study reflect employer needs.

Encourage employers that receive state funds from economic development and similar programs to utilize the public workforce development system.

To demonstrate WFWV's encouragement of co-enrollment, the following numbers were queried from the MACC from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019:

- WP and WIOA Adult-1,590
- WP and WIOA DW-3,030
- WIOA DW and TAA-398
- WIOA DW and NDWG-1,569
- WIOA Adult and NDWG-438

Goal 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals.

Identify employment barriers of individuals and develop solutions. The removal of barriers is a key component to improving WV's LFPR.

Strategy 3.1: Assess needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training.

Through comprehensive interviewing, educational/career assessment and counseling, the Region 1 LWDB will identify barriers and utilize support services so individuals will be successful in obtaining training and employment goals. To ensure support services needed are being met, individuals may be co-enrolled in partner programs.

Region 3 LWDB individuals are given Tests of Basic Education (TABE), and an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is undertaken to ascertain education levels, skills, knowledge and interest prior to offering training and/or employment options. Monthly follow up is conducted to ensure successful completion of program services.

Region 3 individuals with no or limited work history take five career readiness modules before being referred to individualized career services.

Region 3 conducts comprehensive case management to ensure individual receives necessary supports to be successful in chosen workforce development service (job, training, career readiness).

The TABE test is administered to eligible individuals, especially those in need of basic skills remediation, by the Region 5 One-Stop Operator, core partner, and required partner staff at regional AJCs. DRS administers specific assessments to individuals with disabilities. One-Stop Operator staff also administers the Region's Career Plan Development Manual to further assess individuals. Adult Education is charged with the responsibility of conducting English language assessments for individuals in the region in need of this type of assessment.

The Region 6 LWDB area will provide comprehensive counseling to ascertain supportive service needs of individuals. Skills assessments will be provided in order to determine skills needs/upgrades pertinent to obtain desired employment.

Region 6 will encourage cross-program funding and programmatic integration of workforce preparation activities to develop employability skills, adult education, and occupational training, supplemented by supportive services, as part of career pathway models to ensure that the critical needs of individuals (including those with basic skills deficiencies) are met, allowing the greatest opportunity for employment success. When appropriate, job seekers will be co-enrolled between two or more core programs to accomplish this goal. In addition, integrated systems must incorporate customer-centric design components, where possible.

Region 7-The WIOA rules explain that the Individualized Employment Plan is an individualized career service, jointly developed by the participant and career coach. The Individualized Employment Plan includes an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to obtain these goals and objectives. Individualized Employment Plans are one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment, and to coordinate the various services, including training services, they may need to overcome these barriers.

The Individualized Employment Plan is the basis for the overall case management strategy. The career coach will utilize the Individualized Employment Plan to update strategies and activities as they occur, and to document referral and contact information for services obtained from partner organizations. When reviewing the Individualized Employment Plan, career coaches will document a participant's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments.

Additionally, the Individualized Employment Plan should be:

- Developed in partnership with the participant;
- Used as a tool that can and will change over time, as necessary, to meet the needs of the individual;
- Used as a roadmap to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals; and
- Designed to reflect the individual's interests and incorporate career planning.

The provision of services should be a result of, and consistent with, the customer's assessment and Individualized Employment Plan. Having a well-developed Individualized Employment Plan and related documentation is required and is a fundamental part of case management. Once an Individualized Employment Plan is developed and approved, it should be used in the on-going process of monitoring and re-evaluating the participant's progress toward educational and occupational goals.

The Individualized Employment Plan should be a "living document" and reviewed and updated as life changes occur, including the participant's interests and ambitions, as strategies are updated, as services are obtained from partner organizations, as activities are completed, and as goals are met and benchmarks are reached.

DRS Counselors meet with VR applicants to discuss information related to background, career aspirations, preferences, capabilities, limitations, accommodations, and other matters related to employment and/or independence. Upon entry into the VR program, the vocational goal, intermediate objectives, and the nature and scope of rehabilitation services to be included in the client's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is determined. To prepare the IPE, the Counselor conducts a comprehensive assessment of the career goals, unique strengths, resources, priorities, interests, and needs (including the need for supported employment services) of an eligible individual in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the client's informed choice.

DRS specializes in individualized service provision to people with disabilities who desire to work. These services include employability/soft skills, training sponsorship, vocational counseling and guidance, and job placement, among several others. DRS acknowledges that because of the individualized nature of services, some consumers will require the services of core partners or auxiliary partners to meet their additional needs. As appropriate, DRS will refer

consumers to partners or provide joint services with partners in order to meet the needs of the WDS and its customers.

Provide counseling to ascertain service needs of individuals to determine skills necessary for desired employment.

Coordinate cross-program services for job preparation activities to develop employability skills, adult basic education, and occupational training. When appropriate, individuals will be co-enrolled between two or more core programs to accomplish this goal.

Strategy 3.2: Use the Employment First framework to ensure competitive, integrated employment as the priority option for individuals with significant disabilities.

The Region 1 LWDB Opportunities in Action team works to increase awareness and access to services to individuals with challenges to employment, specifically those who have disabilities. Team effort includes the maximization of resources, cross referrals, co-enrollment in programs, and outreach in the service delivery area of Region 1.

Region 2 LWDB believes that all persons, regardless of disability, are fully capable of participation in the workforce. Region 2 provides counseling through career planners and assistance/referrals to DRS, to assist individuals in the achievement of employment.

The Region 3 LWDB utilizes transitional jobs for individuals with disabilities, providing employers wage subsidy incentives.

The Region 5 LWDB, core partners, and required Partners will ensure the implementation of the "Employment First" framework for the local WDS. The "Employment First" Framework will be centered on the premise that all individuals, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in available employment activities and community life.

Local policies, procedures and service delivery practices will be modified and aligned to ensure integrated employment for this target group. Work experiences will be developed by the Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners for individuals with significant disabilities that will include work experiences, preferable full-time, paid directly by employers at a greater of minimum or prevailing wages with commensurate benefits occurring in a typical work setting. The employee with a disability will be able to interact continuously with co-workers who do not have disabilities and have the opportunity for advancement and job mobility.

Region 6 LWDB will mainstream job seekers with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to the maximum extent possible by offering realistic entry points into career pathways and by ensuring necessary supportive services are in place and coordinated across agencies, so that those individuals with the most significant barriers to employment are successful in accessing and navigating career pathways. When appropriate, job seekers will be co-enrolled between core and other partner programs in order to provide the most comprehensive services possible.

Through integrated efforts, the Region 6 LWBD core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment, and cross referrals, outreach and service delivery will allow for increased awareness and access to services.

Region 6 will continue to work with entities such as, but not limited to, Job Squad and Pace Enterprises, to support the entry of persons with disabilities into the workforce through

Transitional Job and OJT programs, which include supportive services for those who have been assessed to need them.

Region 7 WIOA funding enables the delivery of a comprehensive array of services that prepare individuals with disabilities for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and obtainment of employment with career opportunities. This is accomplished by assessing the participant's skills, interests, needs and personal goals; creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant; and expanding the participant's connection to and understanding of the local economy, educational opportunities, and available community services.

DRS counselors provide vocational counseling and guidance to VR applicants immediately to begin determination of eligibility and planning of career goals. Upon entry into the VR program, consumers develop an IPE with their counselor. The IPE outlines the specific employment goal, career pathway, and services needed to enable and empower the individual to obtain employment.

DRS specializes in individualized service provision to people with disabilities who desire to work. These services include employability/soft skills, training sponsorship, vocational counseling and guidance, and job placement, among several others. DRS acknowledges that because of the individualized nature of services, some consumers will require the services of core partners or auxiliary partners to meet their additional needs. As appropriate, DRS will refer consumers to partners or provide joint services with partners in order to meet the needs of the WDS and its customers.

DRS will train partner staff regarding service to individuals with disabilities, including etiquette, accessibility, accommodations, resources, and other relevant topics, as appropriate.

Engage individuals with disabilities by offering realistic entry points into career pathways.

Through integrated efforts, the core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with disabilities. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment, cross referrals, outreach, and service delivery which will allow for successful employment outcomes.

Strategy 3.3: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of individuals.

The Region 1 LWDB works closely with Adult Education, and secondary and post-secondary schools, the community college system and employers to promote micro-credentials that establish job readiness, the achievement of employability skills and measurable skills gains which align to career pathways for individuals with challenges to employment.

The Region 1 LWDB will assist individuals who have created an Individualized Employment Plan in reaching their training and employment goals through connection to approved training programs that lead to high demand occupations, and self-sufficiency, such as ITAs, Registered Apprenticeships, and OJT. Paid time-limited work experiences, such as Empowered Employment, along with supportive services, allow individuals to earn money to cover living expenses while developing relevant skills that prepare them to be successful in meeting their goals.

The Region 2 LWDB encourages employers that the key to retention is employees who understand the value of continued training. This allows the individual to gain employable skills, reducing barriers to employment. Especially for those with disabilities.

Improved economic opportunities depend on an individual's ability to access education and training that prepares him/her for college and career success. A top priority for the Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners is to increase training and education opportunities for eligible individuals, especially those with barriers to employment, in order to meet the needs of employers. The local WDS is universally accessible, customer-centered and training is job-driven. The most promising strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment involve a concurrent mix of employment, training and support services. The Region's Career Pathways System encompasses education and training strategies that go from the acquisition of skills and credentials to the advancement of higher levels of employment within "high demand" industries. Career Pathways Services are linked to the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) through the Region's ITA Program to help individuals understand there are viable options available to them. The Career Pathways System provides a "road map" for individuals that detail certificate or degree requirements and the employment outlook that will lead them to obtain desired education and employment goals. There is also access to work-based training options, like: OJT, Customized Training and Incumbent Worker Training. Individuals who do not meet a training program's entrance requirements and/or eligibility requirements are offered alternate services.

Region 6 LWDB will mainstream job seekers with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to the maximum extent possible by offering realistic entry points into career pathways and by ensuring necessary supportive services are in place and coordinated across agencies, so that those individuals with the most significant barriers to employment are successful in accessing and navigating career pathways. When appropriate, job seekers will be co-enrolled between core and other partner programs in order to provide the most comprehensive services possible.

Through integrated efforts, the Region 6 LWDB core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment, and cross referrals, outreach and service delivery will allow for increased awareness and access to services.

Region 6 will continue to work with entities such as, but not limited to, Job Squad and Pace Enterprises, to support the entry of persons with disabilities into the workforce through Transitional Job and OJT programs, which include supportive services for those who have been assessed to need them.

Region 7 LWDB works with employer partnerships, community and technical colleges, secondary and post-secondary schools to establish credentials that demonstrate job readiness, the attainment of employability skills, and measurable skill gains aligned to career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment especially those with disabilities.

DRS counselors develop IPEs with their consumers, outlining employment goals, career pathways, and services needed, including training services. DRS counselors are trained to identify and coordinate participation in training programs that are most suited to individuals with disabilities, consistent with their abilities, strengths, desires, and informed choice.

Maintain partnerships with employers, community colleges, secondary and post- secondary certificate granting schools, and LWDBs to continue micro-credentials that demonstrate skill development. This allows for the attainment of employability skills and measurable skill gains to align career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities.

Promote access to Registered Apprenticeship programs focusing on non-traditional industries and occupations.

Refer individuals to training programs that lead to self-sufficiency.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways.

Emphasize career pathways to assist individuals entering and moving within the labor force and to educate employers on the advantages of career pathways.

Strategy 4.1: Adhere to WIOA career pathways development.

Career pathway programs being developed within Adult Education, CTE, and the CTCS will be utilized to assist individuals in achieving their educational and employment goals. This integrated system will allow participants to enter their career pathway at any level in addition to entering at the postsecondary level.

Region 2 LWDB ensures career pathways development as set forth in WIOA is followed. Pathways shall be a mix of education, employable skills. The integration of this system permits participants to enter or exit the pathway, knowing they may return to regroup, retrain. Career planners will ascertain service needs of individuals to determine skills needed for desired employment. WorkKeys will be utilized to determine a path forward. Cross-program services will enable individuals to develop skills they may be lacking. Individuals will be co-enrolled between core programs to achieve goals.

The delivery of career pathways services is diverse depending if a customer is low skilled with multiple barriers to employment or not. Career pathways services are based on "high demand" occupations that connect education, training, support services and credentials in a way that optimizes the progress and success for individuals with varying levels of abilities and needs. The Career Pathways System provides individuals most at risk of dropping out-of-school or failing to graduate college with opportunities they need to obtain or build on existing credentials.

Region 5 LWDB assists career pathways prepare individuals to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including apprenticeships. The Region's career pathways system incorporates sector strategy principles by engaging employers to increase relevance and labor market value of an individual's skills and credentials. The delivery of career pathways in the region includes, but is not limited to intake, assessment, advising, instruction and individual learning plans. Partnerships are in place between the local workforce development system, post-secondary institutions and supportive services. Besides the delivery of career pathways services, other Adult Education and Literacy activities may be offered that include basic literacy instruction or instruction in English as a second language, Test of Adult Secondary Completion (TASC), Fast TRACK, contextualized career cluster Fast TRACK, College Transition Fast TRACK and integrated education. Career pathways services are linked to the State's ETPL, via the Region's ITA Program, in an effort to help job seekers understand viable training options available to them and how training can be leveraged for success.
The career pathways system is diverse with multiple entry and exit points that allow individuals with varying degrees of ability to have realistic access to different pathways. Individuals can be assured that, wherever or whenever, they enter the local WDS, there will be a clear pathway that ensures referral(s) are made to appropriate program and services, and ultimately, successful outcomes achieved. Any point of entry will provide an individual access to the full continuum of programs and services.

The Region 6 LWDB will work with Adult Education, CTE, and the CTCS to develop strategies to integrate career pathway programs meeting the requirements of WIOA. Existing career pathway programs will expand to include adult education offerings such as literacy and numeracy, English Language Acquisition (ELA), and high school equivalency instruction as well as contextualized instruction in bridge and pre-bridge programs, pre-apprentice programs and integrated education and training programs supporting next steps in the career pathways models. This integrated system will permit participants to enter the pathway at any of these levels in addition to entering at the postsecondary level.

The Region 7 LWDB makes available individualized career pathways when an individual is determined to need such pathways in order to obtain or retain employment.

DRS continues to inform its consumers about available career pathway programs available through Adult Education, CTE, the CTCS, and four-year colleges. In 2019, DRS assisted 1,184 consumers with four-year college training, 257 consumers with junior/community college training and 119 consumers with other types of occupational/vocational training.

West Virginia Adult Education, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and the Community and Technical College System (CTCS) of West Virginia will continue strategies to integrate career pathway programs. This integrated system will permit individuals to enter the pathway at any level.

Strategy 4.2: Enhance current career pathways system.

The Region 1 LWDB will continue the partnership with local community and technical colleges and economic development authorities to engage employers to identify employer workforce needs and ensure career pathways are aligned to those occupations that are high demand, have higher skill needs and offer self-sustaining wages.

The Region 1 LWDB will engage employers to identify the skills needed for career pathways for quality entry-level jobs that lead to high-demand jobs. Those with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, could utilize programs such as OJT and Empowered Employment.

The Region 2 LWDB will assist in identification of career pathways which will provide work experience to all individuals, regardless of disability. Region 2 ties Transitional Employment and OJT to career pathways, making sure the individual is assisted throughout the process. Apprenticeship training will also be utilized and well as Incumbent Worker Training.

The Region 3 LWDB will continue to engage employers and use labor market research to determine growth occupations and sustaining wage jobs.

The Region 4 LWDB will continue to work with mandated partners and employers to align training and education with employer needs.

The Region 4 LWDB will utilize integrated sector groups to continue alignment of training and curriculum development to ensure career pathways are leading to gainful employment.

The Region 4 LWDB will encourage pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship programs to help align career pathways within demand occupation fields.

Region 5 LWDB eligible individuals can receive career pathway services at any stage. Industry partnerships are being developed on an ongoing basis as a way to stay apprised of the Region's economic outlook at any given time. The needs of industries are tied to worker projects that include training, recruitment, industry-sector partnerships, career pathways development and

enhancement of training options. When necessary, the Region 5 LWDB uses Adult Education career pathway materials as a way of coordinating education and workforce activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary activities. To date, the Region's career pathway committee has developed career pathways in the following "high demand" occupations: Nursing, Commercial Drivers License, Advanced Manufacturing and Welding. The committee continues to gather information and data on other "high demand" career clusters so they can create additional career pathways designs.

The Region 6 LWDB will work with the state in its efforts to maintain a comprehensive career pathway system that combines education, training, counseling, and support services from multiple programs, including secondary and postsecondary CTE, Adult Education, TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), the CTCS, and higher education.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to work with employers to identify the career pathways for which quality entry-level jobs can serve as pre-bridge and bridge models of employment placement of individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide work experience and non-technical skills necessary to obtain high-demand jobs.

The Region 6 LWDB currently is a partner in the Tristate Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium, which was formed to respond to the need for a properly trained workforce for the predicted 100,000 jobs to be added to the regional economy of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and WV over the next ten years. These jobs, which will be in support of Royal Dutch Shell's $6 billion ethane cracker plant in Monaca, Pennsylvania, include mid-stream jobs such as transportation and distribution, and in downstream jobs in petrochemical processing and manufacturing. TEAM brings together partners from industry, higher education, and workforce and economic development to build clear and accessible pathways to energy and manufacturing jobs in the region.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to assess and place individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non-technical skills necessary to lead to employment in high-demand jobs.

Region 6 will require OJT and Incumbent Worker Training be tied to a career pathway.

Region 7 LWDB-Individualized career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
- Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools, and
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an Individualized Employment Plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals, including a list of, and information about, the eligible training providers.
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling

- Career planning
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Internships and paid or unpaid work experiences that are linked to careers; internships and work experiences may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector.
- Workforce preparation activities, including programs or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education, or training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services, including services which
    - Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions
    - Support participants in learning, credit, debt, including student loans, consumer credit, credit cards, and teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit
    - Support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities to make informed financial decisions
    - Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identity theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft, and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data
    - Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials
    - Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings, and
    - Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high-quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction
- Out of area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- Relocation assistance

- ELA and integrated education and training program

DRS, through its involvement with the ICT, stays up to date with ongoing Sector Partnership programs. DRS consumers are made aware of these opportunities, as appropriate.

Through collaboration with WFWV, DRS has maintained regular communication with WFWV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This has been accomplished through regular meetings of the WDS, written communications, teleconferences, and other media. DRS, particularly through its Employment Specialists, stayed informed of emerging careers and occupations via WFWV's LMI website. DRS Employment Specialists have also continuously collected employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS. DRS registers its job- ready consumers with WFWV in order to better serve employers by providing them with a base of potential employees. Information from these employer visits is entered into the MACC system and is available to all partner agencies.

Maintain a comprehensive career pathway system that combines education, training, counseling, and support services from multiple programs, including secondary and postsecondary CTE, Adult and Literacy Education (Adult Education), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training, the CTCS of West Virginia and higher education.

Ensure career pathways are aligned to in-demand occupations likely to pay sustaining wages. The LWDBs will engage employers to accomplish this goal.

Place individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non-technical skills necessary to lead to employment in high-demand jobs.

Require OJT and incumbent worker training be tied to a career pathway.

Strategy 4.3: Educate individuals and employers to encourage career pathways in training and employment environments.

The Region 1 LWDB, in collaboration with Adult Education, developed a Registered Apprenticeship Certified Nursing Assistant program as a career pathway in healthcare.

Region 1 LWDB will utilize career/educational assessments and counseling to assist individuals in navigating career pathway programs that lead to higher skills, better jobs and higher pay.

The Region 2 LWDB provides access to training programs meeting needs of individuals by maintaining our existing partnerships with employers, community colleges, apprenticeships and other programs. These pathways and partnerships are strengthened by Region 2 and partners commitment to provide solid training and career planning.

The Region 2 LWDB continues to promote training programs and other means to support individuals and guide them on their path to self-sufficiency.

The Region 3 LWDB is supporting a pre-apprenticeship program through WIOA funding, a program for women, and look forward to participating with the Nationally Registered Apprenticeship programs that potentially offer a lifetime economically sustainable wage.

The Region 3 LWDB will operate an in-and out of school youth pre-apprenticeship pilot program and evaluate effectiveness.

The Region 4 LWDB will continue to promote and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs in non-traditional occupations as part of the career pathway model.

The Region 4 LWDB will provide career guidance to all individuals with barriers about programs and services that provide an effective pathway to meet their career goals.

Career pathway services offered in Region 5 include a combination of education, training and supportive services that are aligned with the skill needs of industries. The Region's Career Plan Development Manual provides a "road map" for individuals that detail certificate or degree requirements and employment outlook that ultimately leads to his/her desired education and employment goals. Alignment of services offers eligible individuals and employers direct access to a broad range of services that are adapted and leveraged to address the individual's and the employer's needs.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to promote to employers and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs in non-traditional occupations as part of a relevant career pathway model. The Region 6 LWDB will continue to fund the WV Women Work Pre-Apprenticeship program as a non-traditional career pathway into specific Trade apprenticeships.

The Region 6 LWDB will ensure that apprenticeship opportunities within the workforce development system will be promoted as job training options to individuals during the assessment and counseling process and to employers when meeting to discuss opportunities for the employers to utilize workforce services.

The Region 6 LWDB will provide career guidance to individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, about programs and services that provides an effective pathway to their career goals.

The Region 6 LWDB website links with the WFWV state website in order to provide information on the state WDS in addition to regional services.

The Region 7 LWDB assists in the establishment of a statewide and regional list of industry-recognized credentials with a focus on identifying credentials along established career pathways.

DRS counselors provide vocational counseling and guidance to VR applicants immediately to begin determination of eligibility and planning of career goals. Upon entry into the VR program, consumers develop an IPE with their counselor. The IPE outlines the specific employment goal, career pathway, and services needed to enable and empower the individual to obtain employment.

DRS has created PathwaysWV.org, a website for students with disabilities to gain valuable and relevant information on career pathways, education and training opportunities, and current and future in-demand occupations.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth.

Identify employment challenges faced by youth and provide access to postsecondary training/education and employment opportunities to improve WV's LFPR.

Strategy 5.1: Execution of WIOA regulations regarding youth.

The Region 1 LWDB Career Connections program has recognized the priority on OSY/young adults and will continue to identify models and effective practices that will assist local area staff in successfully meeting the needs of individuals while also meeting WIOA regulations. Recruitment efforts include networking through social media, community outreach, participant's word of mouth, career fairs, transitional meetings and brochures.

The Region 2 LWDB identifies models and effective practices, including for recruitment, flexible enrollment (self-attestation, co-enrollment, career pathways and retention) to assist the OSY career planners Region 2 to successfully meet the needs of youth. Region 2 assists the state in ensuring that the statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated so that they accurately reflect the profile of OSY being served in Region 2.

To be eligible to participate in youth programs and services, youth must be between the ages of 14 and 24 and meet eligibility requirements. At least 20 percent of youth funds are spent on paid and unpaid work experiences. The Region 5 LWDB offers eligible youth the opportunity to participate in four work experience programs throughout the program year: The "Summer Works" Program; The "Fall Works" Program; The "Winter Works" Program; and, The "Spring Works" Program. At least 75 percent of the Region's total youth program budget is allocated and spent on serving OSY. The following 14 service elements, WIOA Section 129(c)(2), are delivered to youth, as needed and necessary: 1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Drop-Out Prevention; 2) Alternative Secondary School Services/Dropout Recovery Services; 3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences; 4) Occupational Skill Training; 5) Educational Training Opportunities; 6) Leadership Development; 7) Supportive Services; 8) Adult Mentoring; 9) Follow-Up Services; 10) Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling; 11) Financial Literacy Education; 12) Entrepreneurial Skills Training; 13) Labor Market and Employment Information; and, 14) Access to Post-Secondary Education and Training.

The Region 6 LWDB will work with the youth contractor to identify models and effective practices for youth, including recruitment and flexible enrollment, with the goal of successfully meeting the needs of those individuals.

The Region 6 LWDB will assist in partnership with the state and U.S. Departments of Labor and Education to ensure statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated to accurately reflect the profiles of youth being served within the State and in each local area.

WIOA funding enables Region 7 delivery of a comprehensive array of youth services that prepare youth for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and obtainment of employment with career opportunities. This is accomplished by assessing the participant's skills, interests, needs and personal goals; creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant; and expanding the participant's connection to and understanding of the local economy, educational opportunities, and available community services. This process is organized and coordinated around 14 WIOA Youth program elements, which must be made available to every participant. DRS is mandated by WIOA to reserve at least 15 percent of its federally award to the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, ages 14-21 years. Concordantly, DRS has implemented a number of strategies to provide these services to students with disabilities, and even youth at large.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff

from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, CTE, and post-secondary students at locations across the state.

DRS hosted summer workshops [Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits] for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits.

DRS has demonstrated considerable commitment to providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities statewide since the implementation of WIOA. In collaboration with Community Access, Inc. and Terzetto Creative, LLC, DRS established the Pathways to the Future website (www.PathwaysWV.org), designed to operate as a self-service one-stop for students, parents, and educators in the provision of Pre-ETS that can be accessed at any time. The site provides extensive information and resources regarding career planning, education planning, independent living skills, self-determination, and work-based learning. While this resource was developed for and is emphasized to students with disabilities, the website can be used by anyone, particularly by youth seeking career direction.

Positive Outcomes Within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program–DRS' job shadowing program. POWER offers DRS transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices. DRS Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER program. Work-Based Learning Experiences–Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2–4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

In collaboration with CRPs, the Statewide independent Living Council (SILC) and the WV Centers for Independent Living (CILs), DRS established programs in the summer of 2019 which provided Instruction in Self-Advocacy at 25 locations across the state, serving 294 students with disabilities. These programs provide students with disabilities with the skills necessary to be confident and self-directed self-advocates. Students participating in the programs learned about their legal rights and responsibilities, the history of the disability movement, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),

Individualized Education Plans, and participated in activities to develop their confidence and communication skills, as well as the ability to evaluate their future needs and plans.

In an effort to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields, DRS sponsored a "Build It, Keep It, Share It" (BIKISI) program in the summer of 2019. In the program, through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer. At the end of the training, they take the knowledge–and the computer–home with them. The program is designed to develop student interest in the sciences through computers, to subsequently promote interest in high-paying jobs within in-demand job sectors. In 2019, the program was held in 12 locations and served 363 students with disabilities.

Recognizing the new priority on OSY, the State will identify models and effective practices, including for recruitment, flexible enrollment (e.g. self-attestation, co-enrollment, career pathways and retention) to help local area staff successfully meet the needs of those individuals.

Identify models and effective practices for youth, including recruitment and flexible enrollment, to help local area staff successfully meet the needs of those individuals.

Partner with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education and LWDBs ensuring statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated to accurately reflect the profiles of youth being served within the State and in each local area.

Strategy 5.2: Coordination of youth services within the workforce development system.

A variety of sites have been established throughout the region to help OSY with limited paid work experience. Entrepreneurial opportunities are also being developed through collaboration with the HIVE, an organization that assists with developing business ideas and business start-ups.

The Region 1 LWDB Career Connections program will continue to provide opportunities for youth/young adults to acquire postsecondary skills and credentials needed for skilled and high wage jobs by co-enrolling with WIOA Adult programs.
DRS conducted four summer camps throughout Region 1 focusing on Job Readiness and Life Skills. The Region 1 Career Connections Program assisted in recruiting and enrolling youth for the DRS program. The camps served over 350 youth. Region 1 Career Connections program offers year-round referrals to YouthBuild and Job Corps and will continue to build collaboration efforts on behalf of OSY.

Region 2 makes youth services a priority within the WDS. Region 2 supports the development of transitional jobs, social enterprises and other work experience strategies to help OSY with limited work histories develop the skills needed for workplace success. The co-enrollment of high-risk OSY ages 18-24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to allow for the leveraging for funds and provision of necessary services. Many single-mothers in this age group also receive TANF benefits so coordination with TANF is very important, particularly when it comes to supportive services and non-subsidized employment. Region 2 promotes the use of ITA for 18-24 years old youth, potentially combined with work based learning opportunities. The importance of making sure if the client does not have a HS Diploma or TASC that getting that education certificate opens up many more Career pathways. The placement on CTCS campus, whether enrolled or receiving credential training, will assist in allowing them to grow and understand career pathways. Another collaboration is with Youthbuild and JobCorps programs to assist with training and putting structure in their lives.

Youth Services Systems, Inc. (YSS, Inc.) is the training provider of youth programs and services in Region 5. YSS, Inc. provides comprehensive industry-specific career exploration and training

for in-school and out-of-school youth. One of the goals is to ensure youth participants graduate high school, or successfully pass its equivalent, the TASC, and upon graduation/completion, pursue some form of post-secondary training or education in a viable career pathway or successfully gain employment in a "high demand" occupation. YSS, Inc. helps eligible youth develop the skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education. They systemically enrich participating youth's academic preparation through service learning, internships, career exploration, work readiness training and post-secondary planning. Work readiness skills training helps prepare participating youth for success in the workplace, helping them gain industry-recognized credentials with a focus on finding and retaining self-sustaining employment.

An ISS, that identifies employment goals, a career pathway, goals and objectives and supportive services, is developed for each participating youth. The ISS is flexible in nature due to the youth's age and experience. The Region 5 LWDB developed a Youth Career Pathways Manual that is used by YSS, Inc. This manual helps prepare participating youth to be successful in secondary or post-secondary education, including pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships, or employment.

Strong partnerships are in place with post-secondary institutions, the CTCS, apprenticeship programs, area employers, core and required partners, parents of participating youth, former youth participants and other community-based stakeholders with experience in youth programs and services, like: local Housing Authorities, the Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Panhandle, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Lee Day Center. Core and required partners assist by identifying and recruiting youth for participation in available programs and services, providing youth referrals and providing transportation to youth to/from regional AJCs.

YSS, Inc. works diligently to serve youth with disabilities. DRS assists YSS, Inc. in identifying youth with disabilities who could benefit from participating in year-long youth programs and services. Depending on a youth's needs, different approaches may be taken by YSS, Inc., when serving youth with disabilities, like building staff capacity (aka: preparedness), expanding range of services, customizing program resources and increasing work opportunities to improve workplace skills. YSS, Inc. refers participating youth with disabilities to DRS for further, additional services as needed once a thorough assessment, observation and testing is done.

YSS, Inc. staff oversees and maintains a STEM Youth Room at the AJC in Wheeling for area youth to visit and learn. The STEM Youth Room was put in place as a way to introduce youth to "high demand" training occupations in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and subsequently, entice Youth to enter a training program in any of these fields. The STEM Center has: A XYZ Da Vinci 1.0 Printer with three colors of filament that can create projects with a computer attached to it to create items, etc.; A Lego Mindstorms Robotics Kit as well as STEM curriculum for it that operates through the corresponding laptop; five VEX Robotics STEM Kits for various building projects tied to engineering and technology; A Laptop set up for NASCAR STEM Program to do various activities through the NASCAR Acceleration Nation Site for younger youth and through the Ten80 Student Racing Challenge for older youth; A Weighted Math Building Kit to use math and engineering to build structures; and, a growing library of 49 books based on STEM Curriculum to read and learn from.

The Region 6 LWDB will support the development of transitional jobs, social enterprises and other work experience strategies to help OSY with limited work histories to develop the skills needed for workplace success. Region 6 LWDB continues to work with our youth contractor to expand the use of Transitional Jobs, OJT, and work experience for the youth of the region.

Region 6 will continue to co-enroll high-risk individuals, ages 18 to 24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to leverage funds and provide necessary services. Co-enrollment can occur in Title II Adult Education services, EARN, TANF, or other partner programs. Region 6 will continue the use of ITAs for 18 to 24-year olds in combination with work-based learning opportunities.

Region 6 will continue to collaborate with YouthBuild, JobCorps, and AmeriCorps sites and will encourage inclusion of those partnerships in the region. The youth program in Region 6 continues to partner with YouthBuild to enroll their participants in the WIOA program. The Employment for Independent Living Program, which serves foster youth, also works with and co-enrolls in the Region 6 YouthReady program.

Region 7 LWDB youth provider ensures that all 14 program elements under WIOA Section 129(c)(2) are available to all participating WIOA youth.

DRS hosts summer workshops CEO Summits for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits.

DRS' POWER job shadowing program offers transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices. DRS Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER program.

Work-Based Learning Experiences–Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2–4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

In an effort to promote STEM fields, DRS sponsored a BIKISI program in the summer of 2019. In the program, through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer. At the end of the training, they take the knowledge–and the computer–home with them. The program is designed to develop student interest in the sciences through computers, to subsequently promote interest in high-paying jobs within in-demand job sectors. In 2019, the program was held in 12 locations and served 363 students with disabilities.

Develop transitional jobs, social enterprises, and other work experience strategies to help Out-of-School Youth with limited work histories develop the skills needed for workplace success.

Co-enroll high-risk individuals, ages 18 to 24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to leverage funds and provide necessary services. Co-enrollment can occur in Title II adult basic education services, EARN, TANF, or other partner programs. Continue the use of ITAs for 18 to 24-year olds in combination with work-based learning opportunities.

The State will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences. The WVDE and the CTCS will work cooperatively to explore and develop appropriate connections between WIOA youth activities and Perkins postsecondary and state-funded programming.

The WVDE will support the transformation and modernization of CTE and align CTE with the career pathways recognized by the State.

LWDB will collaborate with YouthBuild, JobCorps, and AmeriCorps sites, identifying partnerships in local plans.

Strategy 5.3: Provide youth a clear pathway to success.

The Region 1 LWDB Career Connections program will ensure that OSY have access to career pathways and will work with partnering agencies to identify on-ramps, access points, and supports which enable participants to enter and successfully complete training and enter employment.

The Region 1 Career Connections program will continue to support DRS as they realign their resources to increase and improve services to youth/young adults with disabilities, especially high school students with disabilities. Participants are co-enrolled with DRS to assist them with college and financial assistance and assertive technology. Participants are also co-enrolled with Adult Education programs to assist with obtaining their TASC and various certifications.

The Region 1 LWDB's post-secondary training through ITAs, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities are promoted to all youth/young adults.

The Region 2 LWDB offers youth a clear path from current situation to success, identify on-ramps, access points, and wrap-around supportive services which will enable them to enter training. Youth in high school and OSY, especially youth with disabilities, can be assisted by DRS which will promote increased cross referrals and co-enrollment of youth. Promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.

The Region 3 LWDB will continue to leverage resources providing effective and efficient services to youth. This includes cross referrals and co-enrollment of individuals in addition to joint projects and activities at the state and regional level.

The Region 3 LWDB is operating a pilot pre-apprenticeship model for in- and out- of school youth, building upon vocational training credentials and providing work experience opportunities.

In order to ensure success for youth participants, including those with disabilities, the Region 5 LWDB and YSS, Inc., the training provider of youth programs and services, provide them with programs and services that meet their education and employment needs, link them to CTCS or postsecondary schools or self-sustaining employment that are most closely aligned with a youth's career pathway.Career pathways for participating youth are developed in response to current labor market data and activities that lead to the attainment of a secondary school

diploma, a recognized post-secondary credential or preparation for post-secondary education and training opportunities. Resources are pulled together in a strategic way so as to create career pathways that provide participating youth with appropriate educational training, skills, access to good jobs and needed supportive services.

The Region 6 LWDB will work to identify on-ramps, access points, and supports which enable participants to enter and successfully complete training and enter employment. Due to the individualized nature of the YouthReady program, and the menu of services offered, each youth has a plan that assists them in reaching their specific goals. The development of these plans involves assessments, information and referral to appropriate agencies, dual enrollments into various supports and services that are available in the local area, and eventually a clear pathway from orientation to eventual employment placement is finalized.

The Region 6 LWDB will leverage resources providing effective and efficient services to youth. This includes cross referrals and co-enrollment of individuals in addition to joint projects and activities at the state and regional level.
The Region 6 LWDB will utilize the Office of Apprenticeship to promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.

Region 7-The three components of an integrated education and training program include: adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. Adult education and literacy activities are programs, activities, and services, such as English language services, to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension. Workforce preparation activities help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills. They improve employability by improving self-management abilities, increasing ability to work with others, and develop other skills necessary for successful transition into post-secondary education, training, and employment.

Such activities could include skill development and practice, such as time management, mock interviews, independent living, or legal responsibilities after the age of 18, and how to prepare for post-secondary education, such as applications, financial aid, scholarship application, etc.

DRS has re-aligned its resources to increase and improve services to youth with disabilities, especially high school students with disabilities. DRS has MOUs with all 55 county boards of education and has a vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to each high school in the state. These counselors provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities to ensure students, and their parents, and school personnel are aware of available services, training, education, and employment options. Through the POWER program, students with disabilities have opportunities for job shadowing experiences. Through STEP, students may receive services from teachers outside of the classroom, including job coaching and job placement. Youth may also continue to receive services from DRS after exiting high school. This often includes additional training and education required to achieve their chosen employment goal.

DRS has a long history of closely working with the state and local education agencies. Since the implementation of WIOA, DRS has further strengthened these working relationships. DRS has worked with the WV Office of Special Education to align WVDE policy with aspects of WIOA, particularly the provision Pre-ETS. Adult Education and DRS have jointly developed materials that are distributed to special education students and teachers across the state.

During FY 2019, DRS held a joint training conference with the WV Office of Special Education. This conference, the WV Capacity Building Institute, provided cross-training to over 200 staff from education and over 125 staff from DRS to ensure that services are provided more effectively and efficiently. Attendees gained an enhanced understanding of the roles and

responsibilities of DRS and WVDE, and how to better serve WV students with disabilities. Due to the success of this training conference, future joint conferences are being planned with the WV Office of Special Education.

All WIOA core programs have mutual memorandums of understanding that help facilitate an integrated service delivery system. The WIOA core partners will continue to maintain communication at the state and local levels on a regular basis.

Information will be shared among the partners in order to provide better and more efficient services to individuals enrolled in one or more programs and to employers served by the system.

Collaborate with LWDBs to identify access points which enable individuals to complete training and enter a successful career pathway.

DRS has re-aligned its resources to increase and improve services to youth with disabilities, especially high school students with disabilities. DRS has MOUs with all 55 county boards of education and has a vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to each high school in the state. These counselors provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities to ensure students, and their parents, and school personnel are aware of available services, training, education, and employment options. Through the POWER program, students with disabilities have opportunities for job shadowing experiences. Through STEP, students may receive services from teachers outside of the classroom, including job coaching and job placement. Youth may also continue to receive services from DRS after exiting high school. This often includes additional training and education required to achieve their chosen employment goal.

Leverage resources providing effective and efficient services to youth. This includes cross referrals and co-enrollment of individuals in addition to joint projects and activities at the state and regional level.

Utilize the Office of Apprenticeship to promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.

Transcripted EDGE credit can be earned by students to matriculate from secondary career technical education to CTCS. The West Virginia EDGE was established in 2001 in Senate Bill

436. EDGE is an acronym for Earn a Degree-Graduate Early and is a result of the seamless curriculum initiative that focuses on curriculum alignment between educational levels. The alignment process identifies curriculum gaps, eliminates curriculum duplication and sets curriculum mastery levels to pre-determined standards while saving tuition money for students.

Goal 6: Closer Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR).

WV has the lowest LFPR in the United States. Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring that WV's employers are able to find workers and our

economy is able to expand.

Strategy 6.1: Match individuals to basic education.

The Region 1 LWDB will continue to offer assessments and comprehensive counseling to determine the needs of individuals seeking services. Individuals without a high school equivalency, or identified with a basic skills deficiency, will be referred through an existing referral system to Adult Education to provide options for high school equivalency and basic skills testing and training.

The Region 2 LWDB matches individuals to basic education through the interview process with a core partner, an individual without a high school diploma or TASC certificate would be offered a referral to a TASC class.

Steps are taken to align basic education skills and English language assessments as outlined in the MOU between the Region 5 LWDB and Adult Education. Mountain State Educational Services Cooperative (MSESC) provides assessment and instructional services in basic education skills and English language skills. In an effort to align assessments, the Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners ensure the TABE is administered to individuals in need of basic skills remediation. MSESC is charged with the sole responsibility of conducting English language assessments for those individuals in need of this type of assessment on behalf of the Region 5 LWDB, core and required partners. Using common standardized assessment tools facilitates accurate data and information sharing among all stakeholders. Coordinating services with Adult Education places more emphasis on serving low-skilled adults; those with low levels of literacy skills or those who are English language learners. For individuals who are deficient in basic skills, Adult Education is a critical partner in establishing career pathways. Adult Education services allows individuals to acquire basic skills and English language services necessary to function in today's society so that they can benefit from the completion of secondary school. Adult Education services include work readiness, workplace preparation, career planning and case management services. Adult Education staff helps individuals access employment and/or post-secondary education or training opportunities to prepare and plan for entry into a career pathway. Adult Education staff helps assist individuals in the preparation of the TASC test at various sites and times in the region. Individuals are also connected to needed support services like childcare, transportation, housing, and health care.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to refer to Adult Education those individuals who have been assessed and found in need of obtaining their high school equivalency certificate in order to move into training and or better job placement results.

When an individual demonstrates either a basic skills deficiency or the lack of a high school diploma or TASC, the Region 7 LWDB makes a referral to our partners at Adult Education. Adult Education is uniquely equipped and staffed to assist individuals in need of basic education.

DRS counselors provide vocational counseling and guidance to VR applicants immediately to begin determination of eligibility and planning of career goals. Upon entry into the VR program, consumers develop an IPE with their counselor. The IPE outlines the specific employment goal, career pathway, and services needed, including any required basic education, to enable and empower the individual to obtain employment.

Individuals will be assessed and referred to adult basic education to obtain skills needed for their career pathway.

Adult Education will track referral source and Education and Career Plan (ECP) utilization in its Management Information System (MIS).

Strategy 6.2: Match individuals to postsecondary training or education.

The Region 1 LWDB will continue to assist individuals to identify career pathways that provide skills needed for high demand occupations that lead to higher wages

The Region 2 LWDB matches individuals to postsecondary training or education via the intake process, determined by the individual's stated goals. If a referral is necessary to meet their employment goals, or if, in conversation, furthering education or training interest is expressed or implied, the career planner makes an appropriate referral to a partner for services, education, and/or training.

The Region 5 LWDB encourages, supports and funds programs at post-secondary institutions that train individuals for "high demand" occupations on the State's ETPL via the Region's ITA program. In an effort to prepare and inform individuals about post-secondary education opportunities, One-Stop Operator staff carefully reviews and interprets the most current labor market data to individuals, along with average earnings per occupation and the types and lengths of training or degrees required for "high demand" employment opportunities. Career pathways services helps prepare individuals to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including apprenticeships. Career pathways services incorporate sector strategy principles by engaging employers to increase relevance and labor market value of participant skills and credentials which in turn improve a participant's employment prospects. Making up to date labor market data accessible and available to interested individuals will assist providers of post-secondary education and training programs in better aligning themselves with labor market demands.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to assess individuals interested in postsecondary training with the aim of matching their career goals to the appropriate training.

Region 7 LWDB training services are provided to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. Under the WIOA, a program of training services includes a structured regimen that leads to specific outcomes. A program of training services is one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen that leads to:

1. A recognized post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma, or its equivalent;
   (b) Employment; or
   (c) Measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

Training services are available for individuals who after an interview, evaluation or assessment and case management are determined to be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or higher wages from previous employment through career services alone. The participant must be determined to be in need of training services and possess the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program.

The WIOA list of training services is not all-inclusive and additional training services may be provided. Training services may include, for example, occupational skills training, OJT, registered apprenticeship which incorporates both OJT and classroom training, Incumbent Worker Training, pre-apprenticeship training, workplace training with related instruction,

training programs offered by the private sector, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, and Transitional Jobs.

Some participants may need additional services to assist their vocational training, such as job readiness training, literacy activities including English language training, and customized training. The WIOA training services must be provided when other sources of grant assistance are unavailable to the individual.

DRS counselors provide vocational counseling and guidance to VR applicants immediately to begin determination of eligibility and planning of career goals. Upon entry into the VR program, consumers develop an IPE with their counselor. The IPE outlines the specific employment goal, career pathway, and services needed, including any required postsecondary education, to enable and empower the individual to obtain employment. In FY 2019, DRS assisted over 2,000 individuals with disabilities with postsecondary training and/or education.

Core partners will increase referrals to postsecondary training or education leading to employment.

Capture data match with WFWV and Higher Education Policy Commission on individuals who enter postsecondary education or employment.

Strategy 6.3: Utilize career pathways when working with the population age 16-24.

The Region 1 LWDB Career Connections program will continue to work with Adult Education and DRS to identify and eliminate barriers and create career pathways for OSY. Paid work experiences will provide youth with relevant experience and training to help them achieve their employment goals.

The Region 2 LWDB utilizes career pathways when working with the population of 16-24 year olds. Region 2 is focused on guiding participants into training and/or education which will increase their employability.

The Region 6 LWDB will continue to emphasize the importance of career preparation and job-readiness in providing services to the youth of the region. Providing work experience, soft skills training, career counseling, and other related services to this age group will expand their ability to successfully enter the workforce.

When utilizing and identifying career pathways for populations aged 16-24, the Region 7 LWDB utilizes our WIOA youth program's ISS. Setting goals was an essential part of developing an ISS in the WIOA youth program. Learning how to set goals enabled youth to make effective use of the WIOA program and services and, ultimately, to set goals for themselves as they pursue adult responsibilities, such as completing their education, finding employment, and becoming good citizens.

<u>Basic Skill Goals</u>
Basic skill goals reflect a measurable increase in basic education skills including reading, math computation, writing, speaking, listening, problem-solving, reasoning, and capacity to use these skills.

<u>Occupational Skill Goals</u>

Occupational skill goals include performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupations at entry, immediate, or advanced levels.
For example:

- Safety procedures
- Work-related terminology
- Clean-up routines
- Use of tools and equipment

Work Readiness Skill Goals
Work readiness skill goals include:

- World of work awareness
- Personal understanding
- Labor market information
- Decision making
- Occupational information
- Job search awareness
- Values clarification
- Daily living skills

WIOA youth can be enrolled in several different activities, as appropriate, following the determination of their needs as identified during intake and the development of the ISS. Each activity involves the collection of information unique to that activity. There are five categories of youth activities found in the MACC, including:

1. Education Services
2. Work Experiences
3. Additional Support for Youth
4. Leadership Development Opportunities

Follow-up Services.

DRS has a long history of serving youth with disabilities. Since July 2014, DRS has been mandated by WIOA to reserve at least 15 percent of its federally award to the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, ages 14-21 years. Concordantly, DRS has implemented a number of strategies to provide these services to students with disabilities, and even youth at large.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As

part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, career and technical education, and post-secondary students at locations across the state.

DRS hosted summer workshops (CEO Summits) for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits.

DRS has demonstrated considerable commitment to providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities statewide since the implementation of WIOA. In collaboration with Community Access, Inc. and Terzetto Creative, LLC, DRS established the Pathways to the Future website (www.pathwayswv.org), designed to operate as a self-service one-stop for students, parents, and educators in the provision of Pre-ETS that can be accessed at any time. The site provides extensive information and resources regarding career planning, education planning, independent living skills, self-determination, and work-based learning. While this resource was developed for and is emphasized to students with disabilities, the website can be used by anyone, particularly by youth seeking career direction.

The POWER program offers DRS transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices. DRS Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER program.

Work-Based Learning Experiences–Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2–4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

In collaboration with CRPs, the Statewide independent Living Council (SILC) and the WV Centers for Independent Living (CILs), DRS established programs in the summer of 2019 which provided Instruction in Self-Advocacy at 25 locations across the state, serving 294 students with disabilities. These programs provide students with disabilities with the skills necessary to be confident and self-directed self-advocates. Students participating in the programs learned about their legal rights and responsibilities, the history of the disability movement, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Individualized Education Plans, and participated in activities to develop their confidence and communication skills, as well as the ability to evaluate their future needs and plans.

In an effort to promote STEM fields, DRS sponsored a BIKISI program in the summer of 2019. In the program, through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer. At the end of the training, they take the knowledge–and the computer–home with them. The program is designed to develop student interest in the sciences through computers, to subsequently promote interest in high-paying jobs within in-demand job sectors. In 2019, the program was held in 12 locations and served 363 students with disabilities.

Core partners will provide youth opportunities for academic enrichment and employment.

Strategy 6.4: Improve the job matching rate.

The Region 1 LWDB will continue to provide career assessment and evaluation of individual skills, education and training levels. Individual and employer assessments will be reviewed to make sure a good fit is made. One of the goals of the Empowered Employment program, which targets individuals with multiple barriers and who may be in recovery or re-entry, is to increase the labor force participation rate. Individuals, who are long-term unemployed or who have limited or no work experience, have the opportunity to attend training, participate in paid-work experience or OJT. Individuals receive career counseling, services and support throughout the duration of the program to help them grow in confidence, learn new skills and move forward in their training and employment goals.

The Region 1 LWDB works closely with established employers utilizing programs such as OJT, Incumbent Worker Training, and Empowered Employment to overcome identified skill gaps. Career coaching and employability training are provided to ensure success for both the employer and the individual.

Region 2 will improve the job matching rate. The intake process is focused on placement of individuals into training and or education programs that will reduce skill gaps. Our goal is self-sufficiency through training, and education, with the common goal being employment.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings.To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WFWV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county.
The Region 6 LWDB will continue to engage with employers to provide information to individuals which will assist the individual in choosing training and education programs which will lead to filling employer skill gaps through placement in targeted employment.

Region 7 LWDB-In order to improve an individual's success in their chosen career, our case management team utilizes a combination of career preparation and career exploration initiatives. Career Exploration introduces young adults, parents, and teachers to available career paths in their region by offering a behind-the-scenes look into in-demand businesses and industries. Career Exploration provides real-time information regarding employer, education, and training requirements necessary to secure employment. Impacts include relationship building, establishing a talent pipeline, talent retention, and the opportunity to see real life application of coursework.

Criteria

1. Local in-demand industries are targeted. These industries will be identified by region;

2. Tours are to be conducted on-site at the employer's business, or at a simulated workplace where the employer provides hands-on experience;
3. An overview of the industry and key positions in demand are to be provided;
4. The educational requirements for key positions in demand (credential, apprenticeship, two or four year degree, etc.) are to be provided;
5. The experience is to highlight "an average day on the job;" and
6. Potential should exist for job shadowing, internships, and/or other work experiences with participating employers.
7. The Region 7 LWDB will use a combination of virtual career exploration activities (http://www.O*NET.org and http://www.mycareeronestop.org) and whenever possible on-site visits.

Partner Roles

1. The Region 7 LWDB: Facilitate relationship building between educational partners and businesses;
2. Businesses: Define roles, skills, and training expectations via short presentations and hands-on experiences; and
3. Educational Partners: Arrange transportation, monitor student safety and behavior, and encourage engagement and open communication.

Post-secondary partners often participate to provide information about the availability of corresponding education and training programs.
The Region 7 LWDB will identify additional partners, such as regional career liaisons, as appropriate. Region 7 recognizes career exploration as a pivotal component to comprehensive case management services. It is the expectation that career exploration activities will be offered to our clients whenever our career coaches deem appropriate.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has nine employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS–employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job–ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the

WFWV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.
DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WFWV, Adult Education, LWDBs, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

DRS counselors provide vocational counseling and guidance to VR applicants immediately to begin determination of eligibility and planning of career goals. Upon entry into the VR program, consumers develop an IPE with their counselor. The IPE outlines the specific employment goal, career pathway, and services needed, including any required training and/or education, to enable and empower the individual to obtain employment.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WFWV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county.

DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WFWV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.

Making better job matches between individuals and employers reduces an individual's time between jobs and minimizes delays to entering the workforce.

Business Service Team-DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WFWV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.

DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WFWV, Adult Education, LWDBs, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

Enhance State MIS to ensure information gathered is complete and accurate.

Improve accuracy of occupational classification among employer postings, training program, and participant work histories.

Strategy 6.5: The State will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences. The Department of Education and the Community Technical College System will work cooperatively to explore and develop appropriate connections between WIOA youth activities and Perkins postsecondary and state funded programming.

DRS will continue to provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities (ages 14-21), including work-based learning experiences and counseling on post-secondary education/training opportunities, including career and technical education programs, to acquire additional skills and credentials.

- Work-Based Learning Experiences–Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2–4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

- POWER program–DRS' job shadowing program. POWER offers DRS transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices. DRS Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER Program.

Strategy 6.6: The Department of Education will explore the transformation and modernization of career and technical education (CTE) and evaluate the opportunity to align CTE with the career pathways recognized by the State.

Strategy 6.7: Explore opportunities to establish Career Development in K-12 education curriculum starting with eight (8th) grade to include career orientation, workforce development information and promote career pathway for youth.

DRS will continue to partner with the WVDE and county boards of education to provide outreach, information, and services to students with disabilities (ages 14-21). DRS and the WVDE have jointly developed and Pre-ETS materials for use by students with disabilities, parents, and teachers to explore potential careers and post-secondary opportunities.

- To complement the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website (www.PathwaysWV.org), DRS and the WVDE developed Sample Lessons for Life After High School. Special Education teachers across the state have been trained on the use of the 244-page manual to provide students with multiple, detailed lessons on job exploration/career counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary education/training opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

- This manual demonstrates the "how to" for shared services, particularly for students in grades 9 and 10, through lessons designed for groups or individuals that are co-taught by Rehabilitation and Education staff or independently. They have been matched to WVDE College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts and Health Education. The initial unit format utilizes the backward design process formalized by Wiggins and McTighe. The Understanding by Design Planning Template was utilized to develop a plan for each of the five Pre-ETS goal areas: Job Exploration/Career Counseling, Work-Based Learning, Counseling on Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, and Self-Advocacy. Beginning with the "end in mind" guides attention on goal and assessment outcomes which leads to the development of individual lessons to achieve them. Sample lesson topics were selected from a comprehensive ideas list for each goal area that was generated from direct providers. The sample lesson plans are developed within a template familiar to classroom instructors. The intent of this manual is to bring professionals together to share expertise that improves outcomes for youth with challenges.

- In FY 2019, DRS and the WVDE updated this manual, as well as additional Pathways to the Future materials, and distributed them to students with disabilities across the state during the 2019-2020 school year. The additional materials include:
    - Pre-ETS transition slide guide
    - Parent/student guide
    - Transition Services Planner
    - Special Education teachers across the state continue to receive training on the use of these materials and use of the Pathways to the Future website. The materials and website provide students, parents, and teachers information about career development, labor market information, career pathways, workforce development system resources, and post-secondary training opportunities.

DRS will continue to provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities (ages 14-21). These services provide students with career exploration opportunities, information on available services through the workforce development system, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, information about post-secondary opportunities, and LMI.

- DRS hosted summer workshops (CEO Summits) for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits.

- POWER program–DRS' job shadowing program. POWER offers DRS transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices. DRS Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER Program.

- Work-Based Learning Experiences–Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2–4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

- In an effort to promote STEM fields, DRS sponsored a BIKISI program in the summer of 2019. In the program, through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer. At the end of the training, they take the knowledge–and the computer–home with them. The program is designed to

develop student interest in the sciences through computers, to subsequently promote interest in high-paying jobs within in-demand job sectors. In 2019, the program was held in 12 locations and served 363 students with disabilities.

Strategy 6.8: Local WorkForce Development Boards will explore opportunities to increase their focus on developing and establishing summer youth programs providing work experience and soft skills to youth.

DRS will work to partner with LWDBs to provide and expand opportunities for work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training (including soft skills) for students with disabilities (ages 14-21).

- DRS hosted summer workshops (CEO Summits) for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits.

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All core partners are represented on the State's ICT, a group centered around WFWV to provide on-going attention to addressing issues that will build and continually improve the overall WDS. The team is the single State-level interagency group for addressing issues or concerns regarding building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of the overall WDS in WV. All partner agencies participate in regular, monthly meetings of the ICT, and is one of the signatories of the ICT MOU, which is drafted annually. The ICT membership includes:

- WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV)

- WV Employment Service–Chapter 41 of Title 38 - Local Veterans employment representatives & Disabled Veteran outreach program

- Employment Service–Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Compensation and WIOA

- Bureau of Senior Services
- Council for Community and Technical College Education
- WV Department of Education (WVDE)
- Office of Diversion and Transition Programs (ODTP)
- Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development
- Department of Commerce-West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR)
    - Bureau of Children & Families
    - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
    - Food Stamp Employment & Training, US Dept of Agriculture
- West Virginia Development Office
    - Business and Industrial Development
    - Community Development Division (Community Services Block Grant Act)

Alignment of Core Program Activities to Implement State Strategy

Each WIOA core agency has roles and responsibilities in serving consumers and employers through the AJCWV. These partners collaborate to better serve consumers utilizing these one—stop employment centers by sharing resources, reducing redundancies, and optimizing service delivery. Depending on the needs of individuals and the available services and resources from the programs (depending on eligibility), one or more agencies may provide services to a consumer. All three partners work with other agencies in various capacities to ensure its alignment with other WIOA programs.

To ensure the alignment of activities across programs, partners maintain ongoing communication to maintain awareness of the activities of other programs. In order to best serve consumers, state and local level staffs are kept well-informed of the services and other resources available from partner agencies. This communication occurs in several ways. At the state level, the AJCs, where daily interaction with partner agency staff occurs. Cross-training is also available, if needed. These activities result in better services to AJC consumers because they are provided the most appropriate services while preserving resources for future consumers.

Further alignment of services will be conducted at the individual consumer level. As appropriate, consumers may be referred to any of the core partners. When this occurs and a consumer is served by more than one WIOA agency (co-enrolled), the benefits of WV's integrated IT system become available to the consumer and service providers.

The integrated system will update daily to inform service providers of the services that other agencies are providing a co-enrolled consumer. This knowledge will allow each agency to coordinate services while also avoiding the duplication of services. In addition, core partners will host and participate in community forums targeting special populations and provide public service announcements about services available. This system is in the process of being developed and in the initial stage of implementation core and partner programs will collaborate

to ensure that resources are leveraged and services are not duplicated. Integration among core partners enables the WDS to remain flexible and adaptable while operating in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

AJC services will provide improved access and efficiency, along with value- added services to customers of the WDS. Partners are responsible for the delivery of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement. Strategically, the programs and agencies serve either a common customer or are charged with achieving similar employment and education outcomes for their targeted customer groups, including those most in need and those with disabilities. These services will include:

- Providing services that facilitate the match between high-demand jobs, employers and job seekers;
- Providing employment, training, and retention services for eligible WIOA participants and prioritizing services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals and individuals who are disabled and/or basic skills deficient, to spur financial self-sufficiency;
- Developing adult education and family literacy programs that ensure all adults have the basic education skills they need to contribute to their families and communities;
- Providing employment, training, and retention services to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, trade-affected individuals, older individuals, ex- offenders, homeless individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, and youth;
- Encouraging the use of training services that provide portable, stackable and transferable credit and credentials;
- Providing "wrap around" support services, such as childcare, unemployment insurance, and transportation to enable eligible individuals to work or participate in employment and training activities;
- Monitoring and evaluating compliance of local area service delivery forfiscal accountability and program effectiveness; and
- Providing technical assistance to LWDBs and training providers to ensure the most effective delivery of workforce services.

The state will take further actions to coordinate services between WIOA core programs and non— core programs and services to create an effective career pathway system. These actions will include the following:

- The education agencies and educational institutions will work with the WVWFDB and LWDBs to build career pathways that include secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs of study.
- The state will expand skill-building services funded through SNAP E&T, including leveraging federal funding available through SNAP E&T 50/50 funds for employment, training, and related support services, and coordinate those services with WIOA core programs.

- The state will increase the integration of TANF employment and training services with WIOA core programs.
- The state will design career pathways to have an entry point along the pathway that meets the adult education and workforce program alignment requirements in the "ability to benefit" provision of Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act, to enable eligible participants without a high school diploma to qualify for Pell Grants and other federal student financial assistance.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Training of the State Board Members

Training will be continual and will be in—person and electronically delivered. Orientation will be provided to all new members. Staff resources will be provided by WFWV to enable board to carryout functions.

The Board shall assist in implementing and overseeing a comprehensive state workforce system that prepares West Virginia citizens for employment opportunities offered by West Virginia businesses. The Board shall make recommendations regarding program implementation, operation, and modifications to all state agencies administering workforce investment programs. The Board shall also assist and encourage West Virginia's educational institutions and public assistance systems to improve their ability to prepare people for gainful employment.

The Governor appoints the members of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and designates one of the business representatives to serve as the Chairperson. The SWDB gives the Chairperson authority through the bylaws to create or dissolve committees and the taskforces in order to accomplish the state board functions of the Board as required under section 101 (d) of WIOA. The general Board meetings are scheduled to occur every quarter. Significant decisions are made with the approval of a simple majority of a Board quorum. Status updates on any current initiatives are given, as appropriate, to full Board during regular meetings and if action is required, the Board is able to act accordingly. Public notice of regular Board meetings will be provided to all members no less than seven days before the day of the meeting. All meetings of the Board will be publicly announced in advance and open and accessible to the general public.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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

***Below describes how the State will implement the strategies discussed in II(c) above.

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS).

For WIOA to continue to be successful the WDS must be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible. Partners in the workforce development system will work together in order to maximize benefits to our customers and improve WV's LFPR.

Strategy 1.1: Core partners will collaborate to align program initiatives and processes.

- Annually update MOU with all partners.

- Conduct regularly scheduled meetings to discuss workforce development. The meetings consist of members from each agency subject to the reporting provisions of WIOA. Meetings with partners will promote program integration to eliminate duplication of efforts.
- ICT (monthly)
- WVWFDB (quarterly)

Strategy 1.2: Ensure cross-training of all workforce development system partners.

- Deploy a comprehensive on-line training program to provide exposure to WDS services.
- Engage in team-based system management for the customers at our American Job Centers of West Virginia (AJCWV).
- Train staff to serve individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities and lacking adult basic education.
    - DRS will train partner staff regarding service to individuals with disabilities, including etiquette, accessibility, accommodations, resources, and other relevant topics, as appropriate.
- Technical assistance and training will be provided on the state management information system to all workforce development staff, both regionally and locally.

Strategy 1.3: Communicate with all partners within the workforce development system.

- Workforce development news and notices are updated on the WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) website www.workforcewv.org.
- The state convenes monthly meetings with local workforce development board directors.

  Strategy 1.4: Maintain integrated state management information system utilized by core partners.
- Provide user training on the integrated state management information system to workforce development staff, both regionally and locally.
- Maintain the integrated state management information system for co-enrollment of individuals receiving services from the core partners.
- Utilize the integrated state management information system to monitor and evaluate performance of core partner programs in relation to the six state goals.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers.

Collaborate with employers utilizing a variety of methods to develop solutions to their workforce needs.

Strategy 2.1: Partner with employers to identify workforce needs.

- Solicit employer feedback to identify the skills and competencies necessary for employment.
- Promote and develop sector strategies based on labor market information and employer needs.

- The WVWFDB will set policies for providing services to employers through enhanced agency coordination. State agencies will act as intermediaries for organizing outreach to employers on a wider geographical basis than local regions.

- Connect employers to participate in business-education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and community organizations with individuals to provide career-related experiences and employment opportunities such as soft skills development, internships, OJT, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring.

  Strategy 2.2: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of employers.

- Maintain partnerships with employers, community colleges, secondary and post-secondary certificate granting schools, and LWDBs to continue micro-credentials that demonstrate skill development. This allows for the attainment of employability skills and measurable skill gains to align career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities.

- Promote the development of Registered Apprenticeship programs focusing on non-traditional industries and occupations.

- Maintain relationships with the secondary, postsecondary, and adult education systems to ensure that programs of study reflect employer needs.

- Encourage employers that receive state funds from economic development and similar programs to utilize the public workforce development system.

To demonstrate WFWV's encouragement of co-enrollment, the following numbers were queried from the MACC from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019:

- WP and WIOA Adult-1,590
- WP and WIOA DW-3,030
- WIOA DW and TAA-398
- WIOA DW and NDWG-1,569
- WIOA Adult and NDWG-438

Goal 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals.

Strategy 3.1: Assess needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training.

- Provide counseling to ascertain service needs of individuals to determine skills necessary for desired employment.

- Coordinate cross-program services for job preparation activities to develop employability skills, adult basic education, and occupational training. When appropriate, individuals will be co-enrolled between two or more core programs to accomplish this goal.

Strategy 3.2: Use the Employment First framework to ensure competitive, integrated employment as the priority option for individuals with significant disabilities.

- Engage individuals with disabilities by offering realistic entry points into career pathways.

- Through integrated efforts, the core partners will increase awareness and access to services to individuals with disabilities. These efforts include maximizing resources, co-enrollment, cross referrals, outreach, and service delivery which will allow for successful employment outcomes.

Strategy 3.3: Provide access to training programs that meet the needs of individuals.

- Maintain partnerships with employers, community colleges, secondary and post-secondary certificate granting schools, and LWDBs to continue micro-credentials that demonstrate skill development. This allows for the attainment of employability skills and measurable skill gains to align career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities.
- Promote access to Registered Apprenticeship programs focusing on non-traditional industries and occupations.
- Refer individuals to training programs that lead to self-sufficiency.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways.

Emphasize career pathways to assist individuals entering and moving within the labor force and to educate employers on the advantages of career pathways.

Strategy 4.1: Adhere to WIOA career pathways development.

- West Virginia Adult Education, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and the Community and Technical College System (CTCS) of West Virginia will continue strategies to integrate career pathway programs. This integrated system will permit individuals to enter the pathway at any level.

Strategy 4.2: Enhance current career pathways system.

- Maintain a comprehensive career pathway system that combines education, training, counseling, and support services from multiple programs, including secondary and postsecondary CTE, Adult and Literacy Education (Adult Education), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training, the CTCS of West Virginia and higher education.
- Ensure career pathways are aligned to in-demand occupations likely to pay sustaining wages. The LWDBs will engage employers to accomplish this goal.
- Place individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non-technical skills necessary to lead to employment in high-demand jobs.
- Require OJT and incumbent worker training be tied to a career pathway.

Strategy 4.3: Educate individuals and employers to encourage career pathways in training and employment environments.

- Promote and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs in non-traditional occupations as part of a relevant career pathway model. Apprenticeship opportunities within the workforce development system will be promoted as job training options to individuals.

- Provide career guidance to individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, about programs and services that provides an effective pathway to their career goals.
- The WV WDS will keep information on the workforce development website up to date regarding career pathways and information provided by the Department of Education around initiatives such as Simulated Workplace.
    - The WVDE staff worked with numerous businesses and industries throughout the state to design Simulated Workplace. This educational initiative was created to assist schools in integrating workplace environment protocols into the CTE programs that align with West Virginia workforce requirements. These protocols focus on transitioning the classroom to a student-driven "company" environment, random drug testing, professionalism, attendance, 5-S quality and safety. Simulated Workplace has enhanced instructional delivery of CTE and created a more engaged student. The Simulated Workplace environment provides students with the opportunity to take ownership of their individual performance as it impacts the overall success of their education while thriving in an authentic workplace culture. Simulated Workplace also encourages local business and industry experts to join onsite review teams to assist schools in meeting their workforce needs and expectations.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth.

Identify employment challenges faced by youth and provide access to postsecondary training/education and employment opportunities to improve WV's labor force participation rate.

Strategy 5.1: Execution of WIOA regulations regarding youth.

- Recognizing the new priority on OSY, the State will identify models and effective practices, including for recruitment, flexible enrollment (e.g. self-attestation, co-enrollment, career pathways and retention) to help local area staff successfully meet the needs of those individuals.
- Identify models and effective practices for youth, including recruitment and flexible enrollment, to help local area staff successfully meet the needs of those individuals.
- Partner with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education and LWDBs ensuring statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated to accurately reflect the profiles of youth being served within the State and in each local area.

  Strategy 5.2: Coordination of youth services within the workforce development system.
- Develop transitional jobs, social enterprises, and other work experience strategies to help OSY with limited work histories develop the skills needed for workplace success.
- Co-enroll high-risk individuals, ages 18 to 24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to leverage funds and provide necessary services. Co-enrollment can occur in Title II adult basic education services, EARN, TANF, or other partner programs. Continue the use of ITAs for 18 to 24-year olds in combination with work-based learning opportunities.

- The State will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences. The WVDE and the CTCS will work cooperatively to explore and develop appropriate connections between WIOA youth activities and Perkins postsecondary and state-funded programming.
- The WVDE will support the transformation and modernization of CTE and align CTE with the career pathways recognized by the State.
- LWDB will collaborate with YouthBuild, JobCorps, and AmeriCorps sites, identifying partnerships in local plans.

Strategy 5.3: Provide youth a clear pathway to success.

- Collaborate with LWDBs to identify access points which enable individuals to complete training and enter a successful career pathway.
- DRS has re-aligned its resources to increase and improve services to youth with disabilities, especially high school students with disabilities. DRS has MOUs with all 55 county boards of education and has a vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to each high school in the state. These counselors provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities to ensure students, and their parents, and school personnel are aware of available services, training, education, and employment options. Through the POWER program, students with disabilities have opportunities for job shadowing experiences. Through STEP, students may receive services from teachers outside of the classroom, including job coaching and job placement. Youth may also continue to receive services from DRS after exiting high school. This often includes additional training and education required to achieve their chosen employment goal.
- Leverage resources providing effective and efficient services to youth. This includes cross referrals and co-enrollment of individuals in addition to joint projects and activities at the state and regional level.
- Utilize the Office of Apprenticeship to promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.
- Transcripted EDGE credit can be earned by students to matriculate from secondary career technical education to CTCS. The West Virginia EDGE was established in 2001 in Senate Bill 436. EDGE is an acronym for Earn a Degree-Graduate Early and is a result of the seamless curriculum initiative that focuses on curriculum alignment between educational levels. The alignment process identifies curriculum gaps, eliminates curriculum duplication and sets curriculum mastery levels to pre-determined standards while saving tuition money for students.

Goal 6: Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR).

WV has the lowest LFPR in the United States. Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring that West Virginia's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to expand.

Strategy 6.1: Match individuals to adult basic education.

- Individuals will be assessed and referred to adult basic education to obtain skills needed for their career pathway.
- Adult Education will track referral source and Education and Career Plan (ECP) utilization in its Management Information System (MIS).

Strategy 6.2: Match individuals to postsecondary training or education.

- Core partners will increase referrals to postsecondary training or education leading to employment.
- Capture data match with WFWV and Higher Education Policy Commission on individuals who enter postsecondary education or employment.

Strategy 6.3: Utilize career pathways when working with youth.

- Core partners will provide youth opportunities for academic enrichment and employment.

Strategy 6.4: Improve the ability of core partners to match individuals with employers.

- Making better job matches between individuals and employers reduces an individual's time between jobs and minimizes delays to entering the workforce.
- DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WFWV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.
- DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WFWV, Adult Education, LWDBs, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.
- Enhance State MIS to ensure information gathered is complete and accurate.
- Improve accuracy of occupational classification among employer postings, training program, and participant work histories.

Strategy 6.5: The State will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences. The WVDE and CTCS will work cooperatively to explore and develop appropriate connections between WIOA youth activities and Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) postsecondary and state funded programming.

Strategy 6.6: The Department of Education will explore the transformation and modernization of CTE and evaluate the opportunity to align CTE with the career pathways recognized by the State.

Strategy 6.7: Explore opportunities to establish Career Development in K-12 education curriculum starting with eight (8th) grade to include career orientation, workforce development information and promote career pathway for youth.

Strategy 6.8: LWDBs will explore opportunities to increase their focus on developing and establishing summer youth programs providing work experience and soft skills to youth.

Core Program Activities to Implement State Strategy

Each WIOA core agency has roles and responsibilities in serving consumers and employers through the AJCWV. These partners collaborate to better serve consumers utilizing these one—stop employment centers by sharing resources, reducing redundancies, and optimizing service delivery. Depending on the needs of individuals and the available services and resources from the programs (depending on eligibility), one or more agencies may provide services to a consumer. All three partners work with other agencies in various capacities to ensure its alignment with other WIOA programs.

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The integrated system will update daily to inform service providers of the services that other agencies are providing a co-enrolled consumer. This knowledge will allow each agency to coordinate services while also avoiding the duplication of services. In addition, core partners will host and participate in community forums targeting special populations and provide public service announcements about services available. This system is in the process of being developed and in the initial stage of implementation core and partner programs will collaborate to ensure that resources are leveraged and services are not duplicated. Integration among core partners enables the WDS to remain flexible and adaptable while operating in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

AJC services will provide improved access and efficiency, along with value- added services to customers of the WDS. Partners are responsible for the delivery of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement. Strategically, the programs and agencies serve either a common customer or are charged with achieving similar employment and education outcomes for their targeted customer groups, including those most in need and those with disabilities. These services will include:

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- Providing employment, training, and retention services for eligible WIOA participants and prioritizing services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals and individuals who are disabled and/or basic skills deficient, to spur financial self-sufficiency;

- Developing adult education and family literacy programs that ensure all adults have the basic education skills they need to contribute to their families and communities;
- Providing employment, training, and retention services to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, trade-affected individuals, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, and youth;
- Encouraging the use of training services that provide portable, stackable and transferable credit and credentials;
- Providing "wrap around" support services, such as childcare, unemployment insurance, and transportation to enable eligible individuals to work or participate in employment and training activities;
- Monitoring and evaluating compliance of local area service delivery for fiscal accountability and program effectiveness; and
- Providing technical assistance to LWDBs and training providers to ensure the most effective delivery of workforce services.

The state will take further actions to coordinate services between WIOA core programs and non— core programs and services to create an effective career pathway system. These actions will include the following:

- The education agencies and educational institutions will work with the WVWFDB and LWDBs to build career pathways that include secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs of study.
- The state will expand skill-building services funded through SNAP E&T, including leveraging federal funding available through SNAP E&T 50/50 funds for employment, training, and related support services, and coordinate those services with WIOA core programs.
- The state will increase the integration of TANF employment and training services with WIOA core programs.
- The state will design career pathways to have an entry point along the pathway that meets the adult education and workforce program alignment requirements in the "ability to benefit" provision of Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act, to enable eligible participants without a high school diploma to qualify for Pell Grants and other federal student financial assistance.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

The WV WDS extends beyond the core programs to include programs administered by numerous state agencies and quasi-governmental entities.

With a market-based and customer-focused plan, the LWDBs continue to refine and improve WV's structure for aligning core and optional programs under WIOA and other available resources to realize the state's vision and achieve its goals.

The State WVWFDB works diligently to promote alignment and collaboration across core programs. The core partners and all required partners are represented on the Board and attend

meetings. The WVWFDB is focused on promoting greater connections between LWDBs and community organizations.

There are numerous examples of specific collaborations among partner programs beyond the high level strategic and planning efforts taking place through the interagency work group and WVWFDB including:

- DRS works extensively with education partners including Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to coordinate the provision of pre-employment and other transition services for students with disabilities.
- WIOA Youth service providers coordinate with LEAs, adult education agencies, county human service offices, county assistance office income maintenance caseworkers, EARN contractors, juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, DRS, economic development entities and other community and faith-based organizations to ensure participants have access to all the services they need to be successful in training activities and find employment.
- WIOA Youth will be notified of opportunities to co-enroll in the TANF program and will also be referred to the Adult Education program as appropriate.
- The braiding of WIOA Title I-B funded programs with other youth-directed state and local entities allows comprehensive services to be offered to all eligible low-income populations under WIOA. Available TANF funding will continue to support WIOA year-round services and summer employment activities.
- Applicants for Title II funds are required to describe how they will align services with local workforce development plans and how they will coordinate with other available education, training, and social services in the community. Alignment with LWDB's goals is required for funding.
- Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) providers assist job seekers in identifying their interests and abilities and aligning these skills needs to training and financial resources to assist with training. Training is linked to the state's high-demand jobs and is designed to lead to credential attainment. Both credential attainment and high-demand jobs alignment assist job seekers in securing employment with family-sustaining wages.
- The state co-enrolls all trade-impacted workers in the WIOA DW program to ensure that all individuals receive the full range of assistance available to dislocated workers.
- The office of Adult Education will work with representatives from the Office of Diversion & Transition Programs (ODTP), the WV Department of Corrections (DOC) and other education stakeholders to identify best practices to support the requirements of Section 225 of Title II.
- ODTP is working closely with CTE, CTCS, DHHR and WVDE and other partners to align its career pathways and reentry initiatives with on-going efforts in the workforce and education systems. These partnerships can provide opportunities for offenders to enhance skills and earn post-secondary credentials.
- The MACC is an integrated data platform that links human service, workforce and wage record data to measure the outcomes of workforce development programs and identifies the supply of skilled workers in relation to employer demand.

- DRS continues to build new and strengthen existing partnerships with the DOC, regarding increasing and improving the agency's involvement in re-entry employment training to assist individuals with disabilities in the correctional system.

- WFWV will establish and participate in partnerships with other agencies and programs that are focused on combating veteran unemployment. WFWV recognizes that the emerging needs of veterans and their families are unique. Eligible veterans are entitled to priority services. Public Law 107-288, Title 38, U.S. Code and State Legislation mandates that qualified veterans receive priority in all employment and training programs including: referral to jobs and job training programs; counseling, testing and job development assistance; eligibility determination for tax credit programs. Co-enrollment of veterans in core partner services will be a priority.

- DRS strives to align its activities and services with other agencies, including WIOA partners. Because DRS provides services under an IPE, many alignment activities occur on the individual consumer level. DRS' Client Services Manual Section 2501.3 requires VR counselors to assess and utilize, if appropriate, any third party comparable benefits and services. One example of this alignment occurs with DRS consumers that choose to receive four-year and/or community college training; consumers must utilize grants and other non-loan resources prior to DRS providing financial support.

- DRS is mandated not only to coordinate services and resources with comparable services and benefits providers, but also to collect and report these data (any involvement with a comparable services benefits provider in approximately 30 service categories) to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration at the individual consumer level. The collection, monitoring, and evaluation of these data allow DRS to ensure coordination and alignment is taking place across the state.

Also, to ensure mandatory partners remain aligned and are actively involved in the progress of this plan, West Virginia has included the following statute in state code.

WV State Code: §5B-2B-9. Coordination between agencies providing workforce investment programs, local workforce development boards and the Executive Director of WorkForce West Virginia

1. To provide ongoing attention to addressing issues that will build and continually improve the overall workforce investment system, the Workforce Investment Interagency Collaborative Team is hereby created. The team shall be the single state interagency source for addressing issues or concerns related to building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act and the overall workforce development system in West Virginia. The team shall focus on how best to collaborate between and among the state agencies directly involved in workforce investment activities and shall develop a strategic plan to that end. The team shall serve as a forum for the board to seek information or recommendations in furtherance of its responsibilities under this article. Workforce West Virginia is the entity which shall convene the team at least monthly and shall provide administrative and other services to the team as the team requires.

2. The team shall consist of members from each agency subject to the reporting provisions of section five of this article. Each agency shall appoint two representatives to the team consisting of the chief official of the department or division and the official within that department or division who is directly responsible for overseeing the workforce investment program or activities at the state level. A designee may be selected to

represent a member appointed to the team: Provided, that the designee has policy-making decision authority regarding workforce investment activities including program and fiscal issues. The team members have authority to make decisions on behalf of the agency at the level required for the team to address issues and advance system improvements.

3. The team shall coordinate the development of a self-sufficiency standard study for the State of West Virginia. The self-sufficiency standard is to measure how much income is needed for a household of a given composition in a given place to adequately meet its basic needs without public or private assistance. Beginning on the first day of November, two thousand four, and every year thereafter, this study is to be reported to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the President of the Senate, the Workforce Development Board and the Legislative Oversight Commission on Workforce Investment for Economic Development.
4. Beginning the first day of January, two thousand three, in order to lawfully continue any workforce investment activities, any agency subject to the reporting provisions of section five of this article shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Executive Director of WorkForce West Virginia and any local workforce Development Board representing an area of this state in which the agency is engaged in workforce investment activities. To the extent permitted by federal law, the agreements are to maximize coordination of workforce investment activities and eliminate duplication of services on both state and local levels.
5. No memorandum of understanding may be effective for more than one year without annual reaffirmation by the parties.
6. Any state agency entering a memorandum of understanding shall deliver a copy thereof to both the West Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWFDB) and the legislative oversight commission.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Coordination of activities occurs at the state, regional, and local levels. The state-level ICT meets monthly to share information and discuss past, present, and future activities among the partner agencies. At the regional level, WVWFDB meetings are attended by core partner staff; these meetings are particularly beneficial to “front line” staff members. Staff receive cross-training to learn about other core programs and share examples of integrated service provision for consumers co-enrolled in more than one core WIOA program.

The core partners have developed an interface that allows the sharing of common data elements enrollment of individuals. This allows case management services throughout the entire process and will also allow for follow up, performance and additional needs. The core partners will share common data elements through the interface. All partners will have one goal and that is to ensure individuals have received needed training and obtain employment.

As previously described, the WIOA core partner programs collaborate in numerous ways to coordinate activities and provide comprehensive, high-quality services, including supportive services to ACJWV consumers. The WIOA partner agencies meet at the state, regional, and local level to share activities, concerns, and solutions related to the WV WDS. These meetings and cross trainings result in coordinated service delivery. Service delivery is further enhanced at the consumer level through the use of the integrated IT system for co-enrolled individuals. The

services that a consumer receives are based on consumer need and program eligibility requirements and resources. Though each agency may specialize in a specific area or serve a specific population (e.g., individuals with disabilities for VR or individuals not in high school for Adult Education), the combined efforts and shared (human and fiscal) resources greatly benefit consumers, including employers, of the WV WDS.

While some services and consumers may overlap, each WIOA program has specific roles, target populations, responsibilities, and areas of expertise within the WDS. For example, WFWV maintains the largest collection of job listings in the state; DRS specializes in serving individuals, including high school students, with the most significant disabilities; and Adult Education provides educational programs to individuals aged 16 years or older who are not required to be enrolled in the public school system. By coordinating activities at the state and local levels, a comprehensive service delivery system can be developed and strengthened to provide consumers with the highest quality services.

All partners attend mandatory monthly meetings established by state statute where the discussion and collaboration of efforts will transpire. Reports will be provided and successes will be shared.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

While WFWV has always offered and continues to offer many and varied services to employers, 2019 has seen the implementation of a new approach to offering these services by establishing a Business Service Unit. The Unit consists of representatives from WFWV, LWDBs, DRS, Adult Education, and Senior Services.

The WVWFDB is business-driven and provides much needed input into the direction of workforce programs. Falling directly in line are the local workforce development boards which are also business-driven but at the local level. The WVWFDB will implement a model to standardize the delivery of products and services to businesses. Regional business service teams will be developed to coordinate needs and provide contacts to local employers. The State realizes the importance of capacity building that supports the service to provide timely solutions and connections to available resources to meet business needs. Collected information can be tracked and shared on the statewide data system to minimize duplication.

OJT providers throughout the state will also be contacting employers and advising them of the services provided through the workforce system.

WFWV is a One-Stop center for workforce resources, including the state's largest online database of job seekers, assistance with worker training, and unemployment processing.

Employers can post job listings, search for qualified employees, analyze LMI, and locate business services.

DRS will continue to provide leadership for accessibility standards, disability talent recruitment, and accessibility issues.

DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WFWV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.

DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WFWV, LWDBs, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will

allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

Adult Education will develop and support career pathways identified by employers and the workforce system. This support will be provided by developing and implementing bridge and pre-bridge programs. Career pathways systems assist youth and adults to achieve success in postsecondary education training and employment in high growth and high demand occupations.

Adult Education partners with several community colleges and CTE programs to offer credentials that demonstrate measurable skill gains and are part of a clearly defined career pathway for individuals with barriers to employment.

Our goal is to strengthen WV's business climate by supporting employers and helping job seekers gain the skills and knowledge required to obtain employment, remain employed, and advance in their careers.

Career Technical Education (CTE) Program Advisory Councils and Clinical Sites

All WVDE CTE programs at each school must have an advisory council in compliance with Perkins V. The majority of members must represent business/industry to identify local labor market demand, program curriculum and certification needs, and guide program improvements. Advisory employers also provided onsite clinical experiences for high school CTE students enrolled in health therapeutics and adult CTE students in Practical Nursing programs. CTE Simulated Workplaces http://wvde.state.wv.us/simulated—workplace and https://wvace.us/

Business and industry representatives inspect Simulated Workplace classrooms to ensure alignment with the industry needs. These representatives evaluate the career technical education program facilities, safety, equipment, space, tools, supplies, technology, professional skills, customer service, and teaching materials using a scorecard. Results are communicated to the administrators and teachers. The business inspector scorecard is located on http://wvde.state.wv.us/simulated—workplace and https://wvace.us/.

Learn & Earn

With the Learn & Earn program, the community and technical colleges have a 50/50 partnership with employers where the students actually work on-site 50 percent of their time and spend the other 50 percent in a classroom setting.

Business Surveys

WV plans to design and conduct business surveys in order to gather information on business needs. West Virginia aims to make the statewide business survey a regular exercise in order to ensure that service and workforce training is relevant and responsive to the needs of the business community.

Consumers of AJC WV, including those with disabilities, frequently require additional training in order to meet employer needs and reach their employment goal. Often, this training is provided by community colleges and vocational/technical training schools located throughout the state. WV's CTCS has an excellent track record of training individuals to have the skills that employers need to fill high quality jobs.

Through its employer partnership programs, WV's CTCS can provide the training an individual needs while leveraging a company's training dollars to maximize worker productivity. WV's

CTCS delivers training to hundreds of employers across the state. WV's CTCS can provide customized training, skill enhancements, certificate, and associate degree programs. A sample of programs (from http://www.wvctcs.org/images/PDF Brochures/Workforce.pdf) can be found below.

Employer Partnership Programs Learn & Earn

Provides students in high-demand applied technology programs with paid cooperative (co-op) educational experiences:

- 50/50 employer & CTC matching contribution
- Co-op experience must pay no less than $10/hr.
- Employer gains a highly qualified employee and a future skilled labor pool
- Students earn valuable OJT and a living wage while attending school

Tech Scholars Program

- Provides scholarships to students who enroll in high demand, applied technology programs
- 50/50 employer & CTC matching contribution
- Must lead to a Certificate of Applied Science (CAS) or Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
- Employer benefits by investing in a skilled workforce
- Students gain much-needed financial assistance while attending school WV Advance Grant
- A rapid-response grant for CTCs to help employers meet an immediate training need.
- Training can include skills upgrades, customized training, or pre-employment training HB 3009 Workforce Development Grant.
- A grant program to help CTCs deliver training to business and industry
- Company cash-match is required
- Business and CTC collaboration in training delivery

Programs like these bring together employers, individuals, and WIOA partner agencies. By identifying the needs of employers and sharing resources to train individuals, the state as a whole benefits from the WV WDS. Community colleges and technical schools have a unique ability to specialize programs across the state depending on the demands of the local economy, including the needs of employers and job seekers.

As described, the WV WDS benefits greatly from its partnership with community colleges and technical schools. This partnership has enhanced access to WDS services and allowed more individuals and employers to reach their goals.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In WV, our WDS begins with the secondary school system which includes career and technical schools through post-secondary education which include community colleges and the higher education system. All core programs work on a regular basis with all sectors of education-in

particular, CTEs and CTCs. Our goals are to work even closer in the future and develop stronger relationships.

As employers and the WDS develop career pathways, the core programs will work with the education system to support them. WFWV is already partnering with the CTE in their simulated workplace program. We wish to expand this program to include older youth in the near future.

The core partners understand the importance of having a recognized postsecondary degree from the perspectives of both employers and job seekers. The state has always strived for quality, career- based employment outcomes for its consumers, when appropriate. In this aim, the state has a long history of providing consumers with the necessary training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential. In FY 2019, over $6 million in DRS funding went toward training. Of this amount, the majority was for four-year college/university and junior/community college tuition.

Core partners have a liaison with postsecondary institutions across the state including 44 colleges, universities, community and technical colleges. Furthermore, cross-training between agencies is routinely conducted at state meetings and conferences. Higher Education and Policy Commission (HEPC) is an example of an agency that cross-trains with the core partners. HEPC develops and oversees a public policy agenda for WV's four-year colleges and universities.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

Since the enactment of WIOA, DRS has focused on providing services, particularly Pre-ETS, to high school students with disabilities starting in the 9th grade. To accomplish this, 59 counselors work with students with disabilities. Pre-ETS are mandated under WIOA and include the following:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institution of higher education
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large Pathways to the Future banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, career and technical education, and post-secondary students at locations across the state.

In addition to Pre-ETS, DRS debuted the POWER program in 2015. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional

working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest, including STEM. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

Another DRS activity is STEP. This program utilizes school personnel to facilitate a more seamless transition from high school to post-secondary activities (employment or training) for students with disabilities. By allowing the student to continue working with an individual who has provided them with classroom instruction and/or transition services while in high school, they are working with people who are most familiar with their interests, skills, and barriers to employment. In addition, STEP will also include the use of science and math teachers to provide appropriate students with further career exploration opportunities in STEM fields. These teachers may also provide college preparation activities, such as ACT test preparation, and work-based experiences.

By engaging students with disabilities earlier and providing them with activities such as Pre-ETS, STEP, and POWER, DRS expects recipient students will have a better understanding of the labor market and the value of obtaining a postsecondary credential. Students with disabilities that are eligible for VR services may, in accordance with their IPE, receive assistance from DRS in obtaining postsecondary training.

The core partners meet on a monthly basis to discuss all aspects of the system. Based on future directives from federal guidelines and procedures developed by the WVWFDB, the other mandatory partners will enter into MOUs at the local level as to how they will coordinate and provide services to customers at the local level.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

WV's workforce development strategy is integrally tied to education, starting with the secondary school system, including CTE centers, and continuing through postsecondary education to include community colleges, and public and private colleges and universities. Adult Education as a core partner is fully engaged with all levels of education within the state.

In WV, Secondary CTE is delivered through comprehensive high schools, county CTE centers, and multi-county CTE centers. Post-secondary CTE is delivered through the State's CTCS. County CTE centers also provide postsecondary CTE instruction.

The core programs will work with the education system to support and develop career pathways identified by employers and the workforce system. The state will be partnering with several community colleges to develop micro-credentials that demonstrate measurable skill gains and are part of a clearly defined career pathway for individuals with barriers to employment. Because the community colleges are Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) postsecondary recipients, the model developed by these community colleges will serve as a model that can be replicated by all of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) postsecondary recipients across the state. In addition, many of the approved secondary CTE programs of study will offer badges to recognize incremental attainment of skills. Badges are earned when a student achieves a minimum score on the technical assessment. A digital badge is an electronic indicator of one's skills, performance, and achievement.

In collaboration with WVDE, providers of CTE programs of study have worked to align industry credentials to high-demand occupations. Secondary career and technical centers make appropriate credentials and micro-credentials available through end-of-program assessment.

Another key area of collaboration and cooperation is the transition from the workforce development program to postsecondary education. Title II program managers, DRS counselors, SPOKES student coordinators and WIOA and Wagner-Peyser employment specialists are establishing relationships with educational staff in Adult Education programs to support the successful transition of their customers to postsecondary programs. The postsecondary programs include those offered by Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) postsecondary recipients.

All West Virginians exiting Adult Education services will be prepared to participate successfully in postsecondary level instruction. To support this vision, adult education providers have implemented the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. At the local level, many adult education providers have developed relationships with postsecondary education providers in the CTE centers and community colleges. Students who do not earn a high enough score on placement tests at the postsecondary institution are referred to a local adult education program for remedial work. After the student has demonstrated sufficient academic progress at the local adult education program, as determined by an approved standardized test, the student is referred back to the postsecondary institution. The state will build on best practices developed through these relationships. For example, in the most successful partnerships, both the adult education program and the postsecondary institution have points of contact for referrals. Also, the adult education and postsecondary programs are working together to identify key content areas for the adult education program to cover to support successful transition to the post-secondary program.

The State will strive to connect youth and adults seeking postsecondary education with available financial aid. The State will also encourage those students without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent deemed eligible under Ability to Benefit for financial assistance to enroll in eligible career pathway programs. Contextualized instruction will also be used as a mechanism for encouraging students without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent to enroll in eligible career pathway programs in providing integrated basic education and skills training for adults with basic skill deficiencies, and a proven skills-building strategy. Post-secondary career and technical education programs will work with adult basic education programs to establish integrated education and training programs throughout the state.

In serving individuals with disabilities, DRS will continue to work collaboratively with local community colleges, career and technical schools to explore the development of training programs that are implemented with universal design to train individuals with disabilities for competitive, integrated employment in jobs that meet local labor market demand. This will include working to replicate successful programs and to expand postsecondary education options for youth with disabilities. DRS will also work to develop and implement interagency agreements with community colleges and career and technical schools to fill unmet needs within the local WDS.

In serving veterans, DRS will continue to work closely with the WVDE and student veteran organizations at colleges, universities, trade schools and other institutions of higher learning to create “veteran friendly” learning environments. The state will continue to support partners in education with focused outreach and coordination with community partners while supporting veterans and their family members to take full advantage of educational benefits that they have earned. This alignment of services will leverage these education and training platforms to focus on job skills that meet the needs of employers within the regions. Education will coordinate with partners to link employers to these educational institutions and programs to ensure that

we graduate skilled applicants who have the greatest potential to move successfully into employment.

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Through its Employer Partnership Programs, West Virginia's CTCS provides the training workers need while leveraging the company's training dollars to achieve maximize worker productivity.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

WV is leveraging investments to enhance access to workforce development programs through various initiatives. Some examples are below:

CTE plays a critical role in a state's economy. WV is fortunate to have an adult career technical system that is currently producing high skilled students who will be the face of WV's highly trained workforce. Adult Education is collaborating with CTE to address the issues of increasing successful postsecondary enrollment of adult students in CTE programs and improving persistence toward completion once successfully enrolled. This collaboration will include shared intake and assessment as well as dual enrollment in linked basic skills and occupational courses, integrated, contextualized instruction and wrap around services for students. These programs will combine basic skills and career-technical content, including general workforce readiness skills, academic and English language skills, and specific occupational knowledge and skills, supported by comprehensive student services along a well-defined career pathway.

Adult Education has a successful history of collaboration with the State's DHHR. Through a cooperative relationship built on trust and commitment to serving economically disadvantaged West Virginians, the two State agencies work together to respond to the mandates of welfare reform. SPOKES, an academic and job preparation skills program, was created by Adult Education under a contract between the WVDE, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development and DHHR, and in collaboration with some LWDBs. The SPOKES program model was also designed to provide intense daily activities that would address academic and soft skills necessary for adults to pursue gainful employment. In addition, students may select certification training from a list of state-approved and industry recognized certifications as a part of this program.

In partnership with workforce education and adult education, training delivered through WV Advanced Technology Grants at BridgeValley Community College is market-driven and focused on providing employers with a highly trained workforce and complementing the economic development efforts of the state. The intent is to provide training services to employers that have a positive economic outcome on WV as determined by the West Virginia Development Office.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

As discussed in the Strategic section of this plan, the state will use data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment and will offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills. The state will also work closely with employers, Industry Partnerships and LWDBs to identify or develop the badges, micro-credentials, certifications and other credentials that adequately represent attainment of those skills.

The state will work to identify and align credentials to career pathways for high-demand and priority occupations. Adult Education is also exploring the use of micro—credentials,

particularly for individuals with barriers to employment, as a means to allow for the attainment of skills in shorter segments and the receipt of an industry-recognized credential to demonstrate skill competency to potential employers. In addition, students enrolled in WVDE approved CTE programs will soon be able to earn badges. Badges are earned when a student achieves a minimum score on the technical assessment. A digital badge is an electronic indicator of one's skills, performance, and achievement.

In accordance with the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V), West Virginia requires postsecondary institutions receiving Perkins V funding, including the nine community colleges, to articulate with secondary schools that offer WVDE-approved CTE programs of study.

These articulation agreements allow qualified students enrolled in an approved career and technical Program of Study to receive college credit toward a diploma, certificate or degree in a similar program at a postsecondary institution. These programs serve as a seamless pathway from secondary to postsecondary education, and ensure students transition from one level to another without delays or duplication of learning.

The state will promote the attainment of postsecondary credentials through a number of programs and initiatives. Examples include:

- All training providers will be required to describe the credential(s) to be earned. All Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) postsecondary recipients report on credential, certificate or degree earned as part of their required accountability measures.
- Business and industry partners encourage/collaborate trainings that result in a postsecondary credential by requiring all proposals to identify credentials/certifications to be obtained and making credentials a required outcome measure.
- DRS will continue to analyze labor market demand and model service delivery systems to identify opportunities for industry—recognized certificates that lead to increased and improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
- Education programs, including secondary and postsecondary Perkins V and adult basic education, will provide professional development opportunities to help providers understand and navigate the full credentialing spectrum and develop expertise in occupational counseling.

All postsecondary institutions with Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) funding have advanced credit offerings aligned with at least one approved CTE program of study and offer additional advanced credit opportunities. Students can earn between two and 22 college credits for their secondary technical coursework, before high school graduation, as permitted in the specific CTE approved program of study and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) Statewide Articulation Agreement.

Since the enactment of WIOA, DRS is focused on providing services, particularly Pre-ETS, to high school students with disabilities starting in the 9th grade. To accomplish this, 59 counselors work with students with disabilities. Pre-ETS are mandated under WIOA and include the following:

- Job development counseling

- Work—based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institution of higher education
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

In addition to Pre-ETS, DRS debuted the POWER program in 2015. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest, including STEM. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

Another DRS activity is STEP. This program utilizes school personnel to facilitate a more seamless transition from high school to post-secondary activities (employment or training) for students with disabilities. By allowing the student to continue working with an individual who has provided them with classroom instruction and/or transition services while in high school, they are working with people who are most familiar with their interests, skills, and barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. In addition, STEP will also include the use of science and math teachers to provide appropriate students with further career exploration opportunities in STEM fields. These teachers may also provide college preparation activities, such as ACT test preparation, and work- based experiences.

By engaging students with disabilities earlier and providing them with activities such as Pre-ETS, STEP, and POWER, DRS expects recipient students will have a better understanding of the labor market and the value of obtaining a postsecondary credential. Students with disabilities that are eligible for VR services may, in accordance with their IPE, receive assistance from DRS in obtaining postsecondary training.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Economic development strategies are primarily developed and implemented by the West Virginia Development Office. The WV Development Office works closely with WFWV, CTCs, CTEs, and Higher Education in evaluating labor market resources to present to current and potential business entities.

West Virginia has local economic and community development offices throughout the state to work in local areas. The WDS works closely with these local entities in an effort to promote economic development.

Further these entities all patriciate in West Virginia's business service model. This model is a collaborate effort to identify and address the needs of the business community in each Workforce region. The Workforce Development System, the MACC, is the repository of data available to coordinate the service delivery**.**

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

The WFWV MACC system is a comprehensive case management system that incorporates many of the programs available under WIOA, including Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Trade Act, National Dislocated Worker Grants, Rapid Response, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, and the Eligible Training Provider List.

The core partners have developed interfaces between the WFWV MACC system, the Adult Education AEMIS system, and the DRS iECM system that allows co-enrollment of individuals under three core partner and real-time sharing of participant activities in the respective systems. This allows case managers to immediately know what services are being provided to the participant as well as follow up, performance and other informational needs. The core partners will share common data elements with other core partners through the interface system. All partners will have one goal: to ensure individuals receive needed training and obtain employment.

Labor market information is provided to data seekers through the website of the Division of Research, Information and Analysis. Data seekers can go directly to the website at lmi.workforcewv.org or can gain access to it through the Agency website.

The Division of Research, Information and Analysis meets the needs of data seekers by completing specific data requests, as well as by offering specific data such as In-Demand Occupations and Occupational Projections and Wages on the website at http://lmi.workforcewv.org/.

West Virginia has an integrated data collection and performance management system (MACC) that covers the following programs:

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Wagner-Peyser
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants
- West Virginia's Unemployment Compensation MIS interfaces with MACC

All other partners have management information systems that are customized to meet the needs of their programs. WFWV, DRS, and Adult Education has made the necessary changes to their systems to collect the required data elements.

Common data elements are shared among the partners through a regular file exchange; to allow partners to access the information in real time. Employment and wage data will be shared with partners to the extent allowed by the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) agreements.

To ensure alignment and integration, all core programs have mutual memorandums of understanding that help facilitate an integrated service delivery system. Staff members of each core partner will be cross-trained and knowledgeable about each core program in order to make appropriate customer referrals. The core partners will continue to maintain communication at the state and local levels on a regular basis. Common customer information and service provision data will be collected and stored in a data warehouse.

This information will be shared among the partners in order to provide better and more efficient services to individuals enrolled in one or more programs and to employers served by the 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, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

In compliance with WIOA, the Governor has established the WVWFDB to assist in the development of the Unified State Plan that will enhance the capacity and performance of the WDS, align and improve the workforce programs and investments, and promote economic growth. The WVWFDB assists the Governor in achieving the State's strategic and operational vision by developing and aligning policies.

Action Plan for Policy Development

WFWV establishes policy guidance for the WDS. Moving forward, WFWV plans to implement an 8- step process for policy development.

West Virginia's 8 Step Process for WIOA Policy Development:

1. Determine policy need
2. Meet with subject matter experts
3. Policy drafting
4. Review and comment period
5. Updates to draft
6. Final approval
7. Policy dissemination
8. Policy modification when applicable

Strategic Functions

- Develop and align policies
- Develop and implement state plans and performance measures
- Develop career pathway strategies
- Develop and expand strategies for partnerships in in-demand sectors/occupations

System Alignment and Effective Operations

- Develop policies and guidance on AJC partner roles and resource contributions
- Develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems
- Develop local area allocation formulas
- Develop a statewide LMI system building system capacity
- Develop strategies to support staff training and awareness

- Disseminate best practices
- Develop and continue improving the AJC system
- Support effective local boards

The State of West Virginia has been pursuing policies of coordinated and integrated workforce development system since the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The policies embedded in the WV State Code §5B-2B-9 for the implementation of WIA still remain valid in the implementation of WIOA.

To support the implementation of the State's strategies and to ensure mandatory partners remain aligned and are actively involved in the progress of this plan, West Virginia has included the following statute in state code:

WV State Code: §5B-2B-9. Coordination between agencies providing workforce investment programs, local workforce Development Boards and the Executive Director of WorkForce West Virginia

1. To provide ongoing attention to addressing issues that will build and continually improve the overall workforce investment system, the Workforce Investment Interagency Collaborative Team is hereby created. The team shall be the single state interagency source for addressing issues or concerns related to building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of WIOA and the overall workforce development system in West Virginia. The team shall focus on how best to collaborate between and among the state agencies directly involved in workforce investment activities and shall develop a strategic plan to that end. The team shall serve as a forum for the board to seek information or recommendations in furtherance of its responsibilities under this article. Workforce West Virginia is the entity which shall convene the team at least monthly and shall provide administrative and other services to the team as the team requires.

2. The team shall consist of members from each agency subject to the reporting provisions of section five of this article. Each agency shall appoint two representatives to the team consisting of the chief official of the department or division and the official within that department or division who is directly responsible for overseeing the workforce investment program or activities at the state level. A designee may be selected to represent a member appointed to the team: Provided, That the designee has policy-making decision authority regarding workforce investment activities including program and fiscal issues. The team members have authority to make decisions on behalf of the agency at the level required for the team to address issues and advance system improvements.

3. The team shall coordinate the development of a self-sufficiency standard study for the State of West Virginia. The self-sufficiency standard is to measure how much income is needed for a household of a given composition in a given place to adequately meet its basic needs without public or private assistance. Beginning on November 1, 2004, and every two years thereafter, this study is to be reported to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the President of the Senate, the board and the Legislative Oversight Commission on Workforce Investment for Economic Development.

4. Beginning January 1, 2003, in order to lawfully continue any workforce investment activities, any agency subject to the reporting provisions of section five of this article

shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Executive Director of Workforce West Virginia and any local board representing an area of this state in which the agency is engaged in workforce investment activities. To the extent permitted by federal law, the agreements are to maximize coordination of workforce investment activities and eliminate duplication of services on both state and local levels.

5. No memorandum of understanding may be effective for more than one year without annual reaffirmation by the parties.

6. Any state agency entering a memorandum of understanding shall deliver a copy thereof to both the board and the Legislative Oversight Commission.

Any state agency entering a MOU shall deliver a copy thereof to both the WVWFDB and the legislative oversight commission.

To solidify the commitment and collaborative efforts of the WIOA core and other participating state agencies at the state level, the WDS has a MOU with the ICT. This MOU details the state-level WDS vision, goals, processes, and system-wide commitments from each agency of the ICT. In conjunction with the WVWFDB, the ICT MOU delineates the State's processes for developing guidelines for the WDS, including guidelines for contributions, benchmarks, and equitable methods of infrastructure funding. All signatories to the ICT MOU agree to participate in a common referral system and all AJCs utilize a common intake/referral form. Having a universal intake process increases service availability for WV WDS consumers and allows partner agencies to maximize resources and improve outcomes. Partner agencies and co-enrolled consumers also benefit from the interoperability of the core partner agencies' MIS (for additional information, please see section III.b.6.A.i). The WDS is in the process of updating the ICT MOU, to embody State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies set forth in this WIOA Unified State Plan. The ICT MOU will serve to support the implementation of the State's goals of: 1) Maximize Efficiency of the WDS 2) Strengthen Relationships with Employers 3) Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals 4) Promote Career Pathways 5) Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth 6) Closer Align West Virginia's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate.

WFWV also provides guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and AJCWV partner programs in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure outlined WIOA policy 06-17 titled Memorandum Of Understanding/Infrastructure Guidance https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/guidance-notices/WIOA_Policy_6-17_Memorandum_of_Understanding_-_Infrastructure_Guidance.pdf.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of all WIOA programs under Title I and III. The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of WIOA programs under Title IV. Title II Adult Education is administered under the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE).

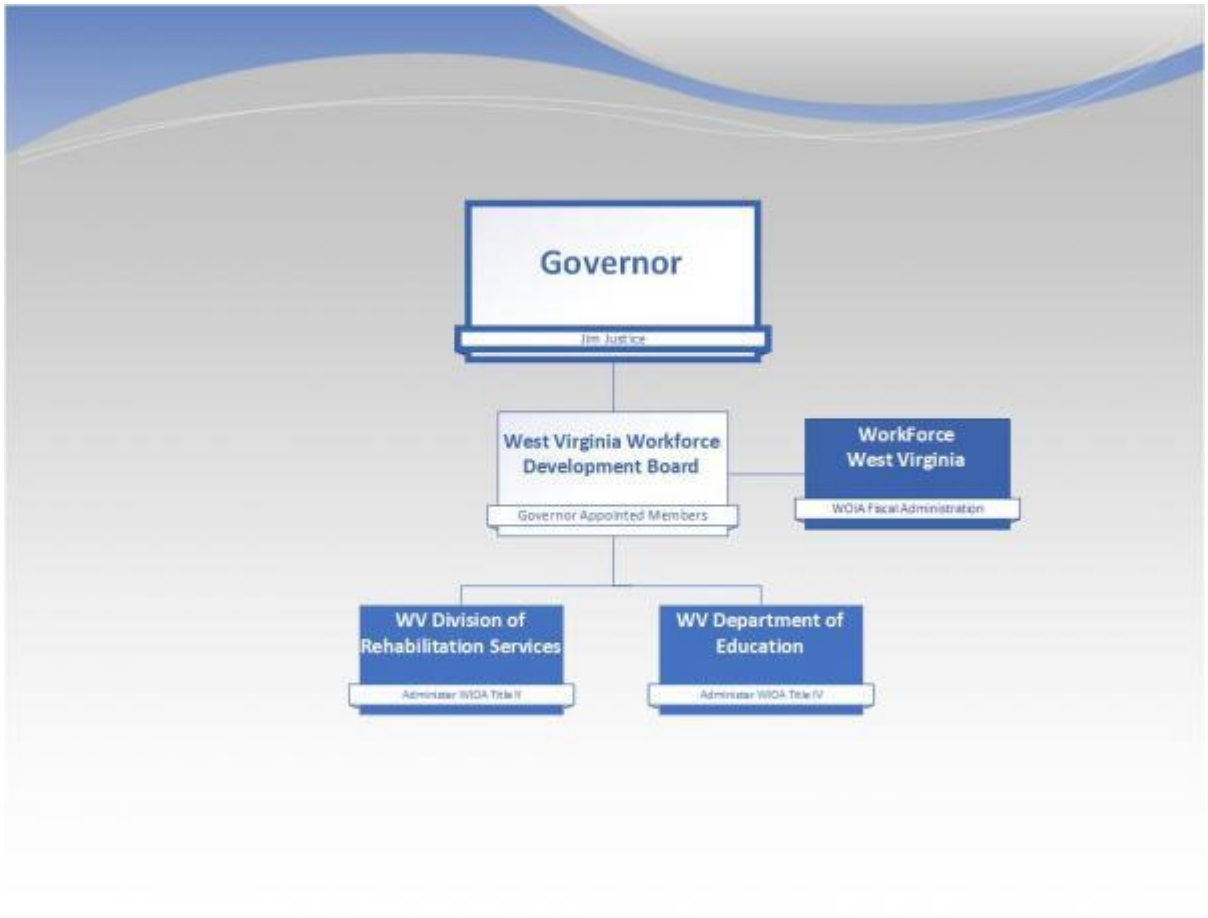
All agencies work closely with the state workforce development board, referred to in West Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWFDB). The WVWFDB advises the Governor on workforce priorities and initiatives while also overseeing workforce activities managed regionally by LWDB's. A few of the many responsibilities the WVWFDB is charged with includes: developing opportunities for West Virginians to gain employment and earn competitive wages,

developing and implementing workforce solutions based on the input of representatives and LWDBs around the state, addressing West Virginia's workforce needs through efficient workforce training and development programs. The WVWFDB also works with WVDE and DRS in developing and implementing the federally mandated state plan under WIOA. As to the LWDBs, West Virginia has a total of seven designated local regions with a LWDB in each. LWDBs are responsible for the oversight of funds and activities, delivering career assessment, job search, and education and training related services through organizations identified and established by the board.

The Executive Branch of West Virginia's State Government is headed by the State's elected Governor, who directly oversees several State Departments, Bureaus, Commissions, and other Boards and Councils. The implementation of WIOA in the State of West Virginia is carried out by two departments: The Department of Commerce and The Department of Education.

The Department of Commerce consists of nine agencies, including the Development Office; Division of Forestry; Geological and Economic Survey; Division of Labor; Office of Miners' Health, Safety, and Training; Division of Natural Resources; West Virginia Tourism Office; the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services; and WorkForce West Virginia. WFWV provides workforce development services statewide, at 18 American Job Centers distributed through seven geographic regions.

The West Virginia Department of Education consists of the State Board of Education, Office of the Superintendent's Office and the following divisions: Teaching & Learning, Support & Accountability, and Technical Education & Governor's Economic Initiatives. The Division of Technical Education & Governor's Economic Initiatives houses the Office of Adult Education.



B. STATE BOARD

The Board shall assist in implementing and overseeing a comprehensive state workforce system that prepares West Virginia citizens for employment opportunities offered by West Virginia businesses. The Board shall make recommendations regarding program implementation, operation, and modifications to all state agencies administering workforce investment programs. The Board shall also assist and encourage West Virginia's educational institutions and public assistance systems to improve their ability to prepare people for gainful employment.

The Governor appoints the members of the WVWFDB and designates one of the business representatives to serve as the Chairperson. The WVWDB gives the Chairperson authority through the bylaws to create or dissolve committees and the taskforces in order to accomplish the state board functions of the WVWDB as required under section 101 (d) of WIOA. The general WVWFDB meetings are scheduled to occur every quarter. Significant decisions are made with the approval of a simple majority of a Board quorum. Status updates on any current initiatives are given, as appropriate, to full Board during regular meetings and if action is required, the Board is able to act accordingly. Public notice of regular Board meetings will be provided to all members no less than seven days before the day of the meeting. All meetings of the Board will be publicly announced in advance and open and accessible to the general public.

All agencies work closely with the state workforce development board, referred to in West Virginia as the WVWFDB. The WVWFDB advises the Governor on workforce priorities and initiatives while also overseeing workforce activities managed regionally by WVDE and DRS in developing and implementing the federally mandated state plan under WIOA. LWDBs are responsible for the oversight of funds and activities, delivering career assessment, job search, and education and training related services through organizations identified and established by the board.

I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

West Virginia Workforce Development Board GOVERNOR APPONTED JULY 1, 2019

MEMBER NAME	COMPANY
John Sorrenti – Chair	John Jay Consulting
Josh Arthur	Chase Bank
Ray Burke, Jr.	Better Foods, Inc
VACANT	Chemours
Paul Geoffrey Sawyers	Allevard Sogefi
Michael Sirockman	Covestro LLC
Michael Bombard	Bombardier Commercial Aircraft
Bryan Johnson	Network Innovation Solutions
Diane Strong-Treister	Manpower
Penny Brown	Broaddus Hospital
Stephanie Smith	NGK Spark Plug Mfg.
Natalie Oliverio	Military Talent Partners
Patrick Martin	Teays Valley Pediatrics
Steve Cox	Toyota Motor Mfg.
Brian Ulery	Thomas Hospital
Roy Hamilton	Farmers Bank
Tim McLean	Walker Machinery
Todd Shell	Guyan International
VACANT	Business Representative
VACANT	Business Representative
Josh Sword	AFL/CIO
Roy Smith	WV State Bldg. Trades
Daniel Poling	International Un of Painters & Allied Traders
Eunice Bellinger	BridgeValley CTC
Kim Tieman	Benedum Foundation
Reverend Matthew Watts	HOPE Community Development Corp
John Moses	Youth Services System
Michelle Foster	Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
Stephanie Ahart	Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF)
VACANT	Local Elected Official / County
Randall (Randy) Rapp	Mayor of Vienna
Myisha Robinson	Bureau of Senior Services
Scott Adkins	WorkForce West Virginia
Bill Crouch / Designee	Dept of Health & Human Resources
Kathy D'Antoni / Designee	Department of Education
Marijane Waldron / Designee	Division of Rehab Services
Chandler Swope	State Senate
Paul Espinosa	House of Delegates

II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Governor appoints members of the WVWFDB (the Board) and designates the Chairperson. The Board through its bylaws may establish working committees to assist the Governor and the full Board in carrying out the functions and responsibilities in Section 101(d) of WIOA. These working committees include, but will not be necessarily limited to, an Executive Committee, advisory committees, and various standing committees for focused topic areas that advance the work of the Board and ensure adequate attention is given to priority issues.

The Board shall assist in implementing and overseeing a comprehensive state workforce system that prepares West Virginia citizens for employment opportunities offered by West Virginia businesses. The Board shall make recommendation regarding program implementation, operation, and modifications to all state agencies administering workforce investment programs. The Board shall also assist and encourage West Virginia's educational institutions

and public assistance systems to improve their ability to prepare people for gainful employment.

The Board shall meet at least quarterly and as such other times as the Chairperson deems necessary. All meetings of the Board will be publicly announced in advance and open and accessible to the general public. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson upon notice to the Board two working days prior to the meeting. Notice of each special meeting shall state the date, time, and location (within the State of West Virginia) of the meeting, and an agenda will be included stating the purpose of the meeting. Such special meetings will comply with the West Virginia Open Meetings law. At any special meeting of the Board, no business other than the stated agenda shall be transacted.

The state still needs to describe the activities that the state board will implement to carry out its functions under WIOA. Additional board activities shall include:

1. Will work in the development of and continuous improvement of the workforce system in West Virginia to include the removing barriers to employment, enhance existing strategies to support career pathways, provide outreach to employers to educate them on workforce services, enhance current sector partnerships to serve the needs of employer and job seekers.
2. Recommend improvements to the AJC system through the local workforce regions to support enhanced delivery of services to individuals and employers.
3. Disseminate best practices related to effective operation of the AJC system and training programs that respond to real time labor market analysis to assist in placement into employment.
4. The review of statewide policies that affect the provision of services in the AJC system, roles of mandated partners and guidance for allocation of funds to support the system.
5. Recommend enhancements and technological improvements for better access to services and activities delivered in the AJC system.
6. Recommend strategies for aligning technology and data systems among the mandated partner programs to improve the capacity to produce the desired results in reporting performance accountability measures.
7. Recommend enhancements to the statewide LMI system under the Wagner-Peyser Act.
8. Recommendations for other policies that promote unified initiatives to improve the WDS.

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

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Each of the core partners, including WFWV, DRS, and Adult Education will be assessed based on the performance accountability measures to assess the quality, effectiveness and improvements of the programs by local area or provider. Core programs will be assessed each year primarily through the State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. The assessments will be conducted at the state, local, and regional levels, while taking into account local/regional planning goals, as appropriate. The WV WDS "data warehouse" ensures that the state will have the capability to conduct assessments at various levels across programs in addition to assessments of the system as a whole. Assessments will help the state maintain

focus on service quality, progress towards its goals, identify promising practices, and pinpoint areas in need of improvement.

Each core program will be assessed on the following performance measures from section 116(b) of WIOA:

- Employment (second quarter after exit)
- Employment (fourth quarter after exit)
- Median earnings (second quarter after exit)
- Credential attainment rate
- Measurable skills gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers

Additional assessments maybe conducted utilizing other measures, as appropriate.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

The West Virginia AJC system partner programs include the following:

- Alien Labor Certification Program
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Adult Basic Education
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Career and Technical Adult Education
- Higher Education Adult Part-time Student
- Workforce Development Initiative Grant
- WV Advance Grant and Technical Program Development Initiative
- WIOA Title I Adult
- WIOA Title I Youth
- WIOA Dislocated Worker
- Governor's Discretionary Fund
- Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Veterans Programs
- Labor Exchange (Wagner-Peyser)
- Community Services Block Grant
- Unemployment Compensation

- Governor's Guaranteed Workforce Program (Including Small Business Workforce Development)
- National Emergency Grants (Various)

Each year, WFWV issues an assessment of the West Virginia workforce development system- the Workforce Development System Report. This serves as the primary assessment of one-stop partner program services in the state. This report includes the State of the AJC System, the Funding Stream Report, performance requirements, positive practices, and the ICT MOU. This report is a summary document that gives a public account and assessment of the current operations, structures, activities, finances, and future direction of AJCWV. The report is published annually, as required by the West Virginia Legislature, and reported to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Workforce Investment for Economic Development.

The purpose of the Funding Stream Report is to quantify the level of both fiscal and programmatic (service delivery) involvement of all the entities involved either directly or tangentially with workforce development in West Virginia. The data collected for the report is critical to conducting an assessment of the AJCWV system. With the original passage of House Bill 4083 in 2002, the West Virginia Legislature required this annual report regarding the source, use and outcomes of all funds received for workforce development activities in the state.

Specifically, this reporting requirement includes:

- Source and amount of federal, state, and other funds received for workforce development activities;
- Purpose of each of the above funds;
- Services provided in each of the seven regional workforce development areas;
- The measure used to evaluate program performance (including current and baseline performance data) and any other information the council requests.

All of the publicly funded workforce development programs operating in the state are to include:

- Amount of federal funds expended by each program,
- Amount of state funds expended by each program,
- How the funds are spent,
- The resulting improvement in the workforce.

The purpose, beyond identifying sources and uses of funds, is to focus on the outcomes of workforce development. Holding agencies and programs accountable for results is vitally important. Getting the most value from the dollars invested, be it federal, state or independent grants, is critical to the success of West Virginia's workforce development system.

For each workforce development program or activity, the report includes the following:

- State Organization
- Funding Unit
- Operations Unit

- Program
- Program Type
- Program Purpose
- Target Population
- Service Level (number of individuals served)
- Evaluation Measurement (specific to each program)
- Outcome
- Service Locations
- Funds, by source

Percentage of funds used for Workforce Development

Local and Regional Planning

- Data are collected from the local one-stops within each region. The report also aggregates data by workforce development region and includes data from the previous two years for comparison and assessment purposes. A sample of the data includes:
- The number of individuals receiving services (over 100 different available services) in each region, by program
- Contributions of each partner agency and non-mandated partner programs at each one-stop and region
- Program performance for the most recent three years, including negotiated benchmarks and actual performance

System and Program Oversight

The Workforce Development System Report is provided to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Workforce Investment for Economic Development to assess the activities and outcomes of the WV WDS. The report allows the governor, legislators, agency and program administrators, and other stakeholders to assess performance and develop appropriate, data-driven planning goals. Due to the comprehensive data collection, activities are being reported at the local, regional, and state levels to facilitate administrators' ability to examine and comparer performances at various levels and across areas.

WFWV has overall responsibility for the process to collect the Funding Stream Report information and provide the WV Workforce Development Council the information needed to report to the legislature, Governor's Office and others. WFWV works with the ICT as the central clearinghouse for identifying, collecting and reporting the information.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The Governor and the WV Secretary of Commerce created a taskforce to assess the WV WDS and related areas such as business and workforce climates, workforce participation rates, training and educational needs, skill gaps, workforce development strategies, and how the WV Unified State Plan can effectuate positive change in areas that adversely affect business. The taskforce

is comprised of representatives of all core partner agencies, the state legislature, business owners, community partners, and other stakeholders. Prior to the development of the WV Unified State Plan, the taskforce conducted a review WV WDS activities, including surveys of stakeholders and economic analyses. Based on their findings, the taskforce assisted the WV WDS with both the development of new and the revision of existing goals and strategies.

In addition to overall WV WDS assessments, individual agencies conduct evaluations on the effectiveness of their programs and use the findings to make improvements. For example, DRS conducts various assessments of the effectiveness of its program, including the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The latest CSNA and Consumer Satisfaction Survey results are available in the VR Section of this Unified State Plan. DRS also maintains its commitment to meeting WIOA Performance Indicator benchmarks and continues to establish baseline levels of performance on five of the six WIOA Performance Indicators. For the Measurable Skills Gains performance indicator, DRS has a negotiated level of performance of 41% for Program Year (PY) 2020 and 42% for PY 2021. DRS expects to submit expected levels of performance on the remaining performance indicators (with the exception of Effectiveness in Serving Employers) in the Unified State Plan submitted prior to PY 2022.

D. EVALUATION

Selected research and improvement projects will be aligned to strategies in this plan and monitored by the core program planning workgroup. This workgroup will consist of members appointed by each of the core partner directors. To select projects, the core program partners will utilize the WVWFDB to recommend areas for analysis or improvements. These projects would be approved by the leadership of the core program partner agencies and coordinated with the Secretaries of the Departments of Labor and Education.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

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

Once the TEGL has been issued and WFWV has received the Notice of Obligation (NOO) from the USDOL information is gathered from our Research, Information, and Analysis (RIA) to begin the allocation process. The data received from RIA breaks out the unemployment numbers and 'economically disadvantaged youths' by county and region.

Each region is guaranteed to receive no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the prior two years. Per the guidance in the TEGL and WIOA Regulations the remaining funds after the 'hold harmless' portion of the allocation has been calculated, the remaining funds are broken down by unemployed, excess, unemployed, and economically disadvantaged youth.

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

WFWV follows the same guidelines for allocating Adult funds as used in Youth funds except for 'economically disadvantaged adult' versus 'economically disadvantaged youth.' Each region is guaranteed to receive no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the prior two years.

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

The funds distributed for the Dislocated Worker are based on different factors than utilized for Youth and Adult. The 'hold harmless' provision is not taken into account for the dollars distributed.

Each region is guaranteed to receive no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the prior two years.

The entirety of the DW funds are distributed based on the categories and the percentages for each category as listed below:

1. Insured unemployment data 20.0%
2. Unemployment concentrations 20.0%
    a. Annual average count of unemployed
    b. Annual average unemployment rates
    c. Index to state rates
3. Plant Closings and mass layoff data: 15.0%
    a. Initial claims in MLS
    b. Exhaustees involved in MLS
4. Declining industries data 5.0%
5. Farmer-rancher economic hardship data
    a. Percentage of delinquent loans to the estimated number of farms. Base data provided by FHA and US Department of Commerce Census of Agriculture.
6. Long-term unemployment data: 40%
    a. Last pays from UC 217 report

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

Methods and Factors for Title II

West Virginia Adult Education will conduct a competition for new Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Corrections Education and Integrated English Literacy and Civics (IELCE) Education grants. In accordance with 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C, a multi- year grant will be awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process; the first year being the grant award with subsequent renewal years. All eligible applicants will respond to the statewide RFP announcement and will be expected to address the thirteen considerations and seven requirements established in Section 231 (e) of WIOA.

Section 231 (e) CONSIDERATIONS. -In awarding grants or contracts under this section, the eligible agency shall consider-

1. the degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to-

a. regional needs as identified in the local plan; and

b. serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills; or who are English language learners;

2. the ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;

3. past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted performance levels, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy;

4. the extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;

5. whether the eligible provider's program-

   a. is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and

   b. uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;

6. whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;

7. whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology services and delivery systems including distance;

8. whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

9. whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality development, including through electronic means;

10. whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;

11. whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, mental health services, and

career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

12. whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes and to monitor program performance; and

13. whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Section 232 of the act states that each eligible provider desiring a grant or contract from an eligible agency shall submit an application to the eligible agency containing such information and assurances as the eligible agency may require, including-

1. a description of how funds awarded under this title will be spent consistent with the requirements of this title;

2. a description of any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;

3. a description of how the eligible provider will provide services in alignment with the local plan under section 108, including how such provider will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under title I, as appropriate;

4. a description of how the eligible provider will meet the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3), including how such provider will collect data to report on such performance indicators;

5. a description of how the eligible provider will fulfill one-stop partner responsibilities as described in section 121(b)(1)(A), as appropriate;

6. a description of how the eligible provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals; and

7. information that addresses the considerations described under section 231(e), as applicable

The RFP is the mechanism through which Adult Education will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals. An eligible individual is identified as an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and who is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

Programs previously funded by Adult Education will be evaluated for their ability to meet designated state performance measures. Applicants not previously funded by Adult Education will be required to provide data that demonstrate their past ability to achieve success in comparable measures. For both groups, these measures include effectiveness in helping students develop their academic skills, achieve high school equivalency, and transition into employment and/or postsecondary education and training.

Eligible providers submitting applications to Adult Education may include:

- a local education agency;
- a community-based or faith-based organization;
- a volunteer literacy organization;
- an institution of higher education;
- a public or private nonprofit agency;
- a library;
- a public housing authority;
- a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- a consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

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

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

As part of the application process, applicants will be required to submit applications to LWDB for review to ensure that the applications align with the local plan. Adult Education will consider the review and any recommendations made by the LWDBs when scoring the related sections of the applications.

Following is a draft timeline for the RFP process:

- January 2020-statewide announcement
- February 2020-release of application
- March 2020-technical assistance
- April 2020-applications due and LWDB reviews
- May 2020-review committee meets
- June 2020-award notifications released
- July 2020-grants awards distributed

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

Adult Education will ensure that the same grant announcement is made available to all eligible providers. When the RFPs are ready for release, official press release containing information about the availability of funds and the application process will be published as a legal notice in compliance with the WVDE Office of Communication's approved policies and procedures. The RFPs will be posted on the WVDE website for download.

Submissions from eligible applicants will be reviewed for completeness, adherence to grant guidelines, content development, and overall quality. A review committee will score each application and make funding recommendations. Final funding decisions will be made by Adult Education staff based on the review committee's recommendations.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Not Applicable.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

The State board is fully committed to the goal of aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs. The board will continue to make this a priority at its quarterly meetings to ensure progress is being made toward the governor's vision for data alignment.

West Virginia has an integrated data collection and performance management system (MACC) that covers the following programs:

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Wagner-Peyser
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants

West Virginia's Unemployment Compensation MIS interfaces with MACC.

Other partners have management information systems that are customized to meet the needs of their programs. WorkForce West Virginia, Rehabilitation Services, and Adult Education have each made the necessary changes to their systems to collect the required data elements.

Linkages have been put in place to allow partners to access the information in real time. Employment and wage data are shared with partners to the extent allowed by the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) agreement.

While each partner agency does have their own MIS, they are all interoperable and are able to send and retrieve data to and from each other in real time. All individuals served by the WV

WDS are assigned a unique identifier that is used by each partner agency. This unique identifier is used for data sharing and reporting purposes (i.e., co-enrollment with other core programs).

In addition to "behind-the-scenes" data sharing and reporting, front-end users also benefit from shared data. For example, the DRS MIS, iECM (Internet-based Electronic Case Management System), has a link in each case for "WIOA Partner Data." When a DRS Counselor clicks this link, iECM sends a request for data (using the unique identifier) to the WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education MIS. If available, the information is transmitted in real time and displayed. Information provided by partner agencies includes current and previous employment goals, services received, and assessment results. This information is then used by DRS Counselors to optimize service delivery with the goal of improving the participant's employment outcome.

The MACC is WFWV's management information system that covers all USDOL programs that we manage, except for the Unemployment Compensation systems where an interface allows for the immediate transfer of registration data from the UC benefits payment system to the MACC. All partners have added interfaces to their information system that allow the real time exchange of participant tracking information among all systems partners. The system allows case managers to streamline the intake process by eliminating the need to duplicate data that is already available in the partner systems. It also allows the tracking of an individual's participation in all programs, including what services have been given or are scheduled to be given, development plans, outcomes, and other pertinent information.

WorkForce West Virginia, Rehabilitation Services, and Adult Education have already come to a general agreement on aligning technologies and data systems. The West Virginia State Workforce Development Board will continue to work within the framework of the WIOA legislation and federal guidance to improve service delivery.

WFWV's MACC system has always been able to produce the required reports for USDOL programs in the past and we do not anticipate any difficulty in complying with the section 116 reports. While the requirement to produce reports on WIOA training performance, the MACC system has been able to track performance for participants for years. The MACC system has limited fiscal information available, which could be the basis of a fiscal management system once the requirements are established.

The WIOA core partners in West Virginia, including WFWV, DRS, and Adult Education have implement a practical and effective system to fulfill the data alignment and integration requirements of WIOA. Each program has a unique system of data collection that is tailored to meet its unique needs. To maximize the efficient exchange of data to support assessment and evaluation, the core partners have collaborated to develop and implement a system for data sharing. This system operates as follows:

1. Each consumer in the system is assigned a unique participant identifier upon entering the system (WFWV, DRS, Adult Education). The date each consumer enters and exits each program is recorded. The unique participant identifier and program entry/exit dates are used to identify common consumers across the core programs and provide access to the common data elements collected by other partners in the AJC system.

2. To ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the AJC system, data collected by each program on new consumers are made available for each program to track service delivery of common consumers. This process ensures that service delivery for each consumer can be tracked across all programs.

3. The data collected is used to generate reports required under section 116, performance accountability system.

Alignment of each partner's system of data collection has improved service delivery to individuals at the AJCWV including individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, by providing the three core partners with more information about how consumers are being assisted across programs in the AJCWV. This information enables the core partners to have a greater understanding of how the needs of their consumers are being met across programs, to track their progress, and to minimize duplication of service. Alignment and integration of data across programs in a data sharing system supports a consumer-focused approach to service delivery that generates quality employment outcomes for consumers in the AJCWV.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

To the extent possible, the State uses data matches with other state systems to track participants' entry and progress in post-secondary education or employment, for example using the WV Department of Education's P20 system. In cases where a data match is not possible or is inadequate, case managers will work with participants, training providers, and employers to gather the needed information.

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

WFWV is the state agency that houses the Unemployment Compensation programs in WV and has access to Unemployment Compensation wage data. WV is also a member of WRIS, WRIS2 and SWIS. Wage records will be shared when possible and aggregated performance data shared when the actual wages records cannot be shared.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Scope

WorkForce West Virginia is an agency within the West Virginia Department of Commerce. This Privacy Notice Summary is based on the West Virginia Department of Commerce Privacy Policy; however, it is specific to WorkForce West Virginia.

Personal Information

- We need certain personal and non-personal information to assist you with your employment, unemployment and training needs.
- The Personally Identifiable Information (PII) we collect may include your name, address, social security number, date of birth and more.

Uses of Information

- By West Virginia law and the Privacy Act of 1974, we must collect certain PII to assist you. Without certain PII, we may not be able to determine the services for which you are eligible, such as Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- The information we collect may be combined with information obtained from other Executive Branch Departments' websites and services.
- We use personal information for purposes that relate to the reason you provide it. If information is used for another purpose, we will obtain your permission.

- For purposes matching the reason you provided, we may share your information with other state and federal agencies for the limited purpose of data processing or storage.
- In certain cases, we may share your information when required by state or federal law.
- Your information may be shared with others we have hired to assist us; however, all staff and contractors are bound by a West Virginia Executive Branch Confidentiality Agreement.
- We do not sell or rent your PII to third parties for marketing purposes.
- We may share non-personal, aggregated, or de-identified data for purposes related to improving our business practices.

Your Rights and Choice

- You have the right to review the personal information you provide us and to update or correct that information.
- If you have consented to an electronic exchange of information, you may cancel that consent by following the instructions in the email you receive.
- If you provide any information to any of our agency websites, you may choose to remove it at any time, except where such information is required by state or federal regulation.

Security

- WorkForce West Virginia computer systems are constructed and maintained by WorkForce West Virginia agency staff, the West Virginia Office of Technology, and/or WorkForce West Virginia and state approved contractors.
- Regardless of the system or personnel responsible for it, multiple techniques and technologies are used to protect your PII. This means we use industry standards and several in-house safeguards to protect your information.

How to Contact Us

- For more information on our privacy requirements and practices, please call 800-252-5627 and your call will be directed to the WorkForce West Virginia Privacy Officer for response.

Sharing Your Information

By enrolling with WorkForce West Virginia, you agree that WorkForce West Virginia and its mandated partners may access and use all of the information contained within your application in order to best assist you in obtaining employment and in determining your eligibility for training and other services. These services may include testing, assessment, placement services and career counseling, and we may share test scores and job eligibility data with our partners to best serve you. Personal information such as race, ethnicity, sex and disability status is being requested for federal record keeping and reporting requirements and is kept confidential; however, it may be shared with the partners to determine your eligibility for specific programs.

WorkForce West Virginia Partner Agencies

- Adult Education and Literacy Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- Post-Secondary Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Services
- Welfare-to-Work Funded Under Social Security Act
- Senior Community Service
- Veterans Workforce Programs
- Community Services Block Grant (Community Action)
- Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Employment & Training Programs
- Job Corps
- Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Services
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Stamp Employment & Training
- Navigator Program

Civil Rights Statement-Equal Opportunity is the Law!

It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following basis:

- Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief;

OR,

- Against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA I-financially assisted program or activity.

The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas:

Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity; providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such program or activity; or making decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity. Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under WIOA Title I-funded program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either the recipient: Equal Opportunity Officer, WorkForce West Virginia, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, WV 25305, 304-558-1600; WV Relay 7-1-1 (TDD)

The Director, Civil Rights Center, (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210, 202-693-6502; 202-693-6515 (TTY).

If you file a complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center (see address above). If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you do not have to wait for the recipient to issue that Notice before filing a complaint with the CRC. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after you filed your complaint with the recipient). If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

To apply for jobs you must be a United States citizen, a permanent resident alien, or be authorized to work in the United States.

WV DIVISION OF REHABILITATION

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services staff are required to complete a confidentiality agreement. The agreement is utilized to ensure that all West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services staff with access to protected information or any other information deemed confidential, fully understand their obligations to limit their use of such information and to protect such information from disclosure. The agreement also details special attention items, as well as definitions of different types of information including personal health information (PHI), personally identifiable information (PII), sensitive personally identifiable information (SPII), and non-public personal information (NPII). The confidentiality agreement pertains to information in all forms, including electronic and paper.

WV ADULT EDUCATION

Handling Strictly Confidential Information

If a student discloses any of the following types of information (verbally or in writing), legally that information is to be considered strictly confidential and therefore “private”:

- Disclosure of a diagnosed learning disability
- Disclosure of previous status as a "special education" student
- Disclosure of any other type of diagnosed physical or mental disability
- Disclosure of a diagnosed medical condition
- Disclosure of use of any prescription drugs
- Disclosure of history of drug/alcohol abuse and/or treatment
- Disclosure of status as HIV positive or of having the AIDS virus
- Official transcripts including TASC or GED® scores

Filing cabinets or drawers containing strictly confidential information must be labeled as “Confidential.” They must remain locked, must not be accessible to students or support staff, and must have a log filed foremost in each locked drawer to indicate when confidential files are accessed by any instructional or administrative staff person. The log must indicate the date, the purpose for access, and the name of the person accessing information.

Strictly confidential information files should be maintained at the local program level for a period of not less than five years and must be shredded when discarded.

Strictly confidential information regarding a student cannot be discussed, nor can any record be shared without a written release of information.

Instructors need to sign the Adult Education Personnel Confidentiality Agreement. This should be maintained by the administrator in the personnel file.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Priority of Service for Veterans is implemented by WorkForce West Virginia in accordance with Title 38 part III Ch. 42. 4215 via AJCWV located throughout the state, by using clear and concise guidelines, and by trained staff knowledgeable with state guidelines. To ensure access to services for covered persons, the state has established formal guidance regarding priority of service that all Wagner-Peyser and WFWV staff must follow which includes determination of veteran's status and eligibility. WIOA guidance notice 4-16 referencing Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014 section 3(63) (A), 38 U.S.C 4215, and 20 CFR 1010 provides this guidance.

Covered persons obtain information concerning priority of service through WFWV website, flyers posted in AJCWV, banners, and/or in person from WFWV staff in work groups, unemployment compensation groups, during the registration process, and during provision of services. WFWV provides staff information, training, and assistance regarding available employment programs, training opportunities, services, eligibility requirements, and veteran's priority of service.

WFWV provides covered person's priority of service under all state and federally funded employment and training programs. "Veterans priority of service" means that an otherwise covered person shall be given priority over non-veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under that program, notwithstanding any other provision of the law. When services are limited due to available funding, priority of service should be applied. For example, if there are only sufficient funds to provide services to one individual and a veteran is in the pool, the veteran must receive priority.

To effectively and efficiently facilitate the provision of services to covered persons the DVOPS provide coverage to each of the 18 AJCs.

The WFWV registration process is utilized to identify and determine veterans' eligibility. All WFWVs staff, including managers, are trained on implementation of priority of service and integrating it into the service delivery process. Eligibility for priority of service is identified within the database by symbols which indicate that a covered person has been verified by staff or the covered person has self-attested concerning eligibility status. These symbols serve to easily identify individuals that may be eligible for priority of service. Contact information and office locations are readily available on the WFWV website. Covered persons seeking employment can receive information about programs, priority of service, and eligibility at any time during the assessment process, on the website, banners, or posted on message boards in the ACJWV.

Priority of Service is monitored by conducting regional manager/field supervisor audits as directed by agency leadership. The audits review job orders, services to veterans, and notification of job orders to covered persons prior to release to the public. This ensures that management receives information and that they are made aware of the operations and actions taken to provide Priority of Service to covered persons as written by law. West Virginia's DVET

works with the State Veterans Coordinator to ensure that priority of service is administered in accordance with the law. Additional oversight of the provision of priority of service is provided by DOL's Employment and Training Administration.

Wagner-Peyser staff are covered person's first point of contact in the AJCs. At this point, covered persons are assessed and entered into the service delivery system where they receive priority of service and those that have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) and are in need of Individualized Career Services are referred to DVOPS staff.

DVOPS staff continues the assessment process to determine the covered person's employment options, assist with the Veterans Development Plan, and provides information to the covered person about a wide range of resources available.

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

Section 188 of WIOA ensures nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for various categories of persons, including persons with disabilities, who apply for and participate in programs and activities operated by recipients of WIOA Title I financial assistance. WFWV will use the "Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide" as a boilerplate in assuring compliance with Section 188 of WIOA. The Guide is designed to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in programs and activities operated by recipients of financial assistance under the WIOA, including those that are part of the AJCWV.

The Guide outlines promising practices in the provision of universal access and equal opportunity to programs and activities under WIOA. WFWV will use the guide in coordination with the Governor's WIOA Non-Discrimination Plan to monitor its own compliance, and that of its recipients, regarding the aspects of Section 188 and its implementing regulations that pertain to persons with disabilities.

The WV WDS is committed to ensuring physical and programmatic accessibility at its locations, including those at one-stop centers (AJCs). Policies and procedures have been developed at the state and local levels to certify one-stop locations, based in part on an assessment of accessibility.

At the state level, WFWV has developed WIOA Policy 05-16 to address accessibility and reasonable accommodations. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) stresses physical and programmatic accessibility, including the use of accessible technology to increase access to high quality workforce services to individuals with disabilities. Title I of WIOA assigns responsibilities at the local, State, and Federal levels to ensure the creation and maintenance of an American Job Center (AJC) system that enhances the range and quality of workforce development services that are accessible to individuals seeking assistance.

To afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of the WIOA Title I program or activity, a recipient must furnish appropriate auxiliary aids or services where necessary. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is appropriate and necessary, recipients must give primary consideration to the requests of the individual with a disability. Primary consideration means honoring the choice unless the agency can demonstrate that another equally effective means of communication is available, or that using the means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program, activity, or undue financial and administrative burdens. There are many forms of reasonable accommodations and the individual with a disability and the AJC should work together to

identify the most effective reasonable accommodation for each individual through informal discussions known as the "interactive process" whereby the individual is provided the opportunity to articulate their needs and the AJC is able to determine how best to meet those needs.

To provide guidance to Local Boards, Chief Elected Officials, and one-stop system partners concerning the criteria to be used to evaluate and certify one-stop centers, WFWV developed WIOA Policy 05-17. This establishes what the State WDB considers the baseline, or minimum, requirements for AJC certification. Among numerous other requirements are the requirements regarding programmatic and physical accessibility, such as providing reasonable accommodations and completing regular accessibility reviews.

At the local level, WDBs have policies and procedures to ensure accessibility and certify one-stop locations. For example, Region 4 WIOA Policy: #23 - Accessibility and Accommodation, establishes that programs, services (including services using technology and the Internet), and facilities of the AJCs in the WDB region are accessible to all.

The Region 4 Equal Opportunity (EO) officer conducts ADA assessments annually for all offices of Workforce WV in Region 4. In addition, an inclusion Team has been created as a subset of the One Stop Managers and is charged with making sure the AJCs are accessible and can accommodate ALL customers regardless of disability or limitations. The inclusion Team will conduct "secret shopper" walk-throughs by individuals with various barriers, at least annually to help determine areas that need improvement and highlight the areas that are working well. Technology will be used to provide access to documents in an accessible manner to customers who may need them in a larger format, different language, etc. The lobby of the AJC is laid out to be friendly to persons with various barriers; staff can access an office to accommodate persons as necessary. AJC staff will be provided with training at least annually to assist them in understanding how to best provide services to customers with various barriers to employment/training (for example: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities from the ADA website.) All WIOA staff at the AJC have completed this training, and it has been recommended to partner staff. The inclusion Team meets monthly to discuss issues and determine how to meet any needs to be addressed, using partner resources, technology and other appropriate means. Additional sources of training include Job Accommodation Network and the Civil Rights Center.

Region 4 AJC operators and partners will comply with Section 188 of WIOA through staff training, facility checklists, monitoring of processes, use of "secret shoppers", accessible technology for customers/employers. All partners sign an MOU that includes compliance with Section 188 of WIOA and 20 CFR 38. The EO officer will conduct ADA accessibility reviews for each Workforce WV site in the region at least annually. Staff training will be documented by each partner, with suggestions for training coming from front line staff, the EO officer for the region and areas of concern to the One Stop Management Team. The team has as a subset, an Inclusion Team which is charged with overseeing accessibility and accommodation within the AJCs in the region. The goal of the Inclusion Team is to make staff and the facilities accessible to all persons who wish to have access. Region 4 does not have a culturally diverse population so materials in a language other than English will be provided upon request as needed by the employer/job seeker. Federal, State, and local policy will be followed to provide accessibility and accommodation for everyone seeking services in Region 4.

As the vocational rehabilitation core partner agency, DRS is readily available to provide disability-related technical assistance, provide one-stop staff training, and other related assistance in AJCs across the state. DRS' Rehabilitation Technology Unit is also available

statewide to provide detailed ADA assessments, recommendations for rehabilitation technology, and engineering plans/drawings. DRS also provides training and technical assistance relating to assistive technology, including various hardware and software options. The DRS Information Technology Unit is available to provide assessments and technical assistance relating to websites, electronic documents, etc. to ensure accessibility and Section 508 compliance. An example of these services can be found in Region 5, where DRS staff regularly meet with AJC staff to identify opportunities for improvements at regional AJCs, conduct cross-training, provide technology assistance for AJCs, and coordinate programs and services to better address the diverse needs of job seekers with disabilities. As a result, staff are better able to identify advanced opportunities for individuals with disabilities, as well as the possibility for co-enrollment in other programs.

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

The State will coordinate with AJCWV partners to meet the needs of the non-English speaking customers. WFWV Guidance Notice 2-17, "Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)" details some methods that will be used, such as having vital documents translated into Spanish (and other languages, as needed) and providing interpreters when requested.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

The Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) was established under the state Workforce Investment Act to ensure coordination between the agencies engaged in workforce development activities, the LWDBs and WorkForce West Virginia.

The ICT continues to operate as a state interagency source for addressing issues or concerns related to building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of WIOA and the overall workforce development system in West Virginia. The team's focus is on how best to collaborate between and among the state agencies directly involved in workforce development activities. ICT serves as a forum for the LWDBs to seek information or recommendations to fulfill their responsibilities. WFWV convenes the team at least monthly and provides administrative and other services.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

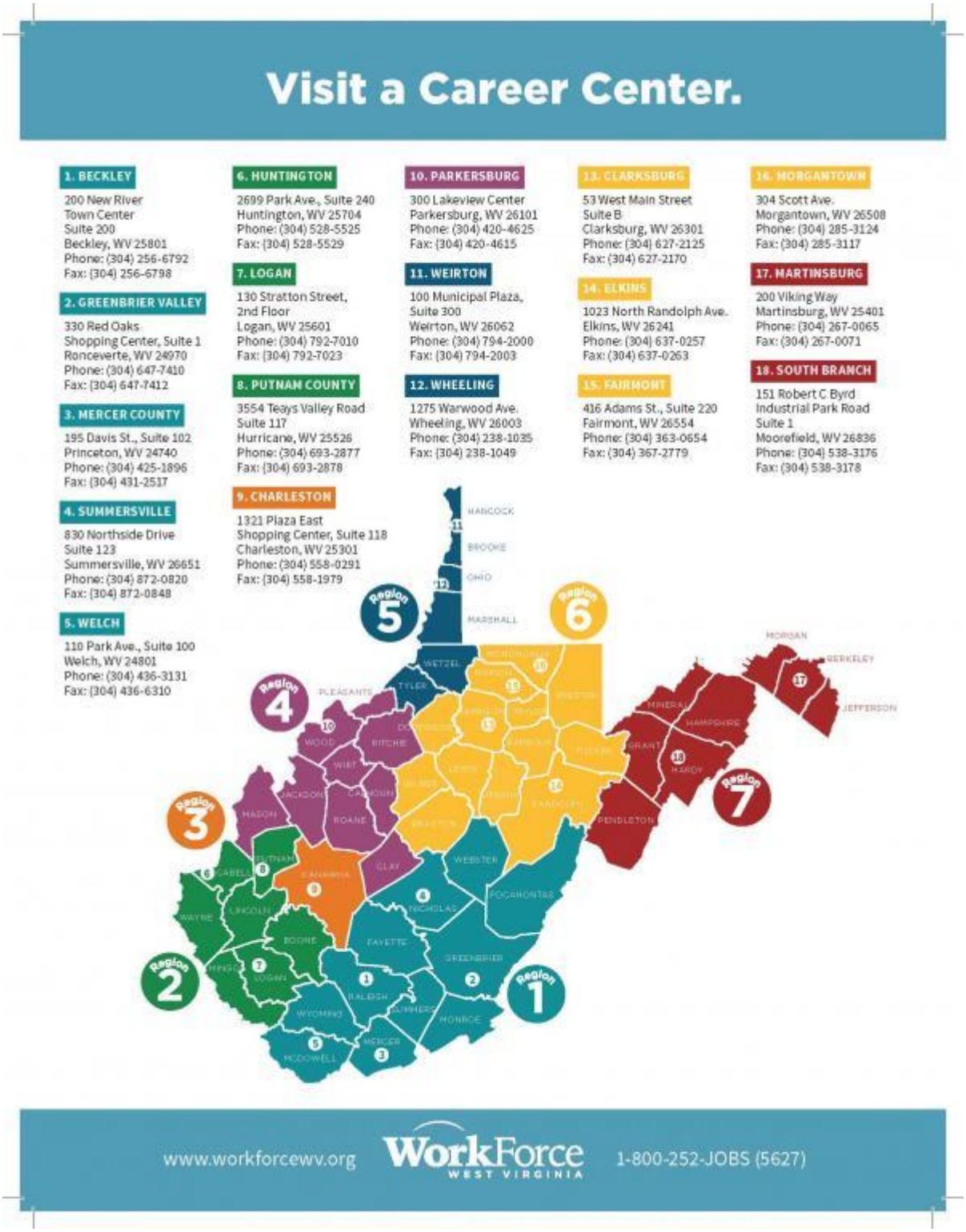
PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Local Regions:

The State of West Virginia is comprised of seven local workforce development areas. While the attached map shows the geographic breakdown of the seven areas/regions, a brief description of each follows:



Region 1: The Region 1 Workforce Development Board, headquartered in Beckley, administers workforce activities in an eleven-county region covering the southeastern portion of the State.

Region 2: The Southwestern West Virginia Workforce Development Board, located in Huntington, governs a seven-county region in the southwestern portion of the State.

Region 3: The Workforce Development Board of Kanawha County oversees activities in the State's only single-county workforce development region from its office in Charleston.

Region 4: Nine counties are served by the Workforce Development Board Mid-Ohio Valley, which is located in Parkersburg.

Region 5: The Northern Panhandle Workforce Development Board provides services in six counties and is based in Wheeling.

Region 6: The Region 6 Workforce Development Board, located in Fairmont, provides services in a thirteen-county region in the north-central portion of the State.

Region 7: Eight counties in the easternmost portion of West Virginia are served by the Region 7 Workforce Development Board located in Moorefield.

The state issued the following Guidance Notice regarding Designation/Re-Designation

WIOA Guidance Notice No. 01-15 Designation/Re-Designation

TO: Workforce Development Boards

FROM: WorkForce WV West Virginia

CATEGORY: WorkForce Innovation and Opportunity Act

SUBJECT: Designation/Re-Designation of Workforce Development Areas and the Appeals Process

SOURCE: Federal/State

DISTRIBUTION: Managers, Workforce Development Programs Staff, Workforce Region Directors and Staff

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015

REFERENCE(S):
Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, WIOA Section 106.

PURPOSE:
To provide guidance and process for the designation and re-designation of Workforce Development Areas in West Virginia along with the process for appealing designation decisions.

BACKGROUND:
The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that the West Virginia Workforce Development Board (SWDB) shall assist the Governor in designation of Workforce Areas, as required in section 106, and that an appeals process is in place.

The Governor of the State shall designate local workforce development areas within the State: (i) Through consultation with the State board; and (ii) After consultation with chief elected officials and after consideration of comments received through the public comment process as described in section 102(b)(2)(E)(iii)(II).
WIOA further states that the considerations should include the following:
(i) The extent to which the areas are consistent with the labor market areas in the State; (ii) The extent to which the areas are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State; and (iii) The extent to which the areas have available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of this Act, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers,

such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools. WIOA states that a unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient that requests, but is not granted designation of an area as a local area, may submit an appeal to the State board under an appeal process established in the State plan.

DEFINITIONS:
PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY-The term "performed successfully", used with respect to a local area, means the local area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, or the Common Measures, as allowed by a USDOL approved waiver of the core indicators of performance, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of this Act) for each of the last 2 consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph.

SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY-The term "sustained fiscal integrity", used with respect to a local, means that the Secretary, or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination, during either of the last 2 consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under subtitle B (or, if applicable, title I of the workforce investment Act of 1998 as in effect prior to the effective date of such subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.

BUSINESS LEADER-A business member of the Local Workforce Development Board or representative of other business organization, such as a chamber of commerce.

COMMUNITY LEADER-An officer or director of an association, community, or civic organization whose focus or activities are related to the services provided by the one— stop delivery system.

DESIGNATION AND RE-DESIGNATION POLICY:
WIOA requires that existing federally recognized workforce areas are designated during the first two programs years, which is referred to as Initial Designation, and again after the first two program years, which is referred to as Subsequent Designation. Units of general local government that desire to become a new local workforce area should follow the New Area designation requirements in section B.

INITIAL WIOA DESIGNATION FOR EXISTING REGIONS: Existing workforce regions operating in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 may request initial designation as a Local Workforce Development Area if they have performed successfully.

WIOA DESIGNATION FOR NEW AREAS: Any unit of general local government may request designation as a Local Workforce Development Area under WIOA. New local area designations will only become effective on July 1 of the next program year. In order for designation to be approved for the start of the next program year, the following steps and timeline must be met.

1. A statement of intent to request designation must be submitted to the West Virginia SWDB no later than February 15th through email. The SWDB will work with the requesting area to determine the deadline for the full request. Submitted materials will be made available for public comment as a part of the review process. The full request for designation as Local Workforce Development Area ("local area") must include the following components and steps: Submit the request in writing to the Chairperson of the West Virginia Workforce Development Board through email to and . Receipt of the

request must be documented by electronic return confirmation. If the requestor does not receive confirmation, it is their responsibility to contact WorkForce West Virginia to ensure that the notice has been received.

2. This request must clearly state the circumstances for the request of designation.
3. The request must also address and explain how the following criteria are met:
    a. Consistency with natural labor market areas.
    b. Consistency with regional economic development areas
    c. Existence of education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools in the area.
    d. Submission of a service delivery plan that includes a description of resources that would be available to the area to provide services.
    e. Coordination of multiple resources within areas that are based on labor markets and natural travel patterns of local residents.
    f. Local support of the implementation strategies to provide quality services to employers and individuals by county commissioners, municipal elected officials including mayors and/or city council members where appropriate, and business or community leaders within the area as demonstrated by letters of support or a vote of support by a city council or other applicable board.
    g. Local ownership exhibited by strong involvement of local elected officials and community leaders on the Local Workforce Development Board.
    h. Local capacity to manage funds, provide oversight of programs, and provide for the proper stewardship of public funds
    i. Evidence that the area, in the two program years for which data is available prior to the request, met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance or the Common Measures and was not subject to the sanctions process resulting from missing the same measure two years in a row, if applicable.
    j. Assurance that during the two program years prior to the request, the U.S. Secretary of Labor, or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination that the
    k. grant recipient or administrative entity for the local area has misexpended funds due to willful disregard, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration, if applicable.
4. The request must address how the proposed new area designation will impact those other workforce areas from which it is withdrawing. It should be understood by any unit of general local government or combination of such seeking designation, that the new area will only secure the formula allocated funds for each WIOA funding stream based on the formula factors as defined by WIOA. If the area in question becomes part of a consortium, the consortium will determine the distribution of WIOA funds with its region(s).

5. If opposition to the request is voiced by municipalities or counties within the area seeking designation, then the requesting entity will address their request at a public hearing. The requesting entity will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns and questions at the hearing, and all comments will be recorded and used to inform the SWDB's action on the request. If a hearing is necessary, it will be held within 45 days of receipt of the request. Time and place is to be determined by the SWDB Chair.

6. The Chair will take the request and comments from the public as well as from a public hearing, if applicable and make a recommendation to the full SWDB.

7. The SWDB will submit its recommendation to the Governors within five (5) business days of the State board vote.

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

APPEALS PROCESS POLICY:
An area or areas seeking to be designated or re—designated, as a Local Workforce Development Area, which has requested but has been denied its request for designation or re—designation as a Local Area, may appeal the decision to the West Virginia Workforce Development Board.

1. An appeal must be in writing and filed with the West Virginia Workforce Development Board within fourteen (14) days after notification of the decision. Submit the appeal to the Chairperson of the West Virginia Workforce Development Board by sending an email to and .

2. The appeal must contain a specific statement of the grounds upon which the appeal is sought.

3. The State board will have 60 days to review the appeal and make a recommendation to the Governor. The review will take into account the information in the original request and supplemental information provided in the appeal to determine if the criteria set in this policy has been met.

4. The final decision rests with the Governor.

5. If the appeal is connected to a request for initial or subsequent designation under section V. A. or section V. B. of this policy, and if the appeal does not result in designation, the entity may request review by the Secretary of Labor to determine if procedural rights were granted or if the minimum criteria of WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or Section 106(b)(3) were met. This second level of appeal must be sent within 14 days to: Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training U.S. Department of Labor 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20210. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the: ETA Regional Administrators U.S. Department of Labor The Curtis Center, Suite 825 East 170 South Independence Mall West Philadelphia PA 19106-3315. In addition, a copy must be sent to WorkForce West Virginia at1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Building 3, Suite 300, Charleston, WV 25305.

6. If the final decision of any appeal reverses the prior decision, it will become effective July 1st of the following year.

Definition: Where the term "days" appears, it shall be defined as calendar days, not working days.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Immediately upon receipt.

INQUIRIES: Please direct all inquiries to: WorkForce West Virginia

**Addressed in preceding question

Upon receipt of the specific terms of an SFM, any Local WDB or one-stop required partner may appeal for cause, within 21 calendar days, in writing (electronic or hardcopy), WFWV's (with the Governor's approval) determination regarding the portion of funds (or non-cash contributions) it is to provide. To be officially received, an appeal must fully contain and evidence the following:

- Addressed to the attention of the Deputy Executive Director of Federal Programs or his/her designee.
- An introduction identifying the appellant and designating the letter as a formal appeal.
- Full citations from WIOA or the WIOA Final Rules in Title 29 or Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that support the appeal.
- Identify the basis for the appeal. *WIOA stipulates that a State Funding Mechanism (SFM) allocation determination may be appealed* only *if the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA sec. 121(h)(2)(E). The Final Rule at 20 CFR 678.750 further limits admissible grounds for an appeal to* three possibilities. *The petitioner must make a case that the State's determination is inconsistent with:*

1. the proportionate-share requirements in 20 CFR 678.737, or
2. the cost-contribution limitations in 20 CFR 678.730(c), or
3. the cost-contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.738

- The letter must be signed (electronic signature is acceptable) and dated.

WFWV will have 10 days to acknowledge the appeal. WFWV then has 30 business days to convene and hear testimony from all parties involved. After hearing testimony, WFWV, under the designated authority and approval of the Governor, has an additional 30 business days to issue a formal resolution for the issue. Until the appeals process is completed, the appellant will remain liable for its contribution as originally determined in the SFM. If a one-stop partner's appeal to WFWV using the process described in 20 CFR 678.750 is successful and results in a change to the one-stop partner's infrastructure-cost contributions, then the Local Area's MOU *must* be updated to reflect the final one-stop partner infrastructure cost contributions.

WIOA Policy No. 06-17 - Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Guidance, Change 1 can be found at: https://workforcewv.org/public-information/guidance-notices-and-policies or directly at: https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/public-notices/Policy_No_6-17_MOU_and_Infrastructure_Guidance_Change_1.pdf. Appeals Process can be found on page 8.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

State policies or guidance for the statewide WDS can be found at:
https://workforcewv.org/public-information/guidance-notices-and-policies

The LWDBs have the option of requesting additional funding besides their formula distribution, to ensure that dislocated workers remain a priority for the WDS. This allows LWDBs to create partnerships with employers for on the Job Training Programs, Transitional Jobs, and ITAs. When the LWDB exhausts or becomes low on formula funds or collaborates with businesses and partners to produce a comprehensive program they may request additional funds. Based on the

amount of funds and the proposal documentation submitted, the request may be awarded. WV supports innovation by reviewing the results of current and recent projects to identify those that have positive results and could benefit from additional resources.

Programs awarded from the state set aside fund include the following examples:

- Transitional Jobs program developed by Region 1. The Transitional Jobs program targets individuals in recovery, most of whom are in residential recovery homes. Transitional Jobs offer participants to learn the routine of work, acquire work-task skills, establish an employment record and generate references for future employment. Transitional Jobs provide the participants case management, wages, and comprehensive career and support services with the goal of transitioning to full-time employment.
- The Empowered Employment Pilot Program is designed to assist individuals in obtaining a time-limited work experience that is wage-paid, subsidized up to 100%, and is in the public, private, or not-profit sectors.
- The "RE-Building One's Opportunities Together" (REBOOT) program developed by Region 5. Provides re-employment activities to those participants, who are, or have been, impacted by the Opioid Crisis. The program is designed to create employment and/or training opportunities that help target secure sustainable jobs and/or needed training as participants work to turn their lives around and become contributing members of their communities.

WV uses WIOA funds to support a state Rapid Response unit, called the State Dislocated Worker Services. The unit conducts rapid response activities to dislocated workers through employer outreach which is coordinated as a joint rapid response team approach between the State Dislocated Worker Services Unit and the LWDB. The Trade Act unit is also part of the State Dislocated Worker Services section.

Each rapid response meeting includes representatives from the AJC to discuss services and offerings to assist dislocated workers, including, but not limited to unemployment, job service, career planners for training eligibility purposes, DRS, DHHR, and LWDBs. For dislocations not coal-related, we explore TAA potential; for coal, we invite the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Career Center to discuss training through the WV Statewide Coal Mining II NDWG and distribute applications for training. After each meeting, each dislocated worker is registered for Rapid Response in the MACC.

Businesses who will be experiencing layoffs or closure come to WFWV through various communication methods: AJC staff, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notices (WARNs), news outlets, employees, and unemployment reports showing noticeable claims, which are then investigated by the Rapid Response coordinator.

Additional services are organized at Rapid Response meetings such as special sessions with unemployment to answer more in-depth questions, resume writing, and interviewing skills workshops either on-site or at an AJC. Sometimes these workshops are incorporated into the RR meeting. WFWV integrated jobs/resources/training into the Pinnacle Mining rapid response events held in October 2018; and in May we participated and shared RR with the State of Maryland in serving Verso, whose business locations were in both Maryland and West Virginia, and invited our partners/employers/resources to the job/resource/training fairs for Verso dislocated workers by the State of Maryland.

Rapid Response provides a comprehensive array of services to offer transitional services in the form of community resource lists of available services and contact information and reemployment services available through the local on Stops, such as job search and training opportunities, unemployment services to accelerate reemployment. Other Rapid Response activities may include community resource fairs, job fairs, training provider fairs, etc. that may be conducted in conjunction with Rapid Response Informational Meetings or separately. While most of the effort is usually expended in the early stages of a dislocation event or an impending dislocation, it is important to continue Rapid Response services until all worker and employer needs are met.

The State coordinates layoff aversion strategies through the direct and immediate efforts of the Governor's Office in connection with the Bureau of Commerce's West Virginia Development Office Business and Industrial Development Representatives who mobilize concentrated efforts to salvage any at risk companies or entities through incumbent worker training through the Governor's Guaranteed Workforce Program, etc. As companies often do advise the state, they are experiencing any difficulties, there is timely sharing of any pertinent information of any at risk companies between the State Dislocated Worker Services Unit and the Business and Industry Development Representatives so the layoff aversion strategies can be quickly implemented. In the event the layoff aversion strategies have not been shared at all local and state levels because of the sensitivity and confidentiality of some of the processes involved in averting a layoff, the State Dislocated Worker Services Unit communicates directly with the Secretary of the Bureau of Commerce with a notification of a need for the provision of Rapid Response services for the majority of dislocations occurring anywhere in the state and receives clearance to proceed with Rapid Response services.

WFWV has specific procedures in place to provide Rapid Response services in case of a Natural Disaster as stated in Part 687 of the WIOA Public Law. The State immediately applies for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) for a disaster temporary work program for disaster clean-up activities which would be coordinated with FEMA and State Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Services. In addition to applying for NDWG, dislocated workers experiencing displacement due to a natural disaster, such as flooding, would be covered under the State's Rapid Response coordination of services and would be a call to address more than just a quick return to work. Therefore, a State Rapid Response Team in conjunction with local Rapid Response Team members and partners could be deployed to the disaster site to conduct Rapid Response Informational Meetings and related Rapid Response activities if necessary.

Rapid Response would coordinate with FEMA, SBA and other relief organizations to make sure the affected workers have a full array of resources to assist them in recovering from a natural disaster. If a natural disaster occurred followed by a FEMA disaster declaration, the availability of the temporary work program would also be highlighted at Rapid Response meetings. If the magnitude of the disaster resulted in mass layoffs/plant closures, and there was not enough WIOA formula funding or Governor's Discretionary funding available at the state level, then the State would apply accordingly for a mass layoff NDWG. If the disaster led to a sizeable mass layoff NDWG being awarded to the State, the Governor's Office would take the lead in implementing a state emergency plan mobilizing a host of state and federal resources to, which include close coordination of the mass layoff NDWG with the efforts of FEMA and State Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Services as well as other State agencies.

WV was awarded a grant though the National Health Emergency Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant program. The grant addresses the Opioid Crisis. This is a special grant based on the Secretary of Health and Human Services, at the White House's direction, declaring

a national public health emergency. This grant was submitted October 5, 2018 and awarded to WFWV on May 24, 2019, in the amount of $10,000,000.00, with an initial increment amount of $3,333,333.00. The grants period of performance will be July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021. The total number of participants to serve in this grant will be 534. This grant is to be used to create disaster-relief employment as well as to provide employment and training activities, including supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. It will provide temporary employment opportunities aimed at alleviating humanitarian and other needs created by the opioid crisis. The grant will provide services to reintegrate into the workforce eligible participants affected by the crisis and train individuals to work in mental health treatment, addiction treatment, and pain management. Currently no statistics are available as the program is new. This grant will be shared during our Rapid Response meetings.

Partner Services as part of our response team may be comprised of Wagner-Peyser, DHHR, DRS, LWDBs, Healthcare navigators for those who have lost their insurance due to loss of job, SBA, a FEMA Partner, FEMA representative, Veteran Representative and Union representatives to assist those represented by a union.

The Rapid Response operates in the same manner regardless if a TAA petition is involved.

The State's early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed is in conjunction with our WIOA Rapid Response activities. In most cases, by the time a TAA petition is filed. WIOA rapid response activities have already taken place. After we learn a TAA petition has been filed, we provide the additional information specific to TAA, for example ensuring workers are aware of deadlines, through TAA/TRA Benefit Rights Informational Meeting (BRIM) to explain all the services available through TAA. Since the impacted workers have already received critical information at a previous Rapid Response meeting, the BRIM Meeting focuses only on TAA benefits and services.

WV continues to strive for improvements, coordination between TAA program and WIOA programs, and quality service through the WDS.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

Transitional Jobs, On-the-Job Training, and Incumbent Workers

The state of West Virginia will increase training opportunities to individuals via alternative training models such as Transitional Jobs, OJT, and Incumbent Worker Training. LWDBs are encouraged to leverage current and develop new local partnerships with community businesses and industry to support economic development in their areas. American Job Centers will provide access to training services aligned with demand occupations. These services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training programs that combine workforce training with related instruction, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs training, job readiness training provided in combination with other training, Adult Education and Literacy activities, and customized training (customized training is designed to provide local areas with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of the job seekers and employers or groups of employers). The underlying advantage of work-based learning is that by definition, it incorporates skill competencies needed by the business. There is no doubt participants are learning the specific skills needed, and furthermore they are learning to apply skills in the way the employer prefers. This practically guarantees individuals that complete training are positioned to immediately

add value in the workplace and have marketable skills to provide upward mobility in a career pathway.

Transitional Jobs

Transitional jobs are reserved for those chronically unemployed and provide real life work experience when it is greatly needed to be successful in the workplace. Transitional jobs is an employment strategy that seeks to overcome employment barriers and transition people with labor market barriers into work using wage-paid, short-term employment that combines real work, skill development and supportive services. Transitional Jobs program participants earn a paycheck, learn skills, may become eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and receive intensive mentoring and support.

The Transitional Jobs program should have at a minimum the following three components:

1. Paid work experience (i.e. three days per week)
2. Classroom training (i.e. soft skills, occupational skills, etc.)
3. Supportive services

Each LWDB must submit a Transitional Jobs Plan to WFWV for approval. Collaborative partnerships will be an essential piece of a transitional jobs plan and are highly encouraged. LWDBs may allocate up to 10 percent of local Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to transitional jobs for individuals with barriers to employment.

On-the-Job Training

OJT ensures high quality training for both the participant and the employer because both have a vested interest in the success of the program. The employer has the unique opportunity of training potential candidates the correct and most efficient way to perform tasks for their company, at a subsidized cost. The participant has the opportunity to receive direct training and experience that increases their current skill set. Participants also gain new skills to meet the requirements of a new occupation or industry and are better equipped to compete for available jobs. All OJT experiences are provided through contracts between local employers and the LWDB. OJT is primarily designed to first hire the participant and provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for the full performance of the job. Both training providers and employers providing OJT opportunities must be providing the highest quality training to participants. OJT contracts must be continually monitored so that WIOA funds provided through OJT contracts are providing participants the training to retain employment successfully. It is important that OJTs provide participants with relevant skills and opportunities for career advancement and provides employers with a skilled workforce.

Incumbent Worker Training

WV also supports Incumbent Worker training. To qualify as an incumbent worker, the incumbent worker needs to be employed, meet the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements for an employer-employee relationship, and have an established employment history with the employer for six months or more. The training must satisfy the requirements in WIOA Section 134(d)(4) and §680.790 and increase the competitiveness of the employee or employer. An incumbent worker does not necessarily have to meet the eligibility requirements for career and training services for adults and dislocated workers under this Act. LWDBs may reserve and expend up to 20 percent of their combined adult and dislocated worker formula allotments for incumbent worker training. States may use state Rapid Response funds [WIOA Section

134(a)(3)(A)(i))] for layoff aversion and WIOA Governor's discretionary funds for statewide incumbent worker training activities.

LWDBs must consider the following factors when determining the eligibility of employers to receive the WIOA share of funds to provide training to incumbent workers using either, local Adult and/or Dislocated Worker formula funds or WIOA statewide discretionary funds provided by the Governor:

1. The characteristics of the incumbent workers to be trained, specifically the extent to which they historically represent individuals with barriers to employment as defined in WIOA Section 3(24), and how they would benefit from retention or advancement;
2. The quality of the training (e.g., industry-recognized credentials, advancement opportunities);
3. The number of participants the employer plans to train or retrain;
4. The wage and benefit levels of participants (before and after training);
5. The employer must not have laid off workers within 12 months and must have a commitment to retain or avert the layoffs of the incumbent worker(s) being trained;
6. The employer must not be delinquent in unemployment insurance or workers' compensation taxes, penalties, and/or interest.
7. LWDBs must document these factors in approving an incumbent worker training project with an employer.

Employers participating in incumbent worker training are required to pay the non-WIOA (non-federal) share of the cost of providing training to their incumbent workers. Employers will be reimbursed the WIOA (federal) share. The employer share is based on the size of the workforce (wages paid to the participant while in training can be included as part of that share) as follows:

- At least 10 percent of the cost for employers with 50 or fewer employees.
- At least 25 percent of the cost for employers with 51 to 100 employees.
- At least 50 percent of the cost for employers with more than 100 employees.

Incumbent worker training is designed to either assist workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment or to avert layoffs and must increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. The Incumbent Worker training policy allows local Boards the flexibility to provide Incumbent Worker Training to employers when needed. Local areas may use up to 20 percent of their local adult and dislocated worker funds for incumbent worker training. Incumbent worker training is targeted to improving the skills and competitiveness of the participant and increasing the competitiveness of the employer. The training should, wherever possible, allow the participant to gain industry-recognized training experience and ultimately should lead to an increase in wages. To receive incumbent worker funding under WIOA, an incumbent worker must have an employer-employee relationship, and an established employment history, with the employer. Incumbent workers are employed at the time of their participation, and the contract funds are paid to the employer for training provided to the incumbent worker either to avert a lay-off or otherwise retain employment. A "model" incumbent worker training would be one where a participant acquires new skills allowing him or her to move into a higher skilled and higher paid job within the company, thus permitting the company to hire a job seeker to backfill the incumbent worker's pre-training position.

Work-based training can be an effective training strategy that can provide additional opportunities for participants and employers in both finding high quality work and in developing a highly skilled workforce. Each of these work-based models can be effectively used to meet a variety of job seeker and employer needs. To ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer, priority consideration will be given to training programs that are related to an in-demand occupation, aligned with career pathways and industry sectors and result in a recognized postsecondary credential. LWDBs must not continue to contract with employers who fail to provide participants long term employment opportunities, with wages and benefits, and working conditions comparable to other employees who have worked a similar amount of time, doing the same type of work. LWDBs will monitor employer onsite contracts to ensure training, wages, hours, benefits, and working conditions are provided in accordance with the contract. Training participants' performance and progress will be monitored during the training to determine supportive service needs, the appropriateness of the training activity and if placement in unsubsidized employment has occurred. WFWV will pursue the following strategies to ensure work-based training models are of high quality:

- Promote and develop sector strategies based on labor market information and employer needs.
- Connect employers to participate in business-education partnerships. These partnerships connect schools, employers, and community organizations with individuals to provide career-related experiences and employment opportunities such as soft skills development, internships, OJT, workplace shadowing, and career mentoring.
- Emphasize career pathways to assist individuals entering and moving within the labor force and to educate employers on the advantages of career pathways.
- Ensure career pathways are aligned to in-demand occupations likely to pay sustaining wages. The LWDBs will engage employers to accomplish this goal.
- Require OJT and Incumbent Worker training be tied to a career pathway.

WIOA Policy 3-16 Transitional Jobs Policy and WIOA Policy 01-16 Incumbent Worker can be found at: https://workforcewv.org/public-information/guidance-notices-and-policies or directly at: https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/guidance-notices/WIOA_Policy_3-16_Transitional_Jobs_Policy.pdf and https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/guidance-notices/WIOA_Policy_No_01-16_Incumbent_Worker_Policy.pdf.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The state will incorporate Registered Apprenticeships into its strategies and services by requiring AJCWV staff seek out and assist Registered Apprenticeship Programs with recruitment into their individual training programs.

Recruitment will include posting and advertisement of Registered Apprenticeship statewide announcements, job orders, phone notifications of apprenticeship openings, veteran priority of service, pre-application testing, initial screening of eligibility requirements and referral. Referral not only includes referral to the job order but to our partners for orientation and eligibility determination for WIOA funding for training. Additional strategies and services will include making space available to the apprenticeship programs for onsite job fairs for recruitment, advertising space for apprenticeship marketing items, space for onsite interviews and assist, as needed, with testing applicants at offsite locations.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

WFWV's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is comprised of training programs that are approved by WFWV and LWDBs to provide training services to eligible WIOA Title 1-B participants. All training providers must submit information and criteria as established under WIOA §122(d) through (g). Training providers use the MACC to provide all required information for initial eligibility, which includes Assurances, as well as applications for each program of study. MACC doubles as WFWV's program certification system and the Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers, as required by WIOA §122 (a)(3). All approved programs are available to the public and to WIOA partners on MACC. WFWV and LWDBs share the responsibility of managing the ETPL, including approving programs for initial and continued eligibility, ensuring training provider compliance, and ensuring accuracy of information, removing training providers or programs, and monitoring of training providers. Upon receipt of completed application and program data, WFWV shall attempt to make an initial determination of statewide eligibility within 15 business days. Training providers will be contacted via email if the completed application and/or program data requires clarification. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will then have 10 business days to review and make comments to the state prior to the official determination of eligibility and placement on the ETPL. Subsequent eligibility determinations take place on a biennial basis, where performance data is again evaluated against the standards. Once the training provider is approved, each training program is evaluated to determine if training programs meet ETPL requirements, including initial performance data standards, resulting in a federally or locally recognized credential and being related to an in-demand sector or occupation in WV. The State ETPL Coordinator reviews required ETPL program information on the application including the following: a detailed description of the program, the total cost of the program, including the cost of tuition, books, and any fees, credential information, and labor market information for the related occupation, including the minimum entry level wage and demand for the occupation in the local area, and initial performance data.

LWDBs are encouraged to target training programs that support industry sectors and prepare participants for jobs in identified career pathways. Using LMI, LWDBs are able to determine higher paying jobs, in-demand industry sector and occupations in the local area enabling them to work with local employers to determine the minimum requirements for these jobs and the types of training and certification requirements for these positions. Using this information, LWDBs are better equipped to reach out to local training providers to encourage them to add their training program to the ETPL.

The State ETPL Coordinator will review the training provider's program performance based on the performance accountability measures, using data on all WIOA Title I-B participants who participated in the training program during the performance period. Each program's performance will be evaluated against state performance standards to determine if the program will remain on the list.

WIOA Policy 01-15 - ETPL Change 3 can be found at: https://workforcewv.org/public-information/guidance-notices-and-policies or directly at: https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/public-notices/WIOA_Policy_01-15_-_ETPL_Change_3.pdf.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC.

134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

West Virginia established Policy 2-16 addressing priority of service. Priority of service for individualized career services and training services funded with Title I Adult funds will be as follows:

- First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses (covered persons) who are low-income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.
- Second Priority: Individuals (non-covered persons) who are low-income or recipients of public assistance or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- Third Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income and are not recipients of public assistance or basic skills deficient.
- Fourth Priority: Individuals who do not meet the above priorities.

Each WDB Region has the flexibility, when creating their own policies, to include a process that also gives priority to other individuals, as long as priority for those individuals comes after the first four groups described above. An example of how priority of service is defined and applied to each participant-priority of service does not mean that only those individuals who meet the criteria listed above will be served. It means that if there are individuals who meet those criteria who are registered for service and deemed in need of career and training services, they will be enrolled before other individuals are considered. Intake and career planning services inform decision making on who will be enrolled, essentially using the rule that if individuals who meet the priority of service definition are available, they will receive consideration for training services (i.e. ITA) and work-based experience programs (i.e. OJT) over others.

Individuals eligible for priority of service shall be identified at the point of entry. Upon identification they shall be notified of their entitlement to priority of service; the full array of programs and services available to them; and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services. LWDB staff must ensure individuals who qualify for priority of service receive individualized career and training services before other non-covered individuals and receive first priority on any waiting lists that are maintained for training slots. However, once a participant is enrolled in a workshop, training, or service, he or she may not be displaced by an individual qualified for priority of service.

Each WDB Region will document priority in the State MIS/participant file. State MIS provides career planners with the appropriate data fields to record eligibility (data fields include, but are not limited to: Veteran status, eligible spouse, low income, public assistance, basic skills deficient, case notes) and either upload appropriate documents into State MIS or place in the participant's file. On-site monitoring will determine if each WDB Region is in compliance with Federal regulations, as well as all State and Local policies. WFWV staff will review the Participant Individual Record Layout and any other available federal report data elements and performance metrics to test for compliance with the priority of service rule, and ensure that priority of service is provided to veterans/eligible spouses, public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

WIOA Policy 2-16 Priority of Service Policy for Adult Title 1 Funding can be found at: https://workforcewv.org/public-information/guidance-notices-and-policies or directly at: https://workforcewv.org/images/files/PublicInfo/guidance-notices/WIOA_Policy_2-16_Priority_of_Service_Policy.pdf.

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

West Virginia recognizes that WIOA allows up to 100% of funds between programs with prior approval from the Governor. The state will ensure that any transfer of funds between WIOA programs complies with the WIOA law. LWDBs will also be required to record and document the use and application of local funds in accordance with instructions set forth in the grantee-subgrantee agreement. Workforce Innovation and Opportunityies Act Policy 01-17

To: Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), Chief Elected Officials, Regional Executive Directors

From: WorkForce West Virginia

Subject: TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER LOCAL FORMULA FUNDS

Effective Date: January 18, 2017

WV State Workforce Development Board

Review Date: January 18, 2017

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidance and parameters for transferring up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for adult employment and training activities, and up to 100 percent of a program allocation for dislocated worker employment and training services between the two programs.

II. EFFECTIVE DATE BY WIOA

July 1, 2015

III. BACKGROUND

Section 133 (b)(4) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the state, up to and including 100 percent of a program year allocation between the local adult and local dislocated worker programs. This transfer provides flexibility to the local workforce development area to provide services in the areas of greatest need.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Funds should not be transferred from the dislocated worker program to the adult program without regard to demands for dislocated worker services. The state may question and, if sufficient justification is not provided by the area, may deny any application for rapid response funds to address a need if a transfer has occurred from the dislocated worker program to the adult program. A LWDB cannot transfer youth funds under WIOA.

<u>Request for Transfer</u>

For transfers of funds the LWDB must make a request to the state for approval of such transfer for a specific appropriation of adult or dislocated worker funding (i.e., program year or fiscal year of appropriation). The request must specify the type of funding (whether adult or dislocated worker) to be transferred to the other program.

There are short-term and long-term effects on program operations that could result from transfers of funds. The LWDB and the fiscal agent should examine the following considerations when deciding to transfer:

1. Are there adequate funds to maintain services to currently enrolled participants?
2. What is prompting the request?
3. How will you respond to unforeseen events?

All requests for transfer must include a written justification addressing each of the above-mentioned considerations and the reasons such transfer is necessary to provide adult or dislocated worker employment and training activities.

Requests are to be scanned to WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) with "Fund Transfer Request" in the subject line. WFWV will respond to all requests. This transfer pertains only to a program (adult or dislocated worker) and program year or fiscal year of appropriation and will continue to apply for the life of the funds. The request must be signed by the Chief Elected Official, LWDB Chair and Local Executive Director. The State Deputy Executive Director of Field Operations and Deputy Executive Director of Fiscal Management will review, with the Executive Director of WFWV for approval.

Transfer of Funds

A LWDB should instruct the fiscal agent of the amount to transfer, up to 100 percent of local workforce development area formula allocations, based upon the state's approval, if the percentage being transferred required approval.

Funds will retain the year of appropriation identity (e.g., program year allocation) and must be reported and accounted for accordingly.

To transfer funds, the LWDB will use the transfer-related expenditure codes of the program from which funds are being transferred, in the state's financial system to report costs incurred by the program receiving funding.

The transfer limit of up to 100 percent, with approval from the state, shall apply to new allocations of adult and dislocated worker funding issued in the fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2015. This higher transfer limit does not apply to funds received in a prior fiscal year that may be carried into the new fiscal year. The level of transfer authority that existed at the time the funding was awarded shall continue to apply to those funds for their period of availability at the local level.

V. MONITORING

At the local level, the LWDB and/or the fiscal agent must conduct oversight of the transfer of WIOA adult and dislocated worker funds to ensure the transfer is being completed per this policy.

Through the state’s monitoring system, fiscal monitors will review the area’s transfer of adult and dislocated worker funds during the annual onsite monitoring review for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. Any issues will be handled through the state’s monitoring resolution process.

VI. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For additional information, you may send your questions to WorkForce WV, WIOA Unit.

VII. REFERENCES

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, § 133(b)(4), Public Law 113-128. NPRM § 683.130 found at 80 Fed. Reg. 20877 (April 16, 2015) (to be codified at 20 C.F.R. § 683.130). O.A.C. 5101:9-31-02, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formulary allocation methodology. (July 24, 2014).

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]

The LWDBs local WDBs follow the State's procurement policies when awarding grants for workforce investment WDS activities. The following clause is included in the Workforce grant agreement:

Sub-granting:

The Grantee shall not enter into a subgrant agreement for any of the work performed under this grant agreement without obtaining the prior written approval of Workforce WVWFWV. If sub-grant agreements are approved, they shall contain, at a minimum, sections of this grant agreement pertaining to indemnity, conflicts of interest, lobbying, nondiscrimination, audit requirements, public notice and any other state and/or federal requirements. Sub- grantee program performance accountability measures are assessed by program staff.

Examples of how local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability are listed below-

- Utilize a RFP Request for Proposal (RFP) process for youth services. When the rating committee reviews the RFP, performance is one of the key factors in scoring.
- RFP's specifically address USDOL required performance measures as a requirement for any proposals that are submitted and/or accepted.
- Reference checks are completed on all proposals received, including USDOL performance in other contracts operated by the proposing organization
- During the course of the year, if a performance measure is not met, the contractor will be part of any corrective action plans developed.
- Setting real time outcome goals for proposers to meet. Meeting the real time outcome goals would be financially tied to contract renewal for the option year(s). Real time outcome goals could be:
    - Provider will be required to hold two recruitment events targeting Out-of-School youth (OSY) during the program year.
    - Provider should enroll a minimum of 80% of their youth (80% Out-of-School and 80% In- School) in a work experience activity during the program year.

    - Provider will be in contact with every active youth during the program year at a minimum of 2 times a month, with one contact being in person. The other contact may be by phone or social media. The contacts will be documented in the youth files and in the MACC as case notes for verification at scheduled file review visits by LWDB staff.

- The criteria for an award(s) of funding is based on: past performance, cost effectiveness, demonstrated overall program effectiveness, youth group(s) targeted for services, placement and retention efforts in offered education or employment programs, ability of the subcontractor(s) to meet and/or exceed performance goals and ability to meet administrative and fiscal grant responsibilities, to name a few.

- Subcontractor(s) are made aware of performance measures for the region and the importance of meeting/exceeding them via a contractual agreement. Specific language about meeting and/or exceeding performance measures is included in contractual agreements signed with subcontractor(s). Performance-based contracts are used for all subcontractor(s). Identified performance measures serve as benchmarks in the contractual agreement and are used for measuring progress.

- Subcontractor(s) are monitored no less than five (5) times per program year to review and evaluate the delivery of program curriculum, program performance, etc. and address any issues that arise. A corrective action plan, along with technical assistance, is provided to the subcontractor(s) should program performance not be met.

- Programs for in-school and out-of-school youth will focus on measureable skill gains.

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

Adhere to WIOA regulations regarding youth;

- Identify models and effective practices for youth, including recruitment and flexible enrollment, to help local area staff successfully meet the needs of those individuals.

- Partner with the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education and LWDBs ensuring statistical models and negotiated performance levels are established and calibrated to accurately reflect the profiles of youth being served within the State and in each local area. Continue serving youth as a priority within the workforce development systemWDS;

- Develop transitional jobs, social enterprises, and other work experience strategies to help OSY with limited work histories develop the skills needed for workplace success.

- Co-enroll high-risk individuals, ages 18 to 24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to leverage funds and provide necessary services. Co-enrollment can occur in Title II adult basic education services, EARN, TANF, or other partner programs. Continue the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for 18 to 24-year olds in combination with work-based learning opportunities.

- The State will expand opportunities for youth to acquire post—secondary skills and credentials needed for high wage jobs through increased access to career and technical

education programs and work—based learning experiences. The Departments of EducationWVDE and CTCSthe Community Technical College System will work cooperatively to explore and develop appropriate connections between WIOA yYouth activities and Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) and state—funded programming.

- The Department of EducationWVDE will support the transformation and modernization of career and technical education (CTE) and align CTE with the career pathways recognized by the State.
- LWDBs will collaborate with YouthBuild, JobCorps, and AmeriCorps sites, identifying partnerships in local plans. Collaborate with LWDBs to identify access points which enable individuals to complete training and enter a successful career pathway.
- The WV Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has made concerted efforts, in conjunction with the State's Client Assistance Program (Disability Rights of WV), to provide outreach and services to non-traditional settings for youth with disabilities, such as juvenile centers and facilities, Youth Reporting Centers, and other similar locations. The youth in these settings are afforded the same opportunity to receive VR services, as well as information (e.g., career information and labor market information, as found on the Pathways to the Future website) and referral, as youth in traditional settings, as appropriate. Community leaders in the State's capital city, Charleston, WV, have also utilized DRS resources, such as materials from the Pathways website to impact the lives of "disconnected youth."
- Utilize the Office of Apprenticeship to promote apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

The State will contract with each of the LWDBs to ensure that each of the 14 program elements are administered in their local area.

State monitors will utilize the State MIS to determine the availability and provision of the 14 program elements prior to the annual on-site reviews. Supporting evidence will be obtained to ensure that the LWDB has complied with the requirements of WIOA section 129 (c) (2).

The LWDB will be notified of any deficiency and a corrective action plan will be required. The 14 program elements, listed below, will be added to the statement of work that is included in the grant agreement LWDB's are required to sign-

PROGRAM ELEMENTS.- —In order to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, programs shall provide elements consisting of-—

1. tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;

2. alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

3. paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include-—

- summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
- pre-apprenticeship programs;
- internships and job shadowing; and
- on-the-job training opportunities;

4. occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123;

5. education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

6. leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;

7. supportive services;

8. adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;

9. follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;

10.comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;

11. financial literacy education;

12. entrepreneurial skills training;

13. services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and

14. activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

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

An individual must meet the following criteria in order to be identified as a youth who needs additional assistance:

1. Must be between the ages of 14 and 24, and
2. Require additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment, and
3. Meet one or more of the following conditions:

a. Youth at risk of dropping out of school. Students at risk for dropping out display certain easily identifiable characteristics, some of which are demographic and some of which are related to their performance in school.

Factors associated with dropping out of high school:

- Comes from low-income family lack of credits earned
- Poor attendance
- Members of racial or ethnic minority group
- Poor grades (especially in core courses)
- Older than the average student in their grade
- Pregnant/Parenting
- Substance Abuse
- Youth offender

b. Immigrant Youth.

c. Youth with limited English proficiency.

d. Youth deficient in basic skills. Basic skills deficient means the individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function of the job, in the individual's family, or in society. In addition, states, and grantees have the option of establishing their own definition, which must include the above language. In cases where states or grantees establish such a definition, that definition will be used for basic skills determination.

e. Youth who resides in areas with high rates of poverty, crime and/or unemployment.

f. Youth who has serious barriers to employment, including but not necessarily limited to, stated current or past substance abuse, truancy, absence of positive adult role models, and diagnosed emotional disorders.

By expanding the definition of "youth who needs additional assistance" LWDBs will be able to serve at—risk youth in a more equitable manner. The following is a list of acceptable source documents required to support an eligibility staff person/case manager identifying a youth as needing additional assistance (clearly identifying which condition the youth met):

1. Individual Service Strategy (ISS).
2. Case Note.
3. WIOA intake of registration form.

4. State MIS.
5. Self-Attestation

Services for Youth (Rehabilitation Specific)

Youth to be served fall into two separate groups: in-school and out-of-school. Both groups are served primarily by different core partners, though any individual served by the WDS might be served by all core partners, perhaps simultaneously. Out-of-school youth are primarily served by WFWV and Adult Education, while in-school youth are primarily served by the State's education system and DRS, for those eligible students with disabilities. Adult Education is prohibited from providing direct services to in-school youth.

In-School Youth

Primary responsibility for services to in-school youth falls, in a general sense, to West Virginia's education system. The primary workforce development need of all in—school youth is a quality, high school-level education, provided by the teachers in the public and private school systems. Because of this need's precedence, the role of WFWV regarding in-school youth is diminished. Among the WIOA core partners, DRS plays the largest role in the development of in- school youth, albeit only for students with disabilities. Students seeking employment who do not qualify for vocational rehabilitation (e.g., not disabled, does not meet order of selection requirements) are referred from DRS to WFWV as needed. WFWV distributes funding to each of the LWDBs, which are allowed to spend up to 25 percent of their youth funds on WDS activities for in-school youth.

DRS has a long standing partnership with West Virginia's education system, at both the State and local level. As such, DRS has cooperative agreements with the State Education Agency and each of the 55 Local Education Agencies (County-level Boards of Education) in West Virginia. These cooperative agreements between DRS and the Education Agencies, assure that each student with a disability in the state who needs special education, vocational education, and/or vocational rehabilitation services is identified and that the appropriate services, are made available to the individual.

DRS offices are located in some of the state's schools including the WV School for the Blind, in Romney, WV. Counselors visit every high school in the state to initiate rehabilitation services needed for transition from school to work. This allows the counselor to develop a collaborative relationship and assist the student in identifying goals, services, and service providers related to employment options prior to transition. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their freshman and sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

Since the enactment of WIOA, DRS is focused on providing services, particularly Pre-ETS, to students with disabilities starting in the 9th grade. DRS is now required to reserve at least 15 percent of its budget for the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities. To accomplish this, 59 counselors work with youth with disabilities, especially students with disabilities, including students enrolled at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind. Expected benefits include increased counselor presence in schools, increased Individualized Educational Program meeting attendance, increased provision of Pre-ETS, and an increase in outreach and awareness of VR services to students with disabilities. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and attempt to resolve educational difficulties as they arise.

Pre-employment transition services are mandated under WIOA and include the following:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institution of higher education
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

The 2018 West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported Pre-ETS need. In accordance with this, DRS counselors will provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and he necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. This information, provided to DRS by WFWV, affords students with disabilities the greatest opportunity for an informed decision regarding work and their potential careers.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large Pathways to the Future banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, career and technical education, and post-secondary students at locations across the state.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will continue to sponsor the CEO Summits, four-day summer workshops students with disabilities statewide. The CEO Summits will be held in multiple locations across the state to ensure statewide coverage. DRS will utilize the assistance of CRPs to conduct the Summit activities. Class size for each of the Summits will be approximately 20 students. Students may earn a stipend for the time that they attend. DRS will also request WFWV and Adult Education to participate in the Summits to provide additional information to the students.

In addition to Pre-ETS, DRS debuted the POWER program in 2015. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest, including STEM. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice.

Another DRS activity is STEP. This program utilizes school personnel to facilitate a more seamless transition from high school to post-secondary activities (employment or training) for students with disabilities. By allowing the student to continue working with an individual who

has provided them with classroom instruction and/or transition services while in high school, they are working with people who are most familiar with their interests, skills, and barriers to employment. In addition, STEP will also include the use of science and math teachers to provide appropriate students with further career exploration opportunities in STEM fields. These teachers may also provide college preparation activities, such as ACT test preparation, and work-based experiences.

By engaging students with disabilities earlier and providing them with activities such as Pre-ETS, POWER, and STEP, DRS expects recipient students will have a better understanding of the labor market and the value of obtaining a postsecondary credential. Students with disabilities that are eligible for VR services may, in accordance with their IPE, receive assistance from DRS in obtaining postsecondary training.

DRS counselors are also invited to participate in Individualized Education Plan meetings. During these meetings the counselor describes DRS policies, and procedures as appropriate. The counselor determines the student's eligibility and order of selection category utilizing information generated from the school, the student, and West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services. Prior to or shortly after the student's IEP transition meeting occurs, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development begins so both the student and counselor have an idea of what rehabilitation services will be necessary to meet the student's vocational goal. Therefore, if the student needs additional training or assessment prior to vocational goal determination, this information is already collected so that planned rehabilitation services may begin. IPE development and approval for students with disabilities, including those able to be served if DRS is on an order of selection, will begin as early as appropriate during the transition process, but before the student determined to be eligible leaves the school setting.

Out-of-School Youth

All core partners are able to serve out-of-school youth who qualify for services. Adult Education works exclusively with out-of-school populations, many of whom are ages 24 and under. The core partners work, in tandem, on many workforce development activities. The partners all have memorandums of understanding at the state and regional levels and also collaborate on specific projects at local levels. For example, the DRS, WFWV, and Adult Education collaborate in Region 2 as part of WIOA One-Stop Management Partner meetings with local development groups to better identify and facilitate needed services for the local area. In DRS Districts 4 and 6, DRS has partnered with Adult Education to increase efforts to reach potential VR consumers being served by Adult Education and the SPOKES program. SPOKES was created by Adult Education under a contract between the WVDE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development and DHHR, and in collaboration with the LWDBs.

DRS understands the importance of having a recognized postsecondary degree from the perspectives of both employers and job seekers. DRS has always strived for quality, career-based employment outcomes for its consumers, when appropriate. In this aim, DRS has a long history of providing its consumers with the necessary training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential. In FY 2019, over $6 million, representing over half of all case services expenses went toward training. Of this amount, the majority was for four-year college/university and junior/community college tuition. DRS also has a liaison with postsecondary institutions across the state including colleges, universities, community and technical colleges.

For youth with disabilities who do not graduate from high school, DRS works closely with Adult Education, referring individuals as needed, to ensure that these individuals have an adequate

opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education. DRS provides assistance as needed to VR consumers in Adult Education programs to ensure individuals have the means to progress through and complete these programs if doing so requires the circumnavigation of functional limitations based on the consumers' disabilities.

WV's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from West Virginia's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment. These learners:

- Have attained 16 years of age;
- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law;
- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society; Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or
- Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Beginning in July 2015 under WIOA, adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advising, coordination, and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research—based innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

1. FastTrack Programs-Increasing Transitions from Levels 1, 2 and 3

Funded providers will use key elements of research based programs, e.g. contextualization, team teaching, and enhanced students services to increase the speed at which students' master basic and ESL skills at federal levels 1, 2, and 3.

These condensed courses feature managed intake and managed enrollment and are typically a six to twelve week accelerated program. FastTrack options include, but are not limited to:

Basic Skills FastTrack:

- Programs focused on either English/Language Arts, Mathematics and Numeracy, Science or Writing in Response to Text Career Cluster FastTrack:
- Programs focused on career immersion and career clusters
- Partnerships with Career and Technical Centers

- Partnership efforts between community colleges and community-based organizations and LWDBs
- Workplace projects that partner providers, employers and LWDBs ESL FastTrack:
- Flipped classroom models for ESL

FastTrack students acquire the skills needed to transition to basic skills education classes at federal levels 4-6 and/or Professional/Technical or Academic pathways.

2. Professional/Technical Transitions-Moving Students from Levels 4, 5, and 6 to Postsecondary Success in Professional/Technical Programs
Students who function primarily at federal levels 4-6 can be served in Professional/Technical Transition programs that result in recognized certificates leading to progression along a defined educational and career pathway. It is our hope to make these programs available at every West Virginia community and technical college, and to encourage partnerships with local community based organizations and as part of the education services at state correctional facilities.

- Programs focused on career immersion and career clusters
- Partnerships with Career and Technical Centers
- Partnership efforts between community colleges and community-based organizations and local WDBs
- Workplace projects that partner providers, employers and LWDBs
- Flipped classroom models for ESL
- Developmental and Academic Transition Programs-Moving Students from Levels 4, 5, and 6 to Postsecondary Success in Academic Programs

3.Developmental and Academic Transition programs will employ the same strategies as professional technical transition programs. They will apply these strategies to credit- bearing classes along 2-year degree pathways and ensure accelerated student progress through higher levels of adult education and precollege education and transition into 2-year degree programs.

Expanding Options for High School Credentials-Certificates and Diplomas

In light of changes to options for acquiring high school credentials made by the federal government and the growing importance of these certificates and high school diplomas, West Virginia has expanded the options available to adults. Our goal is to ensure that adult learners acquire the necessary credentials by gaining the knowledge and skills demanded in the workforce and required for postsecondary success. Toward that end, West Virginia will continue to award state certificates linked to the recognized high school equivalency state exam (TASC).

Welfare Reform Initiative

Adult Education has a successful history of collaboration with the State's human services agency. Through a cooperative relationship built on trust and commitment to serving economically disadvantaged West Virginians, the two State agencies work together to respond to the mandates of welfare reform.

SPOKES

In 2003, an academic and job preparation skills program entitled SPOKES was created by Adult Education under a contract between the WVDE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development and DHHR, and in collaboration with some LWDBs.
The SPOKES program model was also designed to provide intense daily activities that would address academic and soft skills necessary for adults to pursue gainful employment.
Although the program is designed for participants functioning at or above the 4th grade level (FFL 3 and above), there is some flexibility about including participants who score at lower levels. This 4 to 10 week program allows WV WORKS participants to be referred to the program and receive services at the start of each work week. Referrals can be made for the start-up of any week.

The SPOKES program consists of:

- Assessment
- A six-week repeating cycle of modules related to the following components:
    - Employability Skills
    - Job Readiness
    - Work Process Skills
    - Technology Skills-which may include Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) ® work
    - Workplace Academic Skills
- Vocational Training starting Week 5 that may include the following:
    - Customer Service Part 1
    - Customer Service Part 2
    - Microsoft® Office Specialist (MOS)
    - Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3)
    - Work-based Academic Skills (if applicable in region)
- An additional 2-4 week job readiness component, which includes intense jobsearch. SPOKES participants prepare to take the WorkKeys assessment. A variety of certificates may be earned by participants who complete the program. Participants officially referred to and enrolled in SPOKES classes must have an identified need for instruction and/or enhancement in one or more of the module areas that prevents them from getting employment or advancing in a job. Individualized, computer-aided, small/whole group, and work-based/site instructional techniques are utilized within the program delivery of services.

In addition to having a certified full—time Adult Education SPOKES instructor, and in some cases a part time Adult Education SPOKES instructor, the SPOKES program may have access to a career development consultant (CDC) and share a blended classroom with an Adult Education instructor.

Programs are encouraged to pilot and implement additional evidence and research-based strategies for college and career pathways that meet the goals of this plan.

Pursuant to WIOA, WFWV is required to allocate 75 percent of its local area youth funds to OSY. These funds are used to carry out programs that provide the following elements:

1. tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
2. alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. paid and unpaid work experiences, including summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; and OJT opportunities;
4. occupational skill training;
5. education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. leadership development opportunities;
7. supportive services;
8. adult mentoring;
9. follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
10. comprehensive guidance and counseling;
11. financial literacy education;
12. entrepreneurial skills training;
13. services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; and
14. activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

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

For the purpose of determining whether an individual is an ISY or OSY, school status is based on a determination of school attendance on the date of eligibility determination. Once the school status of a youth is determined, that school status remains the same throughout the youth's current participation.

- A youth is "not attending" school if the youth:
- has had at least 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences and on the date of eligibility determination has not returned to school;
- is not attending postsecondary school on the date of eligibility determination;

- has not registered for postsecondary school classes on the date of the eligibility determination; or
- is enrolled only in non-credit-bearing postsecondary classes.

Additionally, participation in the following programs is not considered being "in school" for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status:

- Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA
- YouthBuild programs
- Job Corps programs
- High School Equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)
- Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)

Note: School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.

A youth is "attending school" if the youth:

- is enrolled in any of the following schools:

1. Public school
2. Charter school
3. Private school
4. Alternative education program;

- is homeschooled;
- is attending high school equivalency programs, including those considered to be dropout reengagement programs, funded by the public K–12 system;
- is a high school graduate who has registered for postsecondary classes, even if not yet attending postsecondary classes;
- is attending postsecondary classes; or
- is in between postsecondary school semesters and has registered for classes for a future semester or has paid all or part of the tuition for a future semester.

Note: A youth with fewer than 10 consecutive unexcused absences, or with 10 or more non-consecutive unexcused absences is still considered "attending school."

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

Basic Skills Deficient-An individual unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. For WIOA purposes, the State further defines Basic Skills Deficient as an individual who:

- Lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education.
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program.
- Reading and/or Math assessment at an 8.9 or below grade level.
- Determined to be Limited English Skills proficient through staff-documented observations.
- Other objective criteria determined to be appropriate by the local area and documented in its required policy.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

Not Applicable.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

Not Applicable.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

Not Applicable.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

Not Applicable.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

Not Applicable.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Not Applicable.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

***We are not requesting a waiver.**

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	69.3	69.3	69.3	69.3
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	69.6	69.6	69.6	69.6
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	6,251	6,251	6,251	6,251
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0	78.0	78.0	78.0
Measurable Skill Gains	26.0	28.0	26.0	33.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	81.2	81.2	81.2	81.2
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	83.2	83.2	83.2	83.2
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	9,719	9,719	9,719	9,719
Credential Attainment Rate	83.0	83.0	83.0	83.0
Measurable Skill Gains	25.7	27.5	25.7	35.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second	63.3	63.3	63.3	63.3

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Quarter After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	69.7	69.7	69.7	69.7
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,182	3,182	3,182	3,182
Credential Attainment Rate	73.3	73.3	73.3	73.3
Measurable Skill Gains	34.4	34.4	34.4	34.4
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

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

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

West Virginia will continue to use state merit staff employees for all programs.

2. 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

WDS will work with the WVWFDB to establish a structure to upgrade WDS staff skills so jobseekers and employers are provided a high quality service. WFWV developed an online assessment focused on Employment and Sector Partnering to establish a certificate system that must be completed by all Employment Service (ES) staff. The use and development of this tool will strengthen staff knowledge of Employment Services and partner services which would allow for a well trained staff to assist the customer in obtaining the proper services needed for employment. This development would also give staff insight into industry and business in their local area and surrounding local regions.

WFWV will continue to use established professional development activities in order to meet goals, develop staff skills, and ensure a competent Employment Service staff. In addition, we will enhance training curricula that incorporates policies, processes, and input from Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and/or core partner agency staff. Experts in the fields of UI,

WIOA, Employment Service and core partner staff will recommend related topics. WFWV will continue to train employees on the pertinent skills needed in the AJC through peer and management direction.

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

As training needs are identified, WFWV will develop curriculum and conduct instructional sessions. Self-paced UI process training tutorials are available via the intranet. These tutorials will be enhanced to incorporate the identification of eligibility issues and appropriate referral for UI adjudication. Training will also be available locally across partner agencies to ensure system cross-training objectives are met. Core partners will be utilizing the same management information system and trained to identify then record UI adjudication issues for further review by UI staff.

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

WFWV's UI and ES staff are fully cross trained to assist individuals access a full range of services. The State maintains a UI presence in each AJC to ensure that customers meet the eligibility requirements during the initial application process and to offer support throughout the entire claim cycle. Eligibility information and claimant rights and responsibilities is also available on the website in a mobile friendly environment.

Claimants are provided an opportunity to gather information and apply timely for benefits in remote itinerant sites staffed by well trained staff.

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

West Virginia claimants are profiled at the time the initial claim is filed to determine the level of assistance and support necessary to return to work. New and additional claims are taken online, and the information is reviewed for UI eligibility. Courtesy calls are attempted for each new claim filed where center services are reviewed, labor market information is examined, and labor exchange (ES) services are required. Every claimant is advised of the requirement to be able, available, and actively seeking full time work for each week UI is claimed and must attest to the number of job contacts made during the week claimed. They are advised they must apply and accept suitable work, based on their work experience, training and claim duration. UI eligibility requirements and the consequences for failing to meet them are reviewed during benefit rights section and are available for further review online or through handout materials by visiting a local office or itinerant site.

In addition, those selected to participate in UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) will receive all of the mandatory program components to include the creation of an Individualized Education Plan and additional services such as job search workshops, job search assistance or referrals to other partner programs. The RESEA workshop is designed to motivate and encourage those likely to exhaust benefits by exploring previous work experience, accomplishments and unique skill sets and how to effectively use while job

searching. During the workshop individuals identify strengths and skill sets, set short and long term goals, begin developing a job search plan, and effectively network both in person and using social media.

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:

WFWV's UI and ES staff are fully cross trained to assist individuals access a full range of services. Concentrated, individualized and group services including reemployment assessment, continuing eligibility and job placement are provided to claimants identified as either most or least likely to exhaust benefits. Regionalized claimant-centered labor market information is available through handouts or via https://workforcewv.org/.

WFWV applies an early-intervention approach to delivering services to unemployment compensation recipients. Claimants are dual enrolled from day one for Wagner-Peyser reemployment services and provided an orientation to all available One-Stop services. Courtesy calls are made to claimants who file online where detailed information is conveyed about available partner services and WIOA training eligibility and available opportunities. Common data is uploaded daily from the UI mainframe to the ES registration system.

The State administers the unemployment insurance work test as required. Claimants who fail to participate or report to suitable opportunities are held ineligible until issues are resolved. The UI management information system identifies potential eligibility issues by the claimant's responses to weekly certification questions and by assessing the data entered by staff during eligibility assessments. Any job referral made is reconciled either by claimant or the employer or both. The management information system (MACC) generates a follow—up form to the employer every 15 days. When returned, the results are populated to the UI system and a stop placed on payments of claimants who failed to report.

WFWV ES/UI staff will coach and direct claimants to educational opportunities if training is advisable to the desired employment outcome. Income test information will be provided to assist the customer apply for available financial aid. Cost and performance data, when available, will be available for review so customers will be able to make informed decisions on schooling. Joint partner staff training sessions will provide information and resource tools for staff to guide their referrals.

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 AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES 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.

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.

Farmworker Unique Needs

These items listed below are based upon comments from employers, association members, community agencies/partners, and outreach workers

Generally, those farmworkers traveling into the state for work may have limited money and community resource information; they require the following:

- language assistance- translation services and ESL classes;
- career assessment /counseling for family members;
- legal assistance in applying for available or new citizenship or visa programs;
- transportation and/or driver's education/training to obtain valid driver's license;
- housing and shelters for the homeless;
- assistance obtaining personal loans to purchase housing and land to meet family needs;
- assistance from local food pantries;
- additional work clothing and/or clothing for family members;
- education and training to operate new advanced farming equipment;
- job training/job shadowing beginning which is connected to education educational credit;
- computer classes;
- health assessments;
- dental services;
- information/referrals for self-care-mental health, control of medical issues diabetes, high blood pressure, drug and alcohol counseling and heat related illnesses;
- families may need-education assistance such as tutors, childcare, and special housing;
- appropriate to meet the privacy needs of women and children;
- assistance understanding their farmworker rights;
- assistance recognizing contract violations and filing complaints.

2. 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

1. The current identified top five labor-intensive crops, months of heaviest activity and geographic locations are:

- hay and hay products-May through September- Jackson, Greenbrier, Preston, Hampshire and Mason

- grain, dry beans and peas-April through October- Mason, Jefferson, Hardy, Preston, Pendleton, Wood, Randolph, Berkeley and Monroe
- nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod-February through June-Mason, Putnam, Mercer and Raleigh
- fruits and, berries—May through October -Jefferson, Berkeley and Morgan
- vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes-July through Early September-Jefferson, Mason and Cabell

2. As the scarcity of farm workers persist, agricultural employers continue to utilize family and friends at small to medium farms. However, large agricultural employers rely on the limited local domestic farm workers many who are older and may choose to work on a part-time schedule. Additionally, it is getting more difficult for employers to obtain foreign workers at the time they are need them. There are tighter border controls and delayed processing times for H2-A workers. Employers complain that foreign workers delayed arrivals and some early departure times are interfering with the employer's ability to ensure that all required work is completed. Although some of the large farms are equipped with advanced technology to assist in day-to-day operations, most farm work remains labor intensive and requires the "hands on" application.

Each year agricultural employers must rely on acquiring agents to file their applications with Department of Labor and the process is costly. So, the employer must determine if it is financially prudent for him/her to invest in getting foreign workers who may or may not arrive when they are needed. Their major concern is how will investing in obtaining foreign workers impact their bottom line or return on investment.

3. Current or projected economic, natural and other factors affecting agriculture:

- Climate changes will continue to impact state agricultural production. Extreme temperatures have been experienced in the Eastern Panhandle where the fruit matured early and there was an insufficient number of labor ready workers available workers to harvest the fruit. Employers lost their products and associated revenue.
- Agricultural employers realize that to be competitive they must extend the growing seasons using high and low tunnels which will allow them to grow their products inside with protection from the weather changes. This is an additional expense for equipment and more workers are needed.
- A few agricultural employers found a way to increase revenue by adding hemp to their farm products and have started growing the plant legally for medical research purposes.
- The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker population contains an increased number of foreign visa workers who are employed under the United States Department of Labor H-2A program.
- The aging population of the MSFWs is an issue because these males comprise the bulk of reliable knowledgeable farm workers.
- Lack of domestic workers means that employers will need to maintain approved housing and safe reliable transportation to meet the needs of foreign workers.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Generally, those farmworkers traveling into the state for work may have limited money and require the following:

- language assistance
- career assessment /counseling
- transportation
- housing
- food
- additional clothing

The MSFWs coming into West Virginia are primarily from Florida, Haiti and Mexico. Their languages include Spanish, Creole, Haitian and many speak limited English as a second language.

The Eastern Panhandle had seen an influx in farm workers from Ethiopia who speak Amharic as well as agricultural workers from Burma whose primary language is Burmese.

However, many of them found work at the local poultry plant. Also, there has been a decrease in the number of Haitian workers coming to the state due to visa related problems.

During the peak season statewide there maybe in the months of August through October there may be up to 500 MSFWs employed in the state. This total number of MSFWs includes year-round workers, seasonal workers and migrant seasonal workers (with H2-A foreign workers).

Many of the farm workers at peak season are migrating workers from the southeastern states of the United States and H2-A workers. During the slower agricultural period, domestic year around workers may be as low as 100 - 200 workers performing essential farming tasks.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

1. The SWA works with partner agency staff to assist in locating and contacting MSFWs who do not come into the local Work Force Office. These workers may seek assistance form Telamon Corporation staff, Catholic Charities or Shenandoah Valley Services. These agencies have staff who are familiar with the employment services offered at Work Force Centers and we have planned quarterly meetings to review services available to this special population.

2. Technical assistance is ongoing for Work Force staff and some trainings are open to partner agency staff such as reporting complaints. All outreach staff are provided training and some may attend special trainings offered by DOL designed to assist MSFWs . training is provided via video teleconference and face-to-face and using the MSFW manual.
3. Training has been provided to outreach staff on UI and will be included on the regular training agenda for updates.
4. Professional development is included tin the schedule of ongoing training
5. As stated in item #1 above the SWA collaborates with the NFJP grantee and we have a memorandum of understanding that defines our level of cooperation. However, the NFJP, Telamon Corporation is not a subrecipient for the SWA to provide outreach.

Providing for the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both the farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system.

In the field, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach staff utilize the following strategies to provide services via personal contact and/or translators to communicate with workers. At the American Job Center and in the field, staff use written materials such as brochures and facts sheets printed in the language familiar to the workers in order to inform Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers about the core, intensive, training and career services available to them at no charge. Outreach workers have laptop computers and cellphones to complete orientation and registration as well as aid them in meeting the customer's needs for supportive services, counseling and job development.

Additionally, there are computers which contain Spanish language registration instructions. Should any Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers require or request career and training services which are available under Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Title I to enhance their skill level or to transfer into another career. Services would have to be adapted to meet the needs of that specific customer by outsourcing a staff person to assist him in the field or provide transportation into the American Job Center for assistance.

Agricultural employers are given written information about the full array of services available to them through the local American Job Center and they are encouraged to visit the facility. Each year local American Job Center staff and Outreach workers are encouraged to add new agricultural employers to their visitation list. The State Monitor Advocate attends annual conferences sponsored by the college and universities agricultural departments, and agricultural associations to promote State Workforce Agency services. The State Monitor Advocate, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach staff and local office staff attend local state fairs and special community events such as the Apple Harvest, Peach, Blackberry and Strawberry Festivals, etc. to inform the agricultural employers about the full range of employment and training services offered at the local American Job Center. Each year the agricultural associations, employers and public/private agencies involved with agriculture are invited to provide information for inclusion in the state Agricultural Outreach Plan. And if they submit comments the information is shared with Department of Labor.

- The career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided by using trained staff, translators and brochures which outline all services employment services offers.

- The SWA in conjunction with partner agency staff re-designed the agricultural forums offered to employers, annually.

The Complaint System is marketed to employers and other farmworker advocacy groups as a tool to assist the employer in meeting state and federal compliance and maintaining consistency in this area. All printed materials relative to the program include information on how to obtain materials and include contact information for staff assistance to file Employment Service complaints.

Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to employers reflects educating them regarding more visibility for their business which may attract more workers and save them some money. Representatives of the American Job Center routinely make site visits to discuss a full array of services available to the employer. Information on services, program changes, and topics of interest are shared in a variety of means (visits, electronic, etc.)

The State Workforce Agency has joined with other Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker service providers including National Farmworkers Jobs Program grantees and other service providers. In 2015 we started to meet on a quarterly schedule; it is our intent to expand our group. Agricultural employers will be encouraged to participate as we move forward.

Collaboration: The NFJP grantee MOU is reviewed and updated as needed. And all other partner agencies willingly meet quarterly building on existing relationships and have not needed to sign an agreement. The state will continue to collaborate with our National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and other service providers. The Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers' Partner Agency group will continue to meet quarterly and work toward joint community event planning and to increase our outreach capacity via the partners. The state will continue to collaborate with the National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and the local Workforce Investment Board. The state will exchange information with these groups as well as to seek inclusion in the establishment of the local Workforce Investment Board and National Farmworker Jobs Program Memorandum of Understanding. The state will work toward identifying the two (2) National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and their respective directors who are operating components of this program in West Virginia and work with them to streamline and coordinate services in a seamless manner.

Several agencies generally, submit comments for the AOP , Telamon Corporation and Shenandoah Valley Medical Services. There comments are in the is Outreach Plan

West Virginia has developed a new service delivery strategy within the last four (4) years. The State Monitor Advocate and the State WorkForce team trained outreach workers in each American Job Center office area to be able assist agricultural employers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers living areas and places where they meet such as at local community events to provide printed materials to farmworkers in a language they understand. These materials contain the full array of services such as employment, training, education, unemployment/benefits and support services. Each local employment office manager and one (1) other staff person have been trained to serve as outreach staff over the next four-year period. Additionally, the West Virginia State Monitor Advocate is collaborating outreach staff with the Virginia State Monitor Advocate in developing expanded contacts to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. The development and distribution of comprehensive Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Handbook occurred in July 2017 with the Field Management Team. Subsequent conference calls with front line staff followed in September. Staff training is ongoing and has been impacted by the retirements and staff turnover.

Technical assistance continues to be provided to outreach workers which may include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as American Job 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 other organizations serving Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment. Additionally, this information is shared among the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Partnership group which meets quarterly and involves agencies that offer services to this special population. The Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Partner's include representatives from the following organizations: National Farmworker Jobs Program, Telamon Corporation, Job Corps, Community Colleges and Higher Education, Catholic Social Services, Shenandoah Valley Health Services, Occupational Health and Safety Agency, Department of Health and Human Resources and the State Workforce Agency.

Technical assistance and training are available for State Workforce Agency merit staff at all American Job Centers for professional development activities to ensure they can provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers. Such training will include information regarding the availability of core programs including the Unemployment Insurance program and training on identification of unemployment eligibility issues.

Unemployment staff assigned developed and trained the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach staff to explain unemployment services/benefits and the process for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers to access the system Training. A printed brochure was developed to outline the unemployment program and easy access steps for obtaining assistance.

The state will utilize the continuous trainings and seminars offered by the National Monitor Advocate and the Regional Monitor Advocate to enhance the train-the-trainer services that is offered to the statewide employment service workers including outreach staff. The plan is to ensure that that all staff understand the necessity for providing all customers, including the MSFWs with the full array of quality services. In order to comply with this requirement employment service workers, outreach workers and management staff shall view the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker services as a continuation of services of that must be provided such as job referrals, training, education, supportive services, labor market information, complaint services and unemployment insurance. In the train-the-trainer format the local office manager shall be responsible for training local office staff. West Virginia's continuous education/training plan for train-the-trainer was completed and new series of Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker training has been initiated.

Plan Goal: To provide continuous education and training related services for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers.

Objective: Increase the awareness, capacity and skills of workers serving this special population.

The state staff maintain coordination with our community partners on housing inspections, field checks, field visits and some community events. State staff will continue to exchange printed materials which are written in various languages spoken by the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (Spanish and Haitian) who we all serve. Staff continues to explore ways to ensure that Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers are personally contacted or that they receive employment services information/materials through staff of our partner agencies.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

In the field, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach staff utilize the following strategies to provide services via personal contact and/or translators or translation devices to communicate with farmworkers. At the American Job Center and in the field, staff use written materials such as brochures, flowcharts and facts sheets printed in the language familiar to the workers in order to inform Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers about the core, intensive, training and career services available to them at no charge. Outreach workers have laptop computers and cellphones to complete orientation and registration as well as aid them in meeting the customer's needs for supportive services, counseling and job development.

Additionally, there are computers including laptops which contain Spanish language registration instructions. Should any Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers require or request career and training services which are available under Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Title I to enhance their skill level or to transfer into another career. Services would have to be adapted to meet the needs of that specific customer by outsourcing a staff person to assist him in the field or provide transportation into the American Job Center for assistance.

Agricultural employers are given written information about the full array of services available to them through the local American Job Center and they are encouraged to visit the facility. Each year local American Job Center staff and Outreach workers are encouraged to add new agricultural employers to their visitation list. The State Monitor Advocate attends annual conferences sponsored by the college and universities agricultural departments, and agricultural associations to promote State Workforce Agency services. The State Monitor Advocate, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach staff and local office staff attend local state fairs and special community events such as the Apple Harvest, Peach, Blackberry and Strawberry Festivals, etc. to inform the agricultural employers about the full range of employment and training services offered at the local American Job Center. Each year the agricultural associations, employers and public/private agencies involved with agriculture are invited to provide information for inclusion in the state Agricultural Outreach Plan. And if they submit comments their information is written into the plan and shared with Department of Labor.

a. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;

The career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided by using trained staff, translators/translation devices and brochures which outline all services employment programs, register customers, assess their needs, refer customers for supportive services, inform customers of the their rights, etc. utilizing available technology (i.e. computers, cellphones, videos, etc.)

b. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

The SWA is committed to continuous improvement an actively seeks feedback form employers and farm workers regarding their needs and suggestions for improvement. The SWA in conjunction with the NFJP staff re-designed the agricultural forums offered to employers, annually. And the SWA has utilized the new agricultural employer forum format starting in 2020 to communicate with the employers as well as conducting on-site visits. In February 2020, Wage and Hour staff agreed to conduct ongoing pre-harvest visits and work with employers on compliance, during their discussions at the employer forum.

The Complaint System is marketed to employers and other farmworker advocacy groups as a tool to assist the employer in meeting the needs of their workers and meeting state and federal

compliance while maintaining consistency in these areas. All printed materials relative to the MSFW program include information on how to obtain forms/instructions related to the Employment Services Complaint System. The complaint packet includes staff contact information for assistance to file complaints with Employment Services, instructions and addresses regarding other enforcement entities responsible for receiving/processing complaints. Outreach workers and the SMA provide on-site visits and check for the required Complaint posters on bulletin broads and ask workers about their knowledge of complaint system and how to use it.

Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to employers' entails educating them on how this online system offers more visibility for their businesses which may attract more domestic workers; and this would save them money. Business Services staff and from the American Job Center routinely make site visits to discuss the full array of services available to the employer. Information on services include program changes, wage and hour updates, OHSA news, and topics of interest are shared via a variety of formats (face-to-face visits, electronic resources, and conference calls)

The State Workforce Agency has joined with other Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker service providers including National Farmworkers Jobs Program grantees to ensure we do not duplicate services but offer wrap around services, whenever possible. And we strive to evaluate the customer's needs in order to offer continuous relevant services.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

The state will continue to collaborate with our National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and other service providers. The Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers' Partner Agency group will continue to meet quarterly and work toward joint community event planning and to increase our outreach capacity via the partners. The state will continue to collaborate with the National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and the local Workforce Investment Board. The state will exchange information with these groups as well as to seek inclusion in the establishment of the local Workforce Investment Board and National Farmworker Jobs Program Memorandum of Understanding. The state will work toward identifying the two (2) National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees and their respective directors who are operating components of this program in West Virginia and work with them to streamline and coordinate services in a seamless manner.

Goal: Develop an inclusive partner agency group to serve the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and their families.

Objective: Identify community partners to enhance our total service delivery system.

Plan: To increase participating agencies and receive training from our new partners, annually; these coordination efforts that will grow our assistance network for services to this special population.

Plans for coordinating with other agencies to serve MSFWs continues. Each year more services are implemented to assist the agricultural employers and farmworkers.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The WIOA State Plan was posted on our website at workforecewv.org in January of 2020. All agricultural employers, associations, public agencies, MSFW partners and interested parties were sent an email to go to https://www.workforcewv.gov to review AOP's section. Generally, the SWA receives comments from community staff members of partner agencies for the AOP, Telamon Corporation and Shenandoah Valley Medical Services and several others. Currently, at least two (2) Local Workforce Investment Board Directors and four (4) agricultural employers have provided information; two (2) gave written statements and two (2) gave verbal information, during field visits. Comments are included this 2020 Agricultural Outreach Plan and are listed below.

- Tighter border control since 9/11 and delayed in processing the H2A VISA (https://money.cnn.com/2016/09/29/news/economy/american-farm-workers/index.html)
    - Delayed arrival of farm workers to U.S. in 2018, a grower reported having half of the crew at the camp and the other half on hold in the border.
    - Early arrival and early departure of farm workers in 2019.
- Haitians are ineligible for the H-2A farmworker visa because as Officials cited "high levels of fraud and abuse" and "a high rate of overstaying" visas (https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2018-01-26/florida-farmers-fear-backlash-over-migrant-worker-visa-program).
- Shenandoah Valley Medical System (SVMS) had 38 Haitian's at Mason camp in 2017, and in 2018, we had 50 Mexican migrant workers and we were able to assess 44% (28) of the workers because of understaffed. In 2019, we performed 25 nursing assessments at Mason camp.
- A reduction from 28 to 22 migrant camps in 2019:
    - Westwood camp closed for business.
    - The grower is not using Hilltop camp this year.
    - SCH service area change and the following camp's zip code were not listed:
        - Cherry Hill
        - Holman's Creek
        - Mason
        - Mount Clifton
        - Vetters
        - Brent
        - Whitacre
        - Shanholtz
        - Bragunier
            - Only approved to go to Brent, Bragunier and south camps in 2019.

- In 2019, 5 farm workers were expected at Burkhart camp and they were zero farm workers this year.
- 212 MFSWs expected to the South camps in 2019
    - 48 Farm workers expected at Holman's Creek, and we were able to assess 58% (28) of the workers
    - 50 Farm workers expected at Mason, and we were able to assess 50% (25) of the workers
    - 60 Farm workers expected at Mount Clifton, and we were able to assess 55% (33) of the workers
    - 24 Farm workers expected at Cherry Hill, and we were able to assess 38% (9) of the workers
    - 30 Farm workers expected at Vetters, and we were able to assess 43% (13) of the workers
- Understaffed for 2019 outreach.
- Decline of Mexican birthrate led to decrease in the number of young workers & the migrants are getting older
- 2017: Average age 38, ages' range 25-57
- 2018: Average age 43, ages' range 26-64
- 2019: Average age 36, ages' range 24-64

In conclusion, SVMS accomplished the following in the last two years:

- The total number of MSFWs served in 2019 was 596.
- The health conditions seen were Hypertension, Diabetes and skin conditions such as Poison Ivy. In addition, muscle pain was the primary concern of the farm workers.
- We drove 14,565 miles in 2018 to provide access to care to 748 migrant farm workers and 365 individuals that gather at the homeless sites.
- In 2018, 374 migrant workers received health education: Spanish 68%, Spanish/English 17%, Spanish/Creole 5%, Creole 5%, and English 5%.
- In 2019, 166 migrant workers received health education: Spanish 84% (139), Spanish/English 10% (16), and Creole 6% (11).
    - 16 farm workers received health education on Ergonomics,
    - 46 farm workers received health education on Mental Health Self-Care
    - 104 farm workers received health education on Poison Ivy Skin Care
- In 2018, SVMS reduced the barriers to care by performing 6,450 interpretation services at SCH-clinics.

- In 2018, SVMS visited a new migrant camp, Abelow in Kearneysville, WV. We performed 18 nursing assessments, and 16 migrant workers received health education about Drugs & Alcohol Abuse.
- In 2019, SVMS found that Woodbine has two camp locations. The new location is at the actual office area.
- In 2018, 25 migrant workers received dental services and in addition, one child at Healthy Smiles.
- In 2019, 14 migrant workers received dental services, 12 were no show and two cancel the appointment at Healthy Smiles. In addition, two children received dental care.
- Region 2 Local Workforce Development Board can do training programs, employment subsidies to employers for qualified employees, sponsor Career fairs, and a supply of possible workers in partnership with Workforce WV Job Service-we have experience with assisting a lavender farm that has been placed on strip coal mining property.

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Based upon Wagner-Peyser reports, the SWA has all but two (2) required data elements.

1. Placement in long-term non - agricultural employment for MSFWs – Most MSFWs are domestic workers or they are farmworkers re-locating to the state for seasonal work, only; and they **are not** interested in other long- term employment.
2. Job development MSFWs – Most workers tend to be in the mid - twenties up to middle aged males who already have secured work with employers, before they left during the last agricultural season. They return to work for the same employer each year or quickly find a new employer based upon information from family or friends.

Plan: The SWA is working with agricultural employers and partner agency staff offering MSFWs the full array of employment services and emphasizing sustainable employment.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The SWA met the goals listed below:

- establishing monthly training for Outreach workers and all local staff.
- added video conferencing as a training tool
- field translation services to assist our workers outside of the office.
- the SWA created and maintains a statewide MSFW Operations Handbook.

The SWA did not meet the goal of adding additional community partners, as indicated in the last AOP document. Local Health Department staff and staff from the Environmental Protection Agency were invited but did not respond to attend our MSFW Partner meetings.

Strategy to garner participation and support from these entities:

- ***Step 1: Plan with Telamon Corporation staff a virtual meet and greet for all parties***
- ***Step 2:Request agency staff and interested parties assist in planning and implementing our Agricultural Appreciation Day activities.***

- ***Step 3*:*We will send a formal letter to each agency which emphasizes the need for our joint participation to serve our valuable farmworkers and families.***

The focus will be to engage the designated staff in planning and implementing our Agricultural Appreciation Day. Additionally, we will request their assistance in providing education/consultation services to our Agricultural employers.

Our hope is to attract these agencies to join our efforts to serve MSFWs and increase community visibility as well as cooperation among the partners.

It is our intent to continue moving forward in creating and maintaining a MSFW Partnership program which meets the needs of MSFWs and their families.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The State Monitor Advocate is the author of this Agricultural Outreach Plan and reviewed and approved the AOP.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	61.0	61.0	61.0	61.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	5,093	5,093	5,093	5,093
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

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

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

In 2014 West Virginia Adult Education adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education. Thereafter, in 2016, the West Virginia Board of Education implemented West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics which were developed through the collaborative efforts of West Virginia teachers, parents, and business and community stakeholders-that address the learning needs of West Virginia's students. West Virginia Adult Education has continued to use the CCRS for Adult Education, as they are aligned with the WVCCR standards.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

West Virginia Adult Education expects to award grants on a multi-year cycle with an annual continuation grant submitted. Each year's renewal will be based on evidence of success in provision of the contracted services and subject to the availability of funds. West Virginia Adult Education will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants: 1. shall use not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under Section 231 and to carry out Section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which up to 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out Section 225; 2. shall use not 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, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

As part of the application process West Virginia Adult Education will collect basic information from the eligible provider (e.g., location, service area, scope of the program, demographics served, demonstrated need, data collection, and fiscal management procedures). Additionally,

each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget and program design information. Applicants will be expected to respond to West Virginia Adult Education priorities and the Title II considerations for funding Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs. The requirements to be considered include:

1. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.

2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.

3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.

4. Alignment with One-Stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108, as well as the activities and services of the One-Stop partners.

5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.

6. Research-Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities, including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.

7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.

8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.

10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, Local Boards, One-Stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies,

business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.

12. Data Collection: The degree to which the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with section 116) and to monitor program performance.

13. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

West Virginia's adult education and literacy programs assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, assists adults who are parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and assists adults in completing a secondary school education. Adult education and literacy programs provide direct and comprehensive services to enrolled adult students.

According to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, adult education services are to be targeted for:

- adults who are 16 years of age or older;
- adults who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who...
- are basic skills deficient
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education or
- are English language learners.

West Virginia law mandates that students must attend school until age 17, unless they have a specific waiver. Certain counties have additional rules. All young adult students under age 18 must present official documentation of withdrawal from school or documentation of an exemption.

Students who are enrolled in post-secondary education or job training programs (e.g., colleges, apprenticeship programs, vocational/technical schools, etc.) may be co-enrolled in West Virginia Adult Education programs. In addition, the instruction provided by West Virginia Adult Education in reading, writing, math, or English language acquisition must be designed to help students meet the requirements for enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions.

Federal adult education legislation does not specify the need to prove legal status of ELLs as a condition for enrollment in adult education classes. Thus, it is not necessary for foreigners to present passports, visas, work permits, or Social Security cards to prove legal status in order to enroll. However, foreign students (with F-1 Visas) enrolled in universities or private English

language institutes may not simultaneously enroll in publicly funded adult education programs. ELLs in this country as nannies or au pairs on a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa are required to participate in college level academic classes, not in adult education or literacy classes; therefore, per West Virginia Adult Education policy these persons should not be admitted to adult basic education classes.

English language learners (ELLs) who have completed post-secondary education in another couELLs in this country as nannies or au pairs on a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa are required to participate in college level academic classes, not in adult education or literacy classes; therefore, per West Virginia Adult Education policy these persons should not be admitted to adult basic education classes. ntry but lack English language skills MAY enroll in West Virginia Adult Education programs as long as they do not have an F-1 (or J-1 Visa in certain categories).

West Virginia Adult Education programs require that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and services without regard to:

- race
- color
- religion
- national origin
- sex
- age
- marital status
- disability
- or sexual orientation

It does not discriminate in admission to its programs, services, or activities, in access to them; in treatment of individuals with disabilities; or in any aspect of their operations. Individuals with documented disabilities may request reasonable accommodations for assessment and instruction.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

The West Virginia Office of Adult Education will ensure that the same grant announcement, application process and review process is made available to all eligible providers, including correctional education and education programs providing services to institutionalized participants. These measures will ensure that West Virginia Office of Adult Education meets requirements to provide (1) all eligible providers with direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts under this section; and (2) the same grant or contract announcement process and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the State.

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 West Virginia Department of Education Office of Adult Education will use no more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the state grant that must be allotted to local programs for activities under Section 225. West Virginia adult education and family literacy sub-grant recipients use funds, as allowable, to provide educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals. The Adult Education office will give priority to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Local activities include adult basic education, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, and/or English language acquisition.

The Office of Diversion and Transition Programs will also offer co-enrollment in CTE programs, where available. It is anticipated that these programs will take place, at a minimum, in State Prisons

West Virginia Office of Diversion and Transition Programs (WV ODTP) prepares incarcerated adults for successful transition to school, employment, and to life in their communities as responsible and productive citizens.

This is done by:

- offering innovative, research-based educational opportunities, best practices and approaches
- teaching the content, skills and attitudes for success in school, community and the workplace
- providing the appropriate academic, social and vocational skills development and transitional services
- collaborating with others vested in achieving the same outcomes
- employing and encouraging dedicated, quality staff throughout the organization
- acting as a role model and mentor for students to learn positive attitudes and behaviors and high standards of ethical and moral conduct
- being accountable and fostering performance improvement
- reducing recidivism through education
- advocating the value of each individual's re-entry into the community
- promoting successful reintegration into school, community and the workplace
- encouraging participation in educational opportunities, including career technical education co-enrollment
- supporting all aspects of classroom operations to ensure a quality environment for teaching and learning

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

West Virginia Adult Education will consider whether an eligible provider has demonstrated the need for these types of services through its use of data sources that may include tables from the U.S. Census Bureau, reports from the Office of Immigration Services, and documentation of prior participation in these types of services, or other data. West Virginia Adult Education will award

grants for a multi-year period with yearly grant contracts. Renewal of the grant for the continuation years will be based on evidence of success and subject to the availability of funds.

Programs applying for IELCE funds under Section 243 will be required to provide IELCE instruction that includes integrated education and training activities. Educational services will be provided for English Language Learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables them to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers and citizens in the United States. Applicants will be required to provide extensive data to demonstrate the need and potential for success of IELCE activities in conjunction with integrated education and training in the proposed service area. Such data will include, but not be limited to, immigration trends, demographics of the English language learners in the area where the program will be provided, and employment and labor market statistics for the area. In addition, applicants will be asked to provide evidence that they have developed or will be able to develop in a timely fashion, partnerships that support the purpose of the program. Applicants will be required to provide assurances that the occupational training included as part of the program will be provided by qualified providers. Funding under this title will be awarded based upon the criteria for evaluation of program applications contained in Section 231(e) of WIOA.

West Virginia Adult Education will ensure that the same grant announcement, application process and review process is made available to all eligible providers. These measures will ensure that West Virginia Adult Education meets requirements to provide all eligible providers with direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts under this section. Through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP), the West Virginia Adult Education will award grants on a multi-year basis.

IELCE program(s) use regional labor market information showing in-demand industries and occupations from which employer partnership are established. In cooperation with the employer, a specific educational pathway will be determined. Elements that may be included: workplace employability skills, contextualized English workplace vocabulary, and industry-recognized stackable credentials.

IELCE program(s) work with local workforce development boards to provide training on online job search skills and resume writing. Workforce provides weekly on-the-job training opportunities and individuals are referred whom may be qualified for these positions. Regional labor market results are used to develop integrated training opportunities.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

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

Required: Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners to implement strategies identified in the unified or combined State plan

West Virginia collaborates with other core programs and one-stop partners to implement strategies of the Unified Plan. All funded providers will be required to detail the process that will be used to collaborate with all stakeholders. All providers will describe how they will fulfill one-stop responsibilities in their region. All providers have representation with their Regional Adult Education Coordinator as members of local Workforce Development Boards to participate in ongoing plan development and implementation of WIOA.

Career pathway programs are a "series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment within that sector" as reported by Jenkins and Davis in *The Career Pathways How-To Guide* published by Workforce Strategy Center in October 2006. Career pathways often include "stackable" credentials and accelerated courses offered at flexible times that support student entry and exit along the pathway.

Bridge programs, one of the first steps in a career pathway for low-skill adults, support the transition from adult education to the next step in an occupational pathway. By connecting adult education programs to CTE and community college occupational programs, bridge programs seek to increase the rates at which low-skill adults move into postsecondary occupational programs, persist in these programs, and obtain postsecondary credentials in industries offering family-sustaining wages and career advancement.

Bridge programs help adult students identify career and education goals and develop the skills, content knowledge, and learning strategies they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and employment. They combine basic skill instruction in reading, math, writing, and English language, including preparation for the high school equivalency test, with occupational content, employability skills, and postsecondary success strategies. Some Bridge programs also offer college credit and certificates, which may be the first step toward a college degree. State and local labor market information is used to develop Bridge programs focused on occupations or industry sectors with a high demand for employees. These programs are designed to prepare individuals for productive futures and meet the State's need for well-trained and industry-certified technical workers.

Adult Education is partnering very closely with CTE to create Bridge Programs to the CTE adult programs offered in many of the CTE centers. In addition, Adult Education collaborates closely with the Community College System of West Virginia in establishing a clear pathway for adult students.

Required: Establish or operate high quality professional development programs to improve adult education instruction including:

- **incorporating essential components of reading instruction**
- **instruction related to specific needs of adult learners**
- **instruction provided by volunteers or other personnel**
- **dissemination of information about models and promising practices**

The goal of a good professional development program is to support and continuously improve adult education programs. West Virginia Adult Education continues to design, implement, and operate a large-scale, statewide professional development system to increase program outcomes.

The professional development team carries out this vision by using state leadership funds to plan, coordinate, and continue implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for all eligible providers in the state. The professional development team provides support in the form of in-depth training for the implementation of standards-based instruction both in English language arts and mathematics. State leadership funds are used to hold

conferences and trainings to ensure ongoing professional development in standards-based instruction and other West Virginia Adult Education priority areas. Additionally, state leadership funds are used to design, facilitate, and offer access to online courses covering the areas of competency-based reading instruction, writing, numeracy, basic and multilevel ESOL classes, ABE instruction, ASE instruction, and other research-based practices which lead to program improvement.

Required: Provision of technical assistance to local providers receiving funds including –

- **Development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on best available research in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, and staff training**
- **Role of local providers as one-stop partners**
- **Assistance in use of technology including staff training and improving efficiencies**

State leadership funds are used to develop and maintain the West Virginia Adult Education Teacher Group within Schoology for the purpose of disseminating instructional and programmatic practices to eligible providers. In addition, funds are used to maintain the West Virginia Adult Education website with information for interested parties in need of adult education resources. The West Virginia Adult Education shares resources such as publications; CCRS; distance education software; digital media; and information on career pathways information, program management, assessments, and special populations. On-site technical assistance is available to all programs.

West Virginia Adult Education has Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) who provide training and support to staff on technology integration. They assist programs in the use of technology to enhance learning, model and explain the use of blended learning to increase student participation in distance education, ensure all instructional staff are proficient in the use of Microsoft Office for productivity and communication, provide guidance for the proctoring of industry recognized credential exams, and support instructional staff with basic technology troubleshooting techniques.

Required: The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

The West Virginia Adult Education plans to use state leadership funding to support monitoring and evaluation activities. All adult education programs are monitored to ensure compliance with the National Reporting Standards (NRS), as well as state standards. In West Virginia, this is done in two ways, Data Quality Audits (DQA) and On-Site Monitoring (OSM) visits. One hundred percent of programs will be monitored annually through the use of Desktop Monitoring. A minimum of 15% will be monitored annually via on-site visits. All programs will be monitored on a recurring cycle. The programs identified for on-site monitoring are selected using a Class Ranking Report (CRR) that utilizes and applies performance data across a broad range of performance metrics.

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minimum of 15% will be monitored annually via on-site visits. All programs will be monitored on a recurring cycle. The programs identified for on-site monitoring are selected using a Class Ranking Report (CRR) that utilizes and applies performance data across a broad range of performance metrics.

Desk Monitoring findings and results will determine additional course of action, including:

1. For those grantees with no significant findings, no further monitoring will take place in the current year. However, as with all grantees, desk monitoring will occur on an annual basis, regardless of compliance (or non-compliance).
2. For grantees with minor compliance issues based on the desk review, a DQA by the regional coordinator may be conducted via desk and/or on-site.
3. For grantee with multiple compliance issues based on the desk review and DQA, an on-site monitoring visit will occur to address specific non-compliant areas.

DQAs ensure local programs are administering file checks and reviewing program data for the purpose of technical assistance and improved program performance outcomes. A DQA also ensures the accuracy of data input, data integrity, and processes are followed according to NRS and state policy. It allows the program an opportunity to analyze data and check their progress. The second method is On-Site Monitoring visits. Programs which do not meet federal and/or state performance measures or fall in the bottom 20% on the Class Ranking Report are subject to an on-site monitoring visit.

A typical monitoring visit will include the following:

1. Interview the local Administrator/Director, discussing areas of concern, including NRS performance, staffing, budget, and grantee expenditures to date.
2. Discuss Desk Monitoring Report, Data Quality Audit, NRS Tables, Class Summary Reports, and other forms previously submitted.
3. Interview instructional staff
4. Review pertinent student and class files
5. Financial Reports
6. Closing interviews with all staff to review findings, commendations, and recommendations.

Upon receipt of the final report, the Grantee will:

1. Respond in writing to all findings contained within the Final Report
2. Formulate a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) utilizing the approved West Virginia Adult Education template
3. Request technical assistance

Technical assistance will be available for all low-performing programs, but continued failure to meet minimum state performance measures may result in decreased funding or program cancellation. Any local program or regional coordinator may request an on-site visitation for purposes of program improvement or technical assistance.

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

PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—Each eligible agency may use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for 1 or more of the following adult education and literacy activities:

(A) The support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers.

(B) The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, ordistance education, including professional development to support the use of instructionaltechnology.

(C) Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essentialcomponents of reading instruction as such components relate to adults.

West Virginia Adult Education provides new instructional staff with extensive CCRS training for English Language Arts and Mathematics. In cooperation with LINCS, a sustainability plan will be developed to continue this effort moving forward.

(D) Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways.

West Virginia Adult Education Career Pathways Program continues to implement bridge programs offering participants multiple entry and exit points to accommodate academic readiness and employment opportunities based on their Education and Career Plan. These bridge programs have led to entry into postsecondary education and achieving industry-recognized credentials. The Career Pathways Program collaborates with all core and required partners, numerous additional state agencies, local educational authorities, workforce development boards, community colleges, career and technical education centers, and business and industry. As appropriate, Integrated Education and Training opportunities will be implemented to allow participants to develop their adult education and workplace/workforce related skills while simultaneously training for an in-demand occupation.

(E) The provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achievingsuch objectives, including meeting the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3).

West Virginia Adult Education provides technical assistance to aid eligible providers in measuring progress to meet state adjusted levels of performance.

(F) The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary educationalinstitutions or institutions of higher education.

(G) Integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training,including promoting linkages with employers.

The professional development team provides resources, training, and professional development to eligible providers for integrating literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, and linkages with employers.

(H) Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities.

West Virginia Adult Education partnered with CTE to access the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments for the purpose demonstrating workforce employability skills and obtaining industry-recognized credentials.

(I) Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that—

(i) specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and

(ii) take into consideration the following:

1. **State adopted academic standards.**
2. **The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State or outlying area.**
3. **The primary indicators of performance describedin section 116.**
4. **Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of highereducation supported by the State or outlying area.**
5. **Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State oroutlying area.**

(J) Developing and piloting of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention.

All new instructional staff are provided a systematic new teacher training which pairs them with a peer trainer to provide ongoing support for the first year of employment. Ongoing evaluation of this system allows for continuous improvement in the process. As of July 1, 2019, all new full-time instructional staff lacking a professional teaching certification must complete a state-approved alternative education program which results in a CTE teaching certification with adult education endorsement. West Virginia Adult Education partners with an association to provide instructional staff with low-cost college credit opportunities to maintain their certification.

(K) The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adultlearners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new andpromising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, whereappropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievementlevels.

(L) Outreach to instructors, students, and employers.

West Virginia Adult Education provides outreach via a toll-free hotline number for individuals seeking information about high school equivalency or services in their local area.

(M) Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

West Virginia Adult Education strives to focus professional development on skills instructors require to address student's needs and challenges to help students learn and raise achievements. The quality of professional development provided will be assessed by reviewing various data reports and the student achievement reports available in the state management

information system. Student outcomes, achievements, successes, and measurable skill gains will be monitored for each class by regional adult education staff.

All professional development training sessions, online courses, and conferences are evaluated. Presenters and training teams review the evaluations, consider feedback, and adjust as needed. A comprehensive statewide needs assessment is utilized to determine professional development areas of need and/or improvement. Those identified areas are addressed regionally and at the annual West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA) statewide conference where guest speakers and selected instructional staff present creative and innovative research-based practices such as the essential components of reading instruction. Providers and instructional staff are encouraged to attend state and national conferences relating to adult education to further enhance their knowledge-base and program. All professional development is tracked via the state management information system, where reports can be generated to identify non-compliance with state mandated requirements.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

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

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
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 the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter information in this column**
Applicant's Organization	West Virginia Department of Education
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	W. Clayton
Last Name	Burch
Title	State Superintendent of Schools
Email	wburch@k12.wv.us

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

West Virginia Adult Education programs provide equal access to services without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability or sexual orientation. It does not discriminate in admission to its programs, services or activities; in access to them; in treatment of individuals with disabilities; or any aspect of their operations.

Upon employment, instructors are provided face-to-face professional development pre-service sessions related to discrimination and disability accommodations. They also are responsible for assignments in Schoology geared toward these topics.

All students are required to follow a *Code of Conduct* and *Dress Code* which explains the expectations regarding appropriate behavior, attendance, progress, and dress code. This provides a starting point for a stable safe environment for all students. No violence or abuse of any kind is tolerated within the program classroom.

Materials available for students with disabilities include Braille TABE, Large Print TABE, Audio TABE, Large Print CASAS and a talking calculator. Materials available for ELL students include Spanish TRA and additional curriculum.

West Virginia Adult Education is prepared to provide an interpreter for those students who are hearing impaired. This is through a partnership with the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services. Interpreters are contracted on an as needed basis.

Distance Education opportunities for ELL students as well as literacy level students includes Burlington English software. This online courseware can be accessed outside of an adult education classroom as an additional learning resource.

West Virginia Adult Education has access to multiple literacy programs located across the state who can provide trained volunteers to work with low level literacy individuals. Some programs provide both ESL and basic literacy services.

Recruitment of students into programs includes PSAs to local television, radio, newspaper outlets, and social media. This insures that students with limited reading skills can hear about the program. The public has access to the West Virginia Department of Education website which is ADA compliant.

All class locations are considered diverse learning centers. All students are connected by interest and need rather than limited by gender, age, race, sexual orientation or culture.

West Virginia Adult Education monitors local program compliance using our on-site instrument to ensure that all individuals regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age are receiving appropriate services. Program intake forms are designed to identify barriers which may exist in order for the local program to assist with equal access to services. Additionally, the West Virginia Adult Education management information system collects student demographic information which is used by the state to monitor program compliance. Further, the on-site monitoring tool includes a financial review to monitor compliance with applicable county, state, and federal policies.

West Virginia Adult Education On-site Monitoring Coordinator and West Virginia Adult Education ADA Compliance Coordinator monitor local program compliance and, where necessary, issue a formal correction action plan to ensure equal access to services as required by law.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	30.0%	39.6%	30.0%	39.6%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,293.00	3,294.00	3,293.00	3,294.00
Credential Attainment Rate	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.0%	53.0%	54.0%	54.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) received input from the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) members and chairperson regarding the Unified State Plan to be submitted by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners in 2020. The input and the agency responses are reported below.

Observation 1: The partnership between WV DRS and the Department of Education is imperative for the successful Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) of high school students evolving into the workforce. To reinforce this partnership, there is a profound need for preserving open communication. This will assure students are referred to vocational rehabilitation at a younger age and have a more informed understanding of community-based services offered by WV DRS.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends this component be continued to strengthen knowledge of policies, referral processes, as well as, emerging trends and practices on an annual basis.

Observation 2: A priority for Vocational Rehabilitation is reaching students during their secondary education (9th – 12th grades.) This is imperative for our youth as they start early in identifying their career paths. The creating of an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) early to outline a student's vocational goal area and necessary services needed to support this goal is important. This provides a direction for a student's success when transitioning from high school to the next phase of life whether continuing their education or entering the workforce. The agency has VR counselors assigned to all secondary schools in West Virginia with offices physically located in several high schools in West Virginia.

Once students are preparing to leave the secondary school system and move forward into higher education the students, their parents and advisors/counselors may not be fully aware of services available through WV DRS. Placing Pathways banners at all West Virginia high schools has helped to increase awareness of available transition resources for students.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that WV DRS continue working with high schools and/or vocational schools to establish VR offices to be physically located on additional campuses of our schools. DRS will continue to improve outreach and access to services for children in non-traditional educational settings. This would provide access to VR counselors for assistance to those students and their families to secure services at an earlier age, as funding allows.

Observation 3: The Council is very impressed with the success of the Career Exploration Opportunities (CEO) Program for youth between the ages of 14 and 21 that was conducted throughout West Virginia during the summer of 2019. Based on the Pre-ETS concept, the summer program provided students with the tools and information in seeking long-term career success. The program provided Job Exploration Counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, Counseling on Postsecondary Education Opportunities, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy. Vendors provided and/or completed all training materials, space, training, participant pre- and post-assessments, attendance logs, and summary report at completion.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends the CEO Program be continued, as funds allow, to provide transitioning students with the opportunity to become educated and experience their career paths. This will also provide WV DRS additional resources while developing relationships and growing referral networks with employers throughout the State.

Observation 4: Identifying Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and other service providers who can optimize an individual's independence and provide supports in helping someone maximize their employment opportunities is a valuable resource. These programs can help individuals achieve their employment goals, aid in career choices & advancements and help in overcoming obstacles.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends WV DRS assure current lists of CRPs and service providers are available for students and/or their supports to make an informed, individual choice to aid them in future planning be available on the Agency website, from school counselors or VR counselors.

Observation 5: Integrating and coordinating with WIOA partners in the Workforce Development System is a priority to achieve unified goals. The Agency participates and organizes meetings and events to demonstrate a common mission and vision between partners to increase opportunities for employment for people with disabilities.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends continuing to participate in the joint functions and provide educational and networking opportunities whenever the occasion arises. Disseminating brochures, signage and/or informational materials is suggested.

Observation 6: Business owners and managers are continually seeking employees who want to work; however, businesses may not know how to remove barriers. In many instances, businesses are not aware of the technical assistance, ADA training, on the job accommodations, supported employment options and financial benefits that might be available through the Workforce Development System.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends educating businesses on the advantages their company may experience having hired a person with a disability is the foremost important detail when considering hiring a person. Conducting workshops, having power point/video presentations, disseminating quality brochures and resource guides for a company's management & staff is paramount. Creating an email blast for a concise one- or two-page monthly newsletter for West Virginia businesses, highlighting success stories, training incentives and recognizing businesses who have hired or been long time supporters for hiring people with disabilities is an effective tool to market WV DRS.

Observation 7: Educating the general public regarding the WV DRS to ensure knowledge and the continuum of agency services and programs is crucial. The agency utilizes their website, newspaper articles, statewide magazine advertisements, community events, social media and public broadcasting to bolster awareness of WV DRS in all areas of the state.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends this practice be continued with an emphasis directed to our underserved areas of the State.

Observation 8: West Virginia's demographics and cultural backgrounds can be challenging; therefore, communication must be innovative. Finding the most efficient avenue to educate students and their families regarding available WV DRS services and programs is an ongoing obstacle. Effective, beneficial communication is a key factor.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that WV DRS:

- continue to keep students and their families abreast about services and programs offered by the agency using more social media and community transition events: and,
- increase the visibility and access of VR staff assigned to their respective schools by making school presentations, using VR displays, exhibiting posters in prominent locations and having an increased presence at Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other transition planning meetings.

Observation 9: The agency expects an influx of youth who have drug and/or alcohol related issues and will need services in the future. The agency is not only concerned about the youth having substance related disorders of their own, but also the long-term effects of prenatal opiate exposure. This will be an area that will require VR staff to have more diverse training in these specialized programs and skill sets.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that the Agency continues to provide staff with the training and technical assistance needed to expand their knowledge of drug addiction related diseases and adverse childhood experiences that will affect transition services (ACES.)

Observation 10: The national trend focusing on working more closely with disabled individuals who are within the corrections system, WV DRS has implemented a position for a Behavioral Health and Corrections Specialist. The focus will be on individuals with mental illness and/or other cognitive disabilities.

Recommendation: The WV SRC recommends that the Agency continue to strengthen and expand relationships with the Behavioral Health and Corrections communities for individuals with disabilities who are served in the correctional system.

Observation 11: Transportation issues are persistent not only in WV, but nationally. The lack of personal and public transportation in many areas of West Virginia continues to be an ongoing challenge. WV DRS offers varying opportunities for instruction in learning to drive when barriers are present. All West Virginia high schools currently offer their students driver's education classes. For adults who have lost their driver's license, regaining them may be difficult due to the law and their ability to reimburse the system the required fees.

Recommendation: Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) should include driver's education assessments for students with disabilities who may require accommodations in order to drive. This may require:

- occupational, developmental visual evaluations;
- driver education instructors in the state being supplied with the information available outlining the agency's driving program that offers technical and adaptive support or training; and,
- ensuring WV DRS counseling staff are knowledgeable of advocacy resources available to individuals who need assistance in regaining provisional licenses for driving privileges and continuing to provide transportation assistance when necessary for employment purposes.

Observation 12: As funding allowed, WV DRS has conducted VR State Conferences. Speakers from a myriad of areas have been brought to these conferences to expand knowledge, update staff on new regulations, changes in the law, motivate employees and bring new creative ideas for program and service delivery. These conferences also provided the opportunity for the VR staff from throughout the state to spend several days sharing experiences, hearing state and

national issues, talking with guest speakers while networking with administrative staff and their peers to have a better understanding of Agency workings.

Recommendation: The Council encourages promoting team building and giving the opportunity for an educational experience to enhance job performances. This is vital to the continuing success of the Agency and enriching staff. The Agency Quality Assurance (QA) professionals should keep staff well advised of ongoing emerging practices, policy changes and trends in the respective districts. Partnering with other agencies for joint conferences will also strengthen VR best practices.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION

As part of its program improvement efforts, DRS continues to support the implementation of consumer satisfaction surveys of its clients to ensure quality services for DRS consumers. WV SRC conducts the consumer satisfaction surveys (with full DRS assistance and cooperation). WV SRC is primarily responsible for completion of the consumer satisfaction survey for VR consumers. DRS continues to provide and supplement fiscal and human resources needed for its successful completion.

WV SRC members selected a survey method that allows former DRS clients and individuals who were not accepted for VR services to be contacted via mail surveys as soon as they exit DRS from various VR statuses throughout the fiscal year. Selected highlights of the 2019 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of DRS Clients as reported by WV SRC are presented below.

The latest consumer satisfaction report, entitled, Consumer Satisfaction: Report of Survey Findings, was prepared by the WV SRC in December 2019. The findings were based on consumer satisfaction information gathered from 150 responses across the six DRS districts. Respondents to the consumer satisfaction survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their interactions with DRS. The ratings were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Respondents were provided an option to indicate replies that were neutral or that the survey item was not applicable.

Responses for the 2019 survey, overall, are slightly higher than the reported satisfaction in previous years. The mean rating across the ten satisfaction items is 80% for 2019 versus 78% mean rating for 2018 and 76% for 2017.

The data generally show that those whose cases are closed as “unsuccessful” (i.e., closed without an employment outcome) are less likely to report high levels of satisfaction with the services they received. This year, while that pattern held, the observed differences were slightly less extreme than in previous years. This year, the mean rating for the “successful” group (i.e., closed with employment) was 96% versus a mean rating of 65% for the “unsuccessful” group.

Major findings of the consumer satisfaction survey include: respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (78%), their questions were answered clearly by DRS (83%), they were involved in their plan development (74%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (79%), and they received the services they needed (72%). Respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (85%) and their counselors told them about job opportunities (89%). Consumers also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (89% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (83%), and the overall experience with DRS (79%).

The consumers were asked to recall which client’s rights information had been explained to them. There were 121 individuals who responded that at least one right had been explained (81% of the sample). Most individuals indicated that they had received several rights

explanations. The most commonly explained rights to consumers were (1) their participation in developing the rehabilitation plan (92%) and (2) choice of how services were provided (74%). When asked about needs that were not met by rehabilitation services, 64 of the 113 consumers who responded to this question reported that they had no additional needs (57%). Consumers who did report additional needs most commonly requested education/training, employment–related services, medical services, and financial services.

The survey participants were asked for comments on their experience with DRS. A total of 69 people provided feedback to this question. Of these, 29 expressed praise or gratitude for DRS services, 19 made other statements of explanation or inquiry, and 21 offered criticism. Overall, the level of satisfaction reported for the period continues to be high, as the overall satisfaction increased from 78% to 80%. To maintain high quality of services and promote a greater satisfaction level for our consumers, DRS welcomes and considers compliments, complaints, suggestions, and recommendations that our clients reported in the consumer satisfaction survey.

The WV SRC and DRS were also interested in examining the pattern of responses for transitioning youth (clients who were age 24 or younger). Youth surveys were color–coded so the participants could be isolated. Their responses formed a subset of 78 returned surveys. Overall, youth satisfaction was equivalent to the responses of the whole group, at 80%. Transitioning youth respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (79%), their questions were answered clearly by DRS (78%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (76%), and they received the services they needed (73%). Youth respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (86%), DRS counselors helped them develop a plan to get a job (75%), and their counselors told them about job opportunities (90%). Transitioning youth also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (90% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (84%), and the overall experience with DRS (81%).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning discussions occur on a monthly basis at DRS Executive Management Group meetings, which include representatives of the SRC and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Needs assessment results are shared with the SRC and SILC. DRS Goals and Priorities were presented at meetings of the SRC, where the SRC has opportunities for input. The SRC meetings include a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from the Client Assistance Program, SILC, and other state agencies

In January 2020, DRS held public “Q and A” Sessions in Morgantown, WV and Charleston, WV to receive comments and questions from VR stakeholders pertaining to the Vocational Rehabilitation section of the Unified State Plan. There were a total of 14 attendees at the sessions. Several questions and comments were posed during the meetings. These included questions regarding outreach and marketing efforts by DRS and how DRS is serving high school students with disabilities under WIOA.

To ensure transparency and public awareness regarding the Program Year (PY) 2020 VR section of the Unified State Plan, DRS posted a draft version on the agency’s website for review.

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

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 1:

DRS agrees that its partnership with the WV Department of Education (WVDE) is vital to the success of the provision of Pre-ETS to high school students with disabilities. In Program Year (PY) 2019, DRS hosted a joint conference with the Office of Special Education within WVDE which was attended by both DRS counselors and Special Education Staff and Teachers statewide. DRS anticipates similar conferences in the future. Special Education Teachers have also been trained to use the Pathways to the Future website with their students, as well as instructional materials regarding Pre-ETS to be used in the classroom. Additionally, because a DRS counselor is assigned to every WV high school, DRS counselors are in frequent communication with teachers, students, and other educational staff.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 2:

DRS agrees that it is important for transitioning youth (TY) with disabilities to begin the vocational rehabilitation process as early as appropriate. DRS is open to the recommendation and has requested that counselors identify any possible opportunities for embedded VR offices within high schools. Relatedly, the West Virginia School for the Blind has made a request, to which DRS has agreed, to have on-campus DRS counseling staff available to provide services, including Pre-ETS, in an expeditious manner. If additional opportunities arise, DRS will move forward to establish offices, where appropriate and agreed upon by both parties.

In support of this aim, DRS currently has fifty-nine (59) vocational rehabilitation counselors assigned to serve TY, including a counselor assigned to each high school in the state. Nineteen (19) counselors are assigned exclusively to TY territories, allowing for more time and resources to provide outreach and services, particularly Pre-ETS to high school students. These counselors are also beginning outreach to students in the ninth grade to ensure sufficient time to provide Pre-ETS and develop and implement a plan for the student's transition from high school to post–secondary employment or training.

Additionally, DRS has made concerted efforts to provide outreach and services to non-traditional education settings for youth with disabilities, such as juvenile centers and facilities, Youth Reporting Centers, and other similar locations. The youth in these settings are afforded the same opportunity to receive Pre-ETS and other VR services as individuals in traditional settings, as appropriate.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 3:

DRS agrees that the CEO Summit program should be continued, as funds allow. In 2019, DRS sponsored numerous Summit events, utilizing the assistance of local CRPs. This allowed a greater number of students to be reached by the program and have content presented that was more geographically relevant. DRS hopes to continue to implement CRP efforts in the future to continue the CEO Summits that provide a tremendous benefit to West Virginia's students with disabilities.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 4:

DRS agrees that CRPs are a valuable resource to consumers with disabilities in pursuit of their employment goals. As such, DRS makes consistent efforts to maintain and improve relationships with CRPs, including maintenance of an up-to-date listing of all CRPs providing each of the acknowledged CRP services. In doing so, DRS counselors are better able to inform consumers of the CRP services that are available to them in their geographic area. Additionally, CRP information can be found on the Pathways to the Future website (www.pathwayswv.org), under the Employers tab.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 5:

DRS agrees that integration and coordination with WIOA partners of WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education is highly important. Since the implementation of WIOA, DRS has worked diligently to coordinate its efforts with its WIOA core partners in order to more effectively and efficiently serve the workforce of the state, including employers and job seekers, especially those with disabilities. At the state level, DRS representatives meet with WIOA partners on a monthly basis at minimum. Additionally, many DRS staff are co-located with other WIOA partners at American Job Centers to facilitate services to its customers, including individuals with disabilities. DRS will continue, as appropriate, to disseminate information to its WIOA partners to inform them of events, best practices, and other relevant information, in the most accessible means available.

DRS Employment Specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WorkForce WV's online Mid Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) system and shared within the Workforce Development System (WDS).

DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams with WorkForce WV, Adult Education, local workforce development boards, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these team members, including DRS Employment Specialists, provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 6:

DRS agrees that educating businesses and employers, including their management, is an important step toward competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. True to this idea, DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 9 Employment Specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of Employment Specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. DRS will continue to utilize these Employment Specialists to promote the connection of employer to job seeker with disabilities. DRS will consider the use of newsletters to businesses, highlighting success stories and training incentives in order to increase employers' awareness.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 7:

DRS agrees with the recommendation to continue efforts to inform the general public about the availability of DRS services. In recent years, the agency has focused on reaching out to stakeholders of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including potentially underserved/unserved consumers with disabilities from minority backgrounds. DRS utilizes the latest technology for this purpose, including a web map that includes turn–by–turn directions to each office to help potential consumers more easily find DRS field offices. As a result, DRS has maintained a constituency that is similarly proportioned to the state as a whole regarding race and ethnicity and is well represented by individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

Additional activities include the sponsoring of community events and statewide radio advertisements. In 2020, DRS plans to continue to identify effective ways to reach out to consumers with disabilities, including potentially underserved/unserved populations using

various methods. Additionally, with the ongoing implementation of WIOA, an additional focus for DRS is to reach out to high school students, including their parents and service providers in the community.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 8:

DRS agrees that effective, good communication is a key factor in making sure that students and their families are aware of DRS services and programs that are available for eligible individuals as they begin preparing for post–secondary school goals. DRS engages in a variety of outreach activities to ensure widespread information dissemination that is beneficial for students with disabilities preparing to leave the school setting. These activities include sponsoring community events, attending job fairs, passing out brochures, and speaking to classrooms.

Additionally, the agency has a counselor assigned to each high school in West Virginia as well as liaisons assigned to institutions of higher education around the state. This on–site presence assists the agency in developing and maintaining working relationships, on a personal level, with students and school staff. Counselors provide outreach materials, including a specialized brochure for transition students. The brochure highlights the DRS Transition program, including eligibility requirements and available services. The brochure has the agency's website address where additional information about the DRS Transition program is available. DRS will continue to explore new, effective methods of information dissemination to secondary schools and institutions of higher education.

In the agency's effort to educate parents, DRS utilizes the West Virginia Parent Training and Information, Inc (WVPTI). The WVPTI is the only organization in West Virginia charged by the U.S. Department of Education/Office of Special Education Programs to serve as the state's Parent Training and Information Center. As mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the WVPTI provides parents of children with disabilities with the information and skills necessary to become effective partners in their children's provisions for special education and related services, including vocational rehabilitation services provided by DRS.

Furthermore, DRS will continue to consult with state and local education officials regarding the use of newsletters and registration packets to inform students and their families about DRS services. DRS counselors and special education teachers across the state also emphasize the use of the Pathways to the Future website to students with disabilities. Many high schools have banner displays promoting the use of the website as well. Finally, DRS counselors attend IEP and other transition planning meetings when they are invited and will continue to do so, in accordance with the law.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 9:

DRS agrees with the issues raised by the SRC regarding the potential increase in the number of consumers having drug and/or alcohol related issues. In addition to the implementation of a Behavioral Health and Correction Specialist at the state level, DRS has been proactive in this area in recent years by providing training to counselors. Training has occurred at the State Training Conference in the past and will continue to take place at future conferences, as appropriate. This training will assist counselors in enhancing their service provision to individuals with addiction by providing an overview of the disease of addiction and an examination of historic, current, and future treatment modalities.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 10:

DRS agrees with the SRC about the importance of working with organizations and individuals with behavioral health issues and previous incarcerations, including individuals in juvenile

detention programs. As mentioned, the agency has implemented a Behavioral Health and Corrections Specialist to focus on outreach and comprehensive service provision to these individuals. The specialist will maintain working relationships with related national and state organizations, assist in the training of counselors in these specialized areas, and ensure that the agency is providing quality and timely services to these individuals.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 11:

DRS agrees that driving and transportation in general are often a barrier to employment for West Virginians with disabilities of all ages. DRS continues to seek solutions to transportation issues and maintains this as an agency goal and priority. During the initial phase of the vocational rehabilitation process, DRS counselors discuss transportation–related issues with consumers. Counselors work with consumers to address and resolve any identified disability–related employment barriers; services to circumvent barriers are included in Individualized Plans for Employment and may include transportation services. DRS also emphasizes individualized transportation services, including driver training, bioptic training, vehicle modification, and vehicle purchase, when necessary. DRS agrees that counselors need to stay abreast of resources available to consumers with disabilities regarding driving licensure, including provisional licensure, in order to best meet their needs for employment-necessary transportation.

DRS Response to Observation/Recommendation 12:

DRS agrees that training conferences are extremely valuable for agency staff members. In the past, these conferences have provided expert speakers, training sessions, and networking opportunities for field staff from across the state. Additionally, it is an enriching experience for staff members to meet others from across the state. The conference promotes cohesiveness among VR staff, as well as promoting team building, in order to serve consumers with disabilities statewide. In PY 2019, DRS and WVDE held a joint conference, bringing DRS counselors and special education teachers across the state together. DRS intends to continue conferences of this nature in the future.

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

The agency is basically in agreement with the input and recommendations provided by the SRC. Please see the previous section for the full DRS responses to the SRC input and recommendations.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

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;

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) maintains cooperation and coordination with various agencies and entities. This section describes DRS association with agencies or entities that are not in the statewide workforce development system, education officials, private non–profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, and supported employment and extended services providers for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

DRS continues to maintain strong relationships with many agencies and organizations that are not in the statewide workforce development system and whose functions, in some capacity, involve the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. The association with other organizations occurs with varying degrees of involvement depending upon joint initiatives that may be planned and/or that may occur within any given year. Generally, DRS representatives may be included in advisory functions for other agencies, as are other agencies with the strategic planning that occurs within DRS. Some examples include:

– A DRS representative is actively involved with the West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council in the monitoring and oversight of behavioral health services in the state. The DRS representative participates in quarterly Council meetings and serves on various subcommittees.

– DRS representatives participate with the West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council. DRS maintains a close working relationship with the staff and members of this Council and has provided support and received effective feedback for its work.

– DRS is represented on the State's Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT), a group (including agencies not under the state workforce development system) centered around WorkForce WV to provide on–going attention to addressing issues that will build and continually improve the statewide Workforce Development System (WDS). The team is the single State–level interagency group for addressing issues or concerns regarding building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of the overall WDS in WV. DRS participates in and hosts regular, monthly meetings of the ICT, and is one of the signatories of the ICT Memorandum of Understanding, which is drafted annually. The ICT membership includes:

- Department of Commerce – WorkForce WV – WV Employment Service
- Department of Commerce – Division of Rehabilitation Services
- Department of Commerce – Development Office – Community Development Division
- Department of Commerce – Development Office – Business Industry Development
- Bureau of Senior Services – State Unit on Aging
- Council for Community and Technical College Education
- Department of Education – Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development

- Department of Education – Office of Diversion and Transition Programs
- Department of Health and Human Resources – Bureau of Children and Families,
- Department of Health and Human Resources –Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Department of Health and Human Resources – Food Stamp Employment and Training, United States Department of Agriculture

– DRS has a good working relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at the district level, which allows direct referrals of appropriate veterans from VA facilities to its rehabilitation technology unit for assistive technology and rehabilitation engineering services. Furthermore, DRS maintains liaisons for all VA offices in WV.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

With respect to state programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS has a memorandum of understanding with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED). The purpose of this MOU is to delineate the working relationship between DRS and the CED in order to provide effective services to individuals with disabilities and their families, ensuring statewide coverage of assistive technology needs.

CED provides free services, statewide, to individuals of all ages and abilities. Device demonstrations are available, in the CED office and in the community, for individuals to receive hands-on guidance from knowledgeable CED staff. Device loans are also available to allow individuals to try-out a device before purchasing or to use during a short-term disability (up to 30 days). CED provides technical assistance to government agencies, institutes of higher education, industry, and other entities. This technical assistance includes consultation on AT related programs and service design. When appropriate, CED provides information and referrals to ensure individuals are connected with available resources relating to disability needs, assistive technology (AT) devices, and funding options.

CED also provides professional development and group training around the state. These trainings are customized to increase knowledge, skills, and competencies in AT devices and service delivery. Popular training topics include:

- Creating accessible documents
- Creating accessible PowerPoint presentations
- AT and transition
- Switch access basics
- iPads as AT
- AT for recreation
- AT for aging

CED WVATS activities are overseen by a Consumer Advisory Council, of which a DRS representative is a member. Similarly, the CED is represented on the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council, which works closely with DRS to help ensure that all West Virginians

with disabilities are provided with an equal opportunity to receive the vocational rehabilitation (VR) service(s) for which they are eligible.

The CED also receives partial funding from DRS in exchange for direct services to eligible individuals in need of AT that is unavailable directly from DRS. DRS has an AT unit, which provides AT solutions to eligible individuals with AT needs statewide. With the additional assistance of the CED, assurances are made that high-quality AT solutions can be provided statewide at any time. Additionally, both parties agree to consult with each other on an as-needed basis for atypical cases.

Individuals and families receiving AT services at the CED who are 14 years of age or older will also receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the vocational rehabilitation services they provide. If an eligible individual in the VR system requests AT services from the CED, DRS staff will make the proper referral. DRS will also refer eligible individuals to the CED in the event that DRS is unable to provide, through their AT unit, the necessary AT.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

Although DRS does not maintain a formal agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development, it provides rehabilitation services as necessary to eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers with disabilities. Another available resource is the WV AgrAbility Project, a USDA–funded program established to assist farmers and farm families who need to find ways to accommodate their disabilities in order to remain active in agriculture.

DRS shares the vision of WV AgrAbility that is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America. More specifically, "success" may include: gainful employment in production agriculture or a related occupation; access to appropriate assistive technology needed for work and daily living activities; evidence-based information related to the treatment and rehabilitation of disabling conditions; and targeted support for family caregivers of WV AgrAbility customers. WV AgrAbility addresses a wide variety of disabling conditions in agriculture, including, but not limited to:

- Arthritis
- Spinal cord injuries/paralysis
- Back impairments
- Amputations
- Brain injury
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Disabling diseases
- Cerebral palsy
- Respiratory impairments

- Head injury

WV AgrAbility continues to work with DRS in advocating for services for WV farmers. WV AgrAbility also provides training for allied health professionals on farm culture, how to tailor treatments to the farmer, and using assistive technology on the farm for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Physical Therapists, and Occupational Therapists. WV AgrAbility continues advocacy efforts with DRS, positively impacting DRS' view on agriculture in WV as a viable self-employment option.

If a WV AgrAbility participant becomes a DRS consumer, they may receive vocational rehabilitation services to help them reach their employment goal. Services may include:

- Evaluation and assistance in purchasing recommended adaptive devices
- Assistive technology
- Rehabilitation technology
- Home, business and/or vehicle modification
- Assistance for vocational training
- Physical or mental health restoration
- Self-employment and business-related services, if applicable

4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

DRS works with a variety of non–educational agencies serving out–of–school youth. The primary coordinated activities serving this population are with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners – WorkForce WV and the regional workforce development boards. DRS strives to coordinate referrals and services to eligible out–of–school youth served by the WIOA youth programs that are overseen by WorkForce WV and the regional workforce development boards. These partnerships allow for improved service delivery through the blending of resources and expertise among the agencies. For example, sharing costs allows DRS and other agencies to enhance outreach efforts, serve increased numbers of out–of– school youth, and improve outcomes for participants.

In addition to DRS' reliance on WIOA partners in serving out–of–school youth, the agency continues to use community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that have become a DRS–acknowledged vendor, to support the needs of this population across the state.

DRS also maintains communication and works with other non–educational agencies that serve out– of–school youth in order to introduce and provide VR services. These agencies include Youth Reporting Centers under the WV Division of Juvenile Services and Peer Support Centers, funded by the WV Bureau for Behavioral Health. Youth Reporting Centers are community–based centers that provide intervention programs for at–risk youth and also provide reintegration services for youth returning to the community. The Peer Support Centers provide a variety of support services for qualifying youth with behavioral health conditions.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

West Virginia's State Use Program was created by the legislature in 1984 and strengthened in 1989. The program allows employment opportunities to be created for citizens with disabilities through nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Programs. The State Use Law allows these programs and their clients to produce commodities and perform services for various state

agencies without requiring competitive bidding. Prices charged for these special commodities and services are established by the governor–appointed Committee for the Purchase of Commodities and Services from the Handicapped.

The Governor's Committee consists of six (6) members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. One member is selected by the Governor to serve as chairperson. Members represent the following:

– a private citizen who is conversant with the problems incidental to the employment of persons with disabilities,

– a representative of a producing nonprofit workshop,

– a representative of the Division of Rehabilitation Services,

– a representative of the Department of Administration who is knowledgeable in the purchasing requirements of the state,

– a representative of private business who is knowledgeable in the activities involved in the sale of commodities or services to governmental entities, and

– a representative of organized labor who is knowledgeable in matters relating to employment of people with disabilities.

Members serve two-year terms. There is also an ex–officio, non–voting member of the committee who is appointed by the Director of the Purchasing Division. This person serves as the Executive Secretary. There are no geographical or political party constraints on who may be appointed.

The state network of CRPs is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with significant disabilities. As of October 2019, there are 72 DRS–acknowledged parent company CRPs in West Virginia located at 80 service sites. Many of these CRPs participate in state use contracting programs. DRS maintains working relationships with non–profit CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community–based assessment, and/or work skills assessment. CRPs also provide employment readiness services such as life skills and work adjustment, job site training, and trial work experience. While respecting freedom of choice, DRS encourages work center programs to expand community–based programs for these individuals. Any CRP meeting the DRS acknowledgment process will be permitted under a written Vendor Acknowledgment to bill for services provided to DRS consumers. In order to become a DRS–acknowledged vendor, an applicant must request, complete, and return a Vendor Acknowledgment Packet. Upon receipt of the completed packet, a recommendation to acknowledge or not acknowledge will be made to the DRS Director.

The Vendor Acknowledgment Packet contains an application for Vendor Acknowledgment to provide supported employment services, an annual data summary that provides the agency's name, address, contact information, a checklist of those DRS services they will be providing, and a Vendor Acknowledgment form addressing conditions of and payment for services rendered to DRS consumers.

A signed Vendor Acknowledgment indicates that the vendor agrees to follow conditions set forth regarding standards, anti–discrimination, indemnification, and conditions/standards of operation. The acknowledgment is good for three years.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

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

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has cooperative agreements with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Special Education, the WVDE Division of Technical and Adult Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, local education agencies (county boards of education), and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The current cooperative agreement between DRS and WVDE (the state education agency) went into effect on July 17, 2019. The cooperative agreements between DRS and WVDE, both at the state and the local levels, assure that each student with a disability in the state who needs special education, vocational education, and/or vocational rehabilitation services is identified and that the appropriate services, including pre–employment transition services (Pre-ETS), are made available to the individual. The cooperative agreements cover:

- Determination of agency responsibility;
- Transition and Pre-ETS planning;
- Outreach and identification;
- Financial responsibility of education;
- Financial responsibility of rehabilitation;
- Consultation and technical assistance;
- Confidentiality of information/sharing of information;
- The duration of the agreement;
- Local agreements;
- Dispute resolution;
- Modification of the agreement; and
- Subminimum wage employment.

The following excerpt from the current formal agreement between DRS and WVDE outlines the coordination and documentation requirements, including the provision of Pre-ETS and transition services, for students seeking subminimum wage employment:

“SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT

Section 511 of the WIOA imposes requirements on Education and Rehabilitation with regard to youth with disabilities seeking subminimum wage employment. Rehabilitation and Education shall work cooperatively to ensure that the individual, before beginning work that is compensated at a subminimum wage, has completed, and produces documentation indicating completion of, each of the following actions:

1. The individual has received pre-employment transition services that are available to the individual under section 113, or transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) such as transition services available to the individual under section 614(d) of that Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)).

2. The individual has applied for vocational rehabilitation services under title I, with the result that-

    a. the individual has been found ineligible for such services pursuant to that title and has documentation consistent with section 102(a)(5)(C) regarding the determination of ineligibility; or

    b. the individual has been determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services;

    c. the individual has an individualized plan for employment under section 102;

    d. the individual has been working toward an employment outcome specified in such individualized plan for employment, with appropriate supports and services, including supported employment services, for a reasonable period of time without success; and

    e. the individual's vocational rehabilitation case is closed; and

    f. the individual has been provided career counseling, and information and referrals to Federal and State programs and other resources in the individual 's geographic area that offer employment-related services and supports designed to enable the individual to explore, discover, experience, and attain competitive integrated employment; and

    g. such counseling and information and referrals are not for employment compensated at a subminimum wage provided by an entity described in this subsection, and such employment-related services are not compensated at a subminimum wage and do not directly result in employment compensated at a subminimum wage provided by an entity described in this subsection.

Any student considering subminimum wage employment upon exiting high school should be referred to Rehabilitation. When appropriate, Rehabilitation may request documentation from Education for purposes related to this section. Rehabilitation will collect and document the necessary prerequisites, corresponding services, and information (described above) required of individuals (aged 24 and younger) seeking subminimum wage employment. This documentation will be provided to the individual within 45 days after the completion of services, or 90 days if a longer period of time is needed due to extenuating circumstances.

Furthermore, this agreement assures, pursuant to 34 CFR 397.31, that Rehabilitation and Education agree not to enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity for purposes of operating a program in which youth with disabilities are employed at subminimum wage."

DRS has a long history of closely working with the state and local education agencies. Since the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), DRS has further strengthened these working relationships. DRS has worked with the WV Office of Special Education to align WV Department of Education policy with aspects of WIOA, particularly the provision of Pre-ETS. Education and DRS have jointly developed materials that are distributed to special education students and teachers across the state.

During FY 2019, DRS held a joint training conference with the WV Office of Special Education. This conference, the WV Capacity Building Institute, provided cross-training to over 200 staff from education and over 125 staff from DRS to ensure that services are provided more effectively and efficiently. Attendees gained an enhanced understanding of the roles and responsibilities of DRS and WVDE, and how to better serve WV students with disabilities. Due to the success of this training conference, future joint conferences are being planned with the WV Office of Special Education.

Also, during FY 2019, in-depth training was provided to special education teachers in 19 counties across the state, including the WV Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. The training covered DRS' "Pathways to the Future" Pre-ETS website. In upcoming years, special education teachers from remaining counties and the Office of Diversion and Transition Programs will receive the training.

DRS' Pathways to the Future materials were updated in FY 2019 and distributed to students with disabilities across the state during the 2019-2020 school year. The materials include:

- Pre-ETS transition slide guide
- Parent/student guide
- Transition Services Planner
- Sample Lessons for Life After High School

As part of its ongoing outreach activities, DRS developed new Pathways to the Future banners and posters during FY 2019. These are being distributed to all high schools in the state to ensure that students, parents, and teachers are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, career and technical education, and postsecondary students at locations across the state to ensure that students ages 14-21 are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. The banners are also used by DRS during job fairs, transition fairs, and other activities involving students with disabilities.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), DRS attempted a one-on-one Pre- ETS needs assessment discussion with teachers and administrators in all of West Virginia's 55 counties. DRS was able to get participation from 110 high schools in 54 (out of 55) counties in 2019. While all six DRS districts were represented, no schools from Jefferson County (in District 6) participated in this particular part of the CSNA, despite repeated requests. However, DRS does have information regarding Pre-ETS need from different sources (e.g., consumers and DRS counselors) in all 55 WV counties. DRS continues to ensure that Pre-ETS are available to students with disabilities on a statewide basis. Details and results of this assessment are provided in the Statewide Assessment section of the state plan.

To better serve students, DRS has offices located in some of the state's largest schools, as well as the WV Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. Additionally, counselors visit every high school in the state to initiate rehabilitation services needed for transition from school to work. This allows the counselor to develop a collaborative relationship and assist the student in identifying goals, services, and service providers related to employment options prior to transition. In FY 2019, there were 73 rehabilitation counselors assigned to work with the state's 55 local education agencies and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

School rehabilitation counselors also are invited to participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. During these meetings the counselor describes DRS services, policies, and procedures as appropriate. The DRS counselor determines the student's eligibility and

order of selection category utilizing information generated from the school, the student, and DRS. Prior to or shortly after the student's IEP transition meeting occurs, development begins on the student's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) so both the student and counselor have an idea of what rehabilitation services will be necessary to meet the student's vocational goal. Therefore, if the student needs additional training or assessment prior to vocational goal determination, this information is already collected so that planned rehabilitation services may begin. IPE development and approval for students with disabilities, including those able to be served if DRS is on an order of selection, will begin as early as appropriate during the transition process, but before the student, determined to be eligible, leaves the school setting.

DRS also assists WVDE with Graduation 20/20, a West Virginia initiative that uses a data driven intervention framework developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC–SD) to address issues that have negatively impacted school completion. Graduation 20/20 utilizes the innovation configuration on evidence–based transition practices and predictors of post school success to guide professional learning which was published by the Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center. The program, using tools from NDPC–SD and CEEDAR, trains local school–based teams and team leaders to diagnose the causes of dropout and develop site–specific improvement plans and strategies.

Information about the DRS school program is widely disseminated to education professionals, as well as students and their parents. An updated fact sheet and new brochure explaining DRS transition services is available. DRS has negotiated an agreement with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission for its consumers who attend in–state public colleges and universities. The agreement describes the financial responsibility of DRS and the appropriate public institution of higher education, provides procedures to resolve interagency disputes, and coordinates policies and procedures to ensure timely delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. To better serve individuals in post–secondary school, DRS has liaisons assigned to 43 post–secondary community/technical colleges, 4–year colleges, and universities across the state.

DRS also coordinates with the WVDE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, a WIOA core partner, to better serve individuals receiving adult education. The agencies have a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and collaborate at the state and local level. The MOU includes screening students for potential disabilities, including learning disabilities, and the collaboration between WVDE and DRS to provide necessary accommodations (e.g., assistive technology, interpreters) for eligible individuals. DRS will evaluate the disability or disabilities and provide specific recommendations regarding testing accommodations, recommendations for instructional accommodations and recommendations for job accommodations. If it is found that the student requires assistive technology (which includes information technology products such as software application, operating systems, web–based information applications, web accessibility, video equipment, multimedia products, and office equipment) then WVDE and DRS will share, as appropriate, the cost for this technology. If it is determined that the person has a hearing disability and it is deemed necessary that an interpreter, CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation), note–taker, or other appropriate accommodations be provided, then WVDE and DRS will share the cost. WVDE will only hire qualified interpreters who are registered through the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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;

The formal agreement includes the following:

CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Rehabilitation agrees to provide consultation and technical assistance services to Education, as well as to LEAS, in order to aid them in the planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation will provide Education and LEAs with information, as appropriate, regarding disability awareness, disability etiquette, accommodations and assistive technology, eligibility for Rehabilitation and the application process, vocational rehabilitation services, the availability of community-based services, independent living, competitive integrated employment, and career pathways. Additionally, Rehabilitation will provide consultation and technical assistance to Education and LEAs regarding pre-employment transition services including job exploration and labor market information, opportunities for work-based learning experiences, post-secondary enrollment opportunities, work place readiness training opportunities, and self-advocacy.

Rehabilitation assures that communication with Education officials shall be done in the most meaningful and convenient manner possible. To that end, Rehabilitation will provide consultation and technical assistance through a variety of methods, including face-to-face contact, phone calls, e-mail, conference calls, and video conferencing.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

The formal agreement includes the following:

TRANSITION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES PLANNING

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition and pre-employment transition services. The IEP and the IPE must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives and planned services for effective and successful transition to post-school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, relevant documentation, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.

IDEA 2004 and WIOA require the individual's participation in the development of the IEP and IPE, respectively, and emphasize informed choice. Identification of transition services for the IEP is focused on a coordinated set of activities which considers the student's preferences and interests. Likewise, the IPE is developed by a rehabilitation counselor and the individual by identifying goals through reviewing assessments, individual strengths, resources, interests, and needs. Education and Rehabilitation provide both awareness and exploration activities in the

areas of living, learning, and work to support decisions about post school outcomes. This interagency cooperation assures the provision of transition and pre-employment transition services that prepare the student to pursue adult goals.

The participation of Rehabilitation counselors in the IEP process will help students and parents understand the differences in and facilitate the provision of educational and rehabilitation services. To this end, Rehabilitation counselors should be invited to IEP meetings, when appropriate, to provide information on available services and eligibility requirements. The Rehabilitation counselor may also assist in the development and coordination of the IEP and the IPE. Both Education and Rehabilitation should document any coordinated services outlined in both the IEP and the IPE. Planning, coordinating and providing transition and pre- employment transition services for students with disabilities may be conducted at the state and local level to maximize service provision and individual choice.

Professional development activities between Education and Rehabilitation, when and where appropriate, shall be provided and facilitated by Education and/or Rehabilitation staff, including support of regional transition teams, participating in topic specific learning events and book studies.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The formal agreement includes the following:

DETERMINATION OF AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

Education, through participation in IDEA 2004, has assured the USDE that it has established general supervisory authority over all education programs administered within the State. General supervisory authority means that:

1. All programs serving eligible students meet all requirements of IDEA 2004;
2. All programs serving eligible students within the state must meet State standards; and
3. Funds which support services to eligible school age students with disabilities, including state and local education funds and funds under Title V, Title VI, Title IX, and Title XX of the Social Security Act, will continue to provide any and all services provided by these funds prior to the passage of IDEA 2004; and no program will alter eligibility requirements for participating in federal, state, and local programs in order to increase the financial responsibility of agencies receiving IDEA 2004 funds. Part B of IDEA does not limit the responsibility of agencies other than educational agencies for providing for and paying for some or all of the costs of FAPE to students with disabilities in the State.

The State Education Agency (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public-school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. From the perspective of the SEA and LEAs, students with disabilities shall have equal access to services that are normally provided by public schools for non-disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

Transition services are defined in IDEA 2004 as a coordinated set of activities for a student with an exceptionality that are designed within a results-oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education; vocational education; competitive, integrated employment; continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living or community participation.

Rehabilitation is mandated by WIOA, in collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs), including the county-level Boards of Education in each of West Virginia's 55 counties, to provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities (ages 14-21) in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for Rehabilitation services - specifically, those students with an IEP and those students with a disability for the purposes of section 504. The five required pre-employment transition service activities are: 1) job exploration counseling; 2) work-based learning experiences; 3) counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs; 4) workplace readiness training; and 5) instruction in self-advocacy.

Rehabilitation is required to conduct, at a local level, a CSNA to determine the need for the five required Pre-ETS activities. The CSNA will be used to determine: 1) the level of need for each of the required Pre-ETS activities, statewide; 2) the amount of service provision delivered by the Education system regarding these five required activities; and 3) the amount of service gap that remains for Rehabilitation to provide. Those Pre-ETS activities not provided by Education will be supplemented by Rehabilitation, as appropriate, and based on the availability of resources.

For students with disabilities, the responsibility for vocational services rests with Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation will provide services, which are legally the responsibility of Rehabilitation, for those individuals determined to be eligible for Rehabilitation services

Eligibility for Rehabilitation services is determined by the following criteria:

- An individual must have a physical or mental impairment which, for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment for employment; and
- The individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATION

Education assumes responsibility for all expenses incurred in the provision of special education and related services to achieve FAPE when those services, including assistive technology devices and services, are necessary for the student's educational program or course of study, as well as participation in school activities and during the pendency of any interagency dispute.

Private Insurance Funds: With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible student under this part, Education may access a parent's private insurance only if the parent provides informed consent consistent with federal regulations pursuant to IDEA 2004. Each time Education proposes to access the parent's private insurance, it must:

1. Obtain written parental consent; and
2. Inform the parent that their refusal to permit the school district to access the private insurance does not relieve the school district of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost.

Public Insurance Funds: Education may use the Medicaid or other public insurance benefits programs in which a student participates to provide or pay for services required. With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible student under this part, Education may not:

1. Require parents to sign up for or enroll in public benefits or insurance programs in order for their child to receive FAPE under IDEA regulations;

2. Require parents to incur an out-of-pocket expense, such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay included in filing a claim for services provided pursuant to this part, but may pay the cost that the parent otherwise would be required to pay; and

3. Use a student's benefits under a public benefits or insurance program if that use would (a) decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit; (b) result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and that are required for the child outside of the time the child is in school; (c) increase premiums or lead to the discontinuation of benefits or insurance; or (d) risk loss of eligibility for home and community-based waivers, based on aggregate health-related expenditures.

To access a student's public insurance (e.g., Medicaid reimbursement), the school district must obtain and maintain documentation of parent/adult student consent specifying the records to be disclosed, the services to be provided, and the extent, frequency, and duration of the services. The school district must also obtain parent/adult student consent if billable services (i.e., type, amount and/or duration) are revised at any time. The parents must be informed that their refusal to consent to the release of information does not relieve the school district of its responsibility to ensure that all services are provided at no cost to the parents.

If Education is unable to obtain parental consent to use the parent's private insurance, or public benefits or insurance when the parents would incur a cost for a service specified on their child's IEP, the school district may use Part B funds to pay for services to ensure FAPE. To avoid a financial cost to parents who otherwise would consent to use private insurance or public benefits or insurance if the parent would incur a cost, the school district may use its Part B funds to pay the cost the parents otherwise would have to pay to use the parents' benefits insurance (e.g., the deductible or co-pay amounts).

Proceeds from public or private insurance will not be treated as program income as pursuant to 34 CFR 580.25(2). If a school district spends reimbursements from Federal funds (e.g., Medicaid) for services under this part, those funds will not be considered "State or local" funds for purposes of the maintenance of effort provisions of Part B of IDEA 2004.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation may be responsible for services that occur outside of the school environment that are vocationally oriented and are specifically intended to prepare students with disabilities to transition into postsecondary training or work, including pre-employment transition services, in accordance with the CSNA. Rehabilitation is not otherwise responsible for payment of any service that has not been directly agreed to during the development of a student's IEP and is not included as a service on a student's IPE for Rehabilitation services. Rehabilitation is not responsible for career development activities that are part of a School to Work initiative within the school system. The responsibility for implementing the requirements of Department of Education Policy 2510 remains with the school system.

The transference to the student of assistive technology devices that have been purchased by an LEA will occur consistent with the surplus equipment policies and regulations in existence

within each LEA. After the student has exited the school system, Rehabilitation may reimburse the LEA at a rate in accordance with the surplus equipment policy, dependent upon the student's continued need or desire for the equipment, the condition of the equipment, and its future usefulness.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

At present, DRS has representation in all high schools in all 55 WV counties. DRS counselors/staff regularly communicate with local school personnel to promote the awareness and usage of VR services. When permitted, DRS school counselors maintain an office in high schools to strengthen the DRS resolve to serve students with disabilities (ages 14-21). DRS continually sponsors grants and activities to educate all stakeholders in high schools about VR services and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

The State Education Agency (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have responsibility for providing appropriate special education and related services for each eligible student with a disability, ages 3 to 21, enrolled in the public-school system. For each eligible student with a disability at age 16 or younger, if determined appropriate, the transition service needs of the student must be identified, including interagency linkages. From the perspective of the SEA and LEAs, students with disabilities shall have equal access to services, which are normally provided by public schools for non–disabled individuals, provided that reasonable accommodations or modifications can be made.

It is important that Education and Rehabilitation work together to determine logistics for providing transition services. The IEP and the IPE must be developed with coordinated goals, objectives, and planned services for effective and successful transition to post–school settings. Each agency will cooperate to provide referral, support, and assistance to the agency with responsibility for services.

The formal agreement includes the following:

OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION

Rehabilitation and Education will continue to utilize a variety of activities to provide outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition and pre-employment transition services. These activities will be conducted both jointly and individually for students with IEPs, students with 504 plans, and other potentially eligible students with disabilities not currently receiving services. Activities may include, but are not limited to, participation in career/job fairs, presentations to students and parents, website links, brochures, surveys, conferencing between Rehabilitation School Counselors and School Counselors, and regularly scheduled contact with individual schools.

Outreach activities and student identification will be conducted as early as possible, preferably during the students' 10th grade year and shall include information regarding (1) the purpose of the Rehabilitation program; (2) the eligibility requirements of the Rehabilitation program; (3) the application procedures of the Rehabilitation program; and (4) the scope of services that may be provided by the Rehabilitation program.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperative Agreements with Private Non–Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to individuals with significant disabilities. CRPs also provide services, including pre–employment transition services (Pre-ETS), to students with disabilities. As of October 2019, there are 72 DRS–acknowledged parent company CRPs in West Virginia located at 80 service sites. There are also an additional 67 Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP) vendors that focus on serving students with disabilities.

DRS maintains working relationships with non–profit CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community–based assessment, and/or work skills assessment. CRPs also provide employment readiness services such as life skills and work adjustment, job site training, and extended employment assessment. While respecting freedom of choice, DRS encourages work center programs to expand community–based programs for these individuals.

Any CRP meeting the DRS acknowledgment process will be permitted under a written Vendor Acknowledgment to bill for services provided to DRS consumers. In order to become a DRS–acknowledged vendor, an applicant must request, complete, and return a Vendor Acknowledgment Packet. Upon receipt of the completed packet, a recommendation to acknowledge or not acknowledge will be made to the DRS Director.

The Vendor Acknowledgment Packet contains an application for Vendor Acknowledgment to provide supported employment services, an annual data summary that provides the agency's name, address, contact information, a checklist of those DRS services they will be providing, and a Vendor Acknowledgment form addressing conditions of and payment for services rendered to DRS consumers.

A signed Vendor Acknowledgment indicates that the vendor agrees to follow conditions set forth regarding standards, anti–discrimination, indemnification, and conditions/standards of operation. The acknowledgment is good for three years.

CRPs can also supplement work exploration activities and provide opportunities for VR consumers, especially students, statewide. DRS also utilizes school personnel as CRP vendors as part of STEP. These teacher/vendors work with students outside of school hours to provide them with CRP services such as community-based assessment, work skills assessment, work adjustment training, job placement, and job coaching. The students benefit from working with a trusted adult who is already familiar with the student's strengths and weaknesses. This eliminates the need for new and/or additional assessment by the service provider. Furthermore, this program allows DRS to ensure services are available in rural areas. DRS has made it an agency goal and priority to expand CRP service availability.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) continues to concentrate efforts on educating interested parties regarding the process of becoming a non–traditional provider source for supported employment services. A variety of supported employment provider choices are needed, particularly due to the rural nature of the state.

DRS continues to focus on providing technical assistance and coordinating training for vendors of supported employment services, DRS staff members, and staff members of other public and private agencies. DRS keeps current on changes and advances in supported employment through documented research, literature, and reviews of best practices.

Other agencies with which DRS collaborates for the provision of time–limited supported employment services are:

1. West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council funds;
2. West Virginia Title XIX––Home and Community–Based Waiver Program for intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) recipients; and
3. Social Security Administration work incentives programs.

In implementing school–to–work transition services for individuals exiting the school system, DRS also collaborates with family resource networks.

Through a combined effort with other disability organizations, $78,000 was appropriated (annually since 2017) by the West Virginia Legislature for supported employment follow–along services (extended supported employment services). DRS serves as the fiscal agent for these funds. DRS has created program guidelines governing the use of state–appropriated funds for extended services under the supported employment program created by state statute in 1993. The sole use of the state funds attached to this program is to provide extended services for individuals not eligible from any other funding source. All providers of supported employment services may access these funds for individuals who are eligible under the guidelines. At the end of Program Year 2019, DRS had sponsored 37 individuals in the extended supported employment program so they could maintain and retain their jobs within the community. This figure represents the cooperative efforts of 10 CRPs.

Agreements between DRS and all acknowledged providers of supported employment services document collaboration for extended services. Each agreement details the time–limited and extended services that DRS will secure through the vendor.

Extended services specified in the agreement will be provided by the vendor and include, at minimum, monitoring two hours per month (no more than eight) at the job site of each individual unless the individual can be better served through off–site monitoring. If off–site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, it must, at a minimum, consist of two hours per month with the individual and at least one contact with the employer during those hours. The vendor also agrees to provide other support services as needed and specified in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

In addition to the basic vendor agreement identifying the time–limited and extended services to be mutually provided by DRS and the vendor, DRS has attempted to collaborate with other agencies and organizations to provide funding for extended services.

These sources of extended supported employment services are:

1. West Virginia Title XIX––Homes and Community–Based Waiver Program for I/DD recipients;
2. DRS program funds for persons receiving extended services at DRS–acknowledged CRP work centers; and
3. Social Security Administration programs such as Impairment Related Work Expenses and Plan To Achieve Self Support for approved Social Security recipients.

DRS continues its efforts to expand the number of acknowledged vendors of supported employment services, particularly in areas underserved and unserved within the current

system. As of September 2019, the number of supported employment service providers was 61, an increase of 23 providers since Fiscal Year 2006.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

1. VR SERVICES; AND

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) believes that coordination with employers is integral to improving the workforce development system. Gathering/collecting information about employer needs, which will also be shared with other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, allows DRS to provide training and other services to vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers in order to meet business needs and expectations of current and future workers. To optimize its coordination with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for consumers with disabilities, DRS takes a multi–faceted approach. DRS utilizes its own personnel in addition to partnering with WorkForce WV to coordinate with employers across the state. Additionally, DRS has specific programs/strategies to identify employment and career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities, including the provision of pre–employment transition services (Pre-ETS). The strategies that DRS uses are described below.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has nine employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. In the previous fiscal year, employment specialists provided 814 services to 529 employers, attended 60 job fairs, coordinated with WorkForce WV, attended statewide and local Business Services Team meetings, participated in rapid response events, attended local workforce development board (WDB) meetings, provided Job Clubs for students with disabilities, and participated in opportunities for collaboration with community colleges, community rehabilitation programs, and other organizations responsive to workforce needs of businesses.

Sample of services provided to employers:

– Pre–screened qualified applicants to reduce employers' cost of recruitment and hiring.

– Consultation, recommendation, and training for retention of employees who acquire a disability.

– Technical assistance on the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

– Accessibility options and solutions.

– Employer on–site disability awareness training.

– Information on tax credits available to employers.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment Specialists contact employers to identify current and future job openings. To complement this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information,

including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

– Staffing services;

– Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities;

– Financial incentives;

– Accessibility assessments;

– Accommodating employees with disabilities;

– Basic disability etiquette;

– Attitudinal barriers;

– Americans with Disabilities Act;

– Locating a DRS office; and

– Where to find additional resources.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS–employer interaction with employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job–ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

DRS also coordinates with employers through participation and membership in various community and regional organizations. These activities range from employer–specific organizations to public– private partnerships and allow DRS to better understand the needs of employers while jointly developing employment–related activities. Some of these partnerships include:

- Regional WDBs;

- Tri-State Society for Human Resource Management;

- Cabell County Family Resource Network;

- Greater Wheeling Reentry Policy Council;

- Chamber of Commerce of the Mid-Ohio Valley;

- Workforce Business Services Units – Fayette, Greenbrier, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, and Webster counties; and

- Employment Specialists attend Community Relations Board meetings at the Federal Prisons in Alderson and Beckley.

Another key strategy to coordinate with employers is through collaboration with WorkForce WV, a WIOA core partner. WorkForce WV is the state agency that oversees numerous U.S. Department of Labor programs. This partnership takes place at all levels, including local offices, regional workforce development boards, and state level Interagency Collaboration Team

meetings. These partnerships have been of great benefit for West Virginians with disabilities seeking training and employment.

Because of the services it provides, WorkForce WV has the largest database of both job seekers and job openings in the state. DRS is able to tap into these resources to identify current employment opportunities for VR consumers, identify needs of employers across the state, and utilize detailed labor market information to assist individuals (including students) with disabilities in identifying future career opportunities. This allows VR consumers to identify potential employment opportunities and any training or other VR services that are required for the job. Additionally, job–ready VR consumers can create an account with WorkForce WV to match with employers seeking workers with specific skills they already possess.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

In addition to the previously described activities, the Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes Within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice. As of November 2019, 85 employers have agreed to host job shadowing experiences with DRS' POWER program.

Employment specialist services, including Pre-ETS, provided to students with disabilities:

- POWER job shadowing program;
- Transition fairs;
- Job readiness workshops;
- Job clubs;
- Interviewing;
- Resume preparation;
- Application assistance;
- Dressing for an interview/employment;
- Job retention and good work habits;
- Job search and employer contacts;
- Assist students in locating employment opportunities and assisting with applying to openings; and
- Advocating on the student's behalf to employers when requested by the student.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

DRS maintains a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Medical Services (BMS), the state agency responsible for the State Medicaid plan under the title XIX of the Social Security Act; this is also known as the Waiver program. An advisory group for the program is constituted with the WV Developmental Disability Council (WVDDC). DRS has a position on the council. DRS and BMS interact as part of this advisory group through the WVDDC. The primary involvement of the title XIX Medicaid Waiver program in fostering competitive, integrated employment outcomes through vocational rehabilitation is by mandating referral to DRS and providing ongoing support funding for those cases closed by DRS in Supported Employment. The WVDDC also advises BMS on policy development and meeting unmet needs of those participating in the title XIX Medicaid Waiver program.

In addition to interacting with title XIX Medicaid Waiver staff as part of the WVDDC meetings, DRS participates in two subcommittees; Employment First and Medley Management. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for intellectually/developmentally disabled (IDD) individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the Bureau for Behavioral Health on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. These are often individuals that are also title XIX Medicaid Waiver eligible. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

DRS counselors will, at the time of application, gather information regarding an individual's third- party resources, including Medicaid. If it is determined that the individual receives Medicaid benefits, BMS will provide all Medicaid–covered services to the individual, regardless of that individual's continued status with DRS. If an individual is approved to receive services from DRS and begins to receive Medicaid benefits at a later time, BMS will provide all Medicaid–covered services to the individual from that time forward.

Individuals receiving services from BMS will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BMS expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time. Similarly, DRS consumers who are Medicaid–eligible will be referred to BMS.

DRS also maintains an MOU with the Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH), the State agency with primary responsibility for providing services and supports for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. DRS interacts with both BBH and its subsidiary, DIDD.

DRS, BBH, and DIDD agree to collaborate to facilitate delivery of services, including extended services, to individuals with the most significant disabilities in the following ways:

– The DIDD program manager and DRS will interact regularly as part of the WVDDC meetings, as well as on the Employment First and Medley Management committees. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for IDD individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the BBH on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. On both of these committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

– The BBH administers several Customized Employment grants with vendors of DRS. BBH and DRS will jointly train the Community Rehabilitation Programs receiving these grants as well as DRS staff working with these programs.

– BBH and DRS will work together in mediating problems in cases being served jointly in the programs.

– DRS will meet monthly with BBH staff to review applicants for an Unmet Needs funding program to foster assistance to IDD individuals where traditional funding sources do not provide needed supports.

– Individuals receiving services from BBH or DIDD will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BBH or DIDD expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time.

DRS collaborates with the BBH and its partners, in order to provide quality and timely vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with behavioral health conditions who qualify.

DRS and BBH staff regularly attend various meetings to receive program updates which allows for collaboration whenever possible. Examples of meetings include:

- The Olmstead Council – DRS and BBH are both state agencies that are required to participate in quarterly Olmstead Council meetings. Olmstead v. L.C. (1999) is a landmark United States Supreme Court decision upholding the civil rights of people with disabilities (including those with behavioral health conditions that result in disability) to receive services and supports in the most integrated setting in the community.

- BBH and DRS are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council (WVBHPC) and attend quarterly meetings working together and with others to accomplish the goals of the council. The WVBHPC is a unified voice that promotes wellness, recovery, and resiliency for all West Virginians. The primary purpose of the WVBHPC is to advocate for and evaluate the provision of community–based behavioral health services.

- DRS and BBH are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and attend quarterly meetings allowing each agency to get program updates and collaborate wherever possible. The West Virginia SILC's mission is to ensure persons who have disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the achievement of their independent living goals.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

DRS maintains an MOU with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, BMS, the state agency responsible for the State Medicaid plan under the title XIX of the Social Security Act; this is also known as the Waiver program. An advisory group for the program is constituted with the WVDDC. DRS has a position on the council. DRS and BMS interact as part of this advisory group through the WVDDC. The primary involvement of the title XIX Medicaid Waiver program in fostering competitive, integrated employment outcomes through vocational rehabilitation is by mandating referral to DRS and providing ongoing support funding for those cases closed by DRS in Supported Employment. The WVDDC also advises BMS on policy

development with the goal of meeting unmet needs of those participating in the title XIX Medicaid Waiver program.

In addition to interacting with title XIX Medicaid Waiver staff as part of the WVDDC meetings, DRS participates in two subcommittees, Employment First and Medley Management. The Employment First committee focuses on promoting employment for IDD individuals as a first option among services providers, legislators, state policy makers, and the community at large. The Medley Management committee provides oversight and advice to the Bureau for Behavioral Health on the state's Medley program, which serves a specific group of IDD individuals that are at risk of institutionalization. These are often individuals that are also title XIX Medicaid Waiver eligible. On both committees, DRS promotes a focus on competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau for Behavioral Health is the federally designated State Authority for mental health and substance abuse, as well as the lead agency for intellectual and developmental disabilities and provides planning, direction, training and funding for prevention, treatment and recovery services throughout the state. DRS also maintains an MOU with the Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau for Behavioral Health (BBH). DRS interacts with both BBH and its subsidiary, DIDD.

DRS, BBH, and DIDD agree to interact in the following ways to facilitate delivery of services, including extended services, to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- The BBH administers several Customized Employment grants with vendors of DRS. BBH and DRS will jointly train the Community Rehabilitation Programs receiving these grants as well as DRS staff working with these programs.
- BBH and DRS will work together in mediating problems in cases being served jointly in the programs.
- Individuals receiving services from BBH or DIDD will receive information on the eligibility requirements for DRS and the services DRS provides. If an individual receiving services from BBH or DIDD expresses a desire to work, he or she will be referred to DRS at that time.

DRS collaborates with the BBH and its partners in order to provide quality and timely vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with behavioral health conditions who qualify.

DRS and BBH regularly attend various meetings together to receive program updates which allows for collaboration whenever possible. Examples of meetings include:

- The Olmstead Council – DRS and BBH are required state agencies that participate in quarterly Olmstead Council meetings. Olmstead v. L.C. (1999) is a landmark United States Supreme Court decision upholding the civil rights of people with disabilities (including those with behavioral health conditions that result in disability) to receive services and supports in the most integrated setting in the community.
- BBH and DRS are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the West Virginia Behavioral Health Planning Council (WVBHPC) and attend quarterly meetings working together and with others to accomplish the goals of the council. The

WVBHPC is a unified voice that promotes wellness, recovery, and resiliency for all West Virginians. The primary purpose of the WVBHPC is to advocate for and evaluate the provision of community–based behavioral health services.

- DRS and BBH are two of the principal state agencies that must have membership on the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and attend quarterly meetings allowing each agency to get program updates and collaborate wherever possible. The West Virginia SILC's mission is to ensure persons who have disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the achievement of their independent living goals.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

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;

DRS is committed to providing a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) that complies with Section 101(a)(7)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and Section 721(a)(7)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. Members of the State Rehabilitation Council are afforded the opportunity to review and comment upon this entire section, particularly the DRS plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, agency personnel standards, and staff development needs and activities.

Provisions of this section should assist in recruiting and retaining qualified staff members to ensure skilled personnel are available to provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, these endeavors will help ensure an improved level of competence and expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities, allowing them to reach employment.

The Human Resources Unit is primarily responsible for performing DRS personnel administration activities in keeping with guidance from the West Virginia Division of Personnel (WVDOP), Rehabilitation Services Administration, Social Security Administration, and other appropriate bodies. The DRS Staff Development Unit administers the in-service training grant program. The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit also works closely with the Field Services Unit to ensure quality and timely training for new field counselors and rehabilitation services associates (RSAs).

The following narrative describes the DRS CSPD and policies, procedures, and activities relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained for DRS operations.

DRS Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development Needs

Statistics and information utilized for personnel planning are maintained within the Human Resources Unit. DRS administrators have the ability to review salary, pay grade, job title, reporting unit, and personal employee information. Such information is available to DRS

Assistant Directors and District Managers who use it for planning, hiring negotiations, and pay equity. DRS retiree information may also be obtained from these databases.

The Human Resources Senior Manager periodically (at least monthly) maintains and provides statistical data to the DRS Director. The data are a list of the number of individuals under various classifications who are employed by DRS in the provision of rehabilitation services. This includes a ratio of the number of counselors to the number of consumers served each year. DRS estimates the ratio of consumers served (6,466) to the number of counselors (80) will be 81 in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2021.

Each year, the DRS Director receives a summary report that estimates and projects the number of such personnel that will be needed during the next five–year period. In November 2019, DRS had 80 counselors in various offices across the state. Of the 80 counselors, DRS had 33 Rehabilitation Counselors, 32 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, 12 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and 3 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees. DRS believes its existing counselors and field staff members are needed to provide services to consumers who are currently in the DRS system.

DRS had several unfilled positions as of November 2019: 27 Rehabilitation Counseling positions, 17 Senior Rehabilitation Counselor positions, 4 Certified Rehabilitation Counselor positions and 4 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee positions. Each unfilled position is being used to expand the number of field counselors when needed.

A breakdown by personnel category, including the number of personnel in relation to the estimated number of individuals served in FY 2021, is as follows (information current as of November 2019):

– Rehabilitation Counselors, 60 total positions, 27 vacancies, and 7 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 108.

– Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, 49 total positions, 17 vacancies, and 10 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Senior Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 132.

– Certified Rehabilitation Counselors, 16 total positions, 4 vacancies, and 6 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Certified Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 404.

– Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee, 6 total positions, 4 vacancies, and 0 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Rehabilitation Counselors in relation to the number of individuals served is 1,078.

– Fiscal personnel, 14 total positions, 7 vacancy, and 1 projected vacancy over the next five years. The number of Fiscal personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 462.

– Administrative Services personnel 24 total positions, 8 vacancies, and 6 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Administrative Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 269.

– Field Services personnel, 158 total positions, 43 vacancies, and 77 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Field Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 41.

– Support Services personnel (e.g., human resources, rehabilitation technology unit), 31 total positions, 9 vacancies, and 12 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Support Services personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 209.

– Information Technology personnel, 10 total positions, 2 vacancies, and 3 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of Information Technology personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 647.

– Other personnel (e.g., vocational instructors, technical analysists), 27 total positions, 6 vacancies, and 15 projected vacancies over the next five years. The number of other personnel in relation to the number of individuals served is 239.

II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

Each year, the DRS Director receives a summary report that estimates and projects the number of such personnel that will be needed during the next five–year period. In November 2019, DRS had 80 counselors in various offices across the state. Of the 80 counselors, DRS had 33 Rehabilitation Counselors, 32 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, 12 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and 3 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees. DRS believes its existing counselors and field staff members are needed to provide services to consumers who are currently in the DRS system.

DRS had several unfilled positions as of November 2019: 27 Rehabilitation Counseling positions, 17 Senior Rehabilitation Counselor positions, 4 Certified Rehabilitation Counselor position and 4 Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee positions. Each unfilled position is being used to expand the number of field counselors when needed.

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.

DRS expects to see a decrease in the number of consumers in its caseload system, from 8,240 individuals in FY 2019 to a projected 7,824 individuals in FY 2025. DRS administrators believe that the expected future caseload size will be managed by existing counseling personnel and the gradual filling of the 52 vacant counselor positions over the next five years. Additionally, DRS employs 36 RSAs to assist Counselors with their caseloads, in order to more efficiently meet the needs of the increasing numbers of consumers.

The following information presents a range of the number of counselors and other agency personnel projected to leave DRS employment after becoming eligible for early retirement under the West Virginia Public Employees Retirement System by FY 2025. Of the 23 counselors who will be eligible, there will be 7 Rehabilitation Counselors, 10 Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, and 6 Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. DRS continues to experience a gradual retirement of counselors and other personnel. The agency expects this trend will continue over the coming years.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by West Virginia University (WVU) and Marshall University, WVU reports 42 students enrolled in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling graduate program in the Fall 2018 semester and 11 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 45 enrolled students and 21 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 124 students and 83 graduates in the 2018–2019 period.

The report from Marshall University shows 178 students in fall 2018 and 35 graduates in Counseling graduate programs for 2018-19. It also reports 103 students in fall 2018 and 33 graduates in Psychology graduate programs for 2018-19.

II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by WVU and Marshall University, WVU reports 42 students enrolled in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling graduate program in the Fall 2018 semester and 11 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 45 enrolled students and 21 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 124 students and 83 graduates in the 2018–2019 period.

The report from Marshall University shows 178 students in fall 2018 and 35 graduates in Counseling graduate programs for 2018-19. It also reports 103 students in fall 2018 and 33 graduates in Psychology graduate programs for 2018-19.

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.

DRS annually collects information from higher education institutions that provide training to prospective rehabilitation personnel. Based on information provided by WVU and Marshall University, WVU reports 42 students enrolled in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling graduate program in the Fall 2018 semester and 11 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Counseling graduate program, WVU reports 45 enrolled students and 21 graduates in the 2018–2019 period. For the Social Work graduate program, WVU reports an enrollment of 124 students and 83 graduates in the 2018–2019 period.

The report from Marshall University shows 178 students in fall 2018 and 35 graduates in Counseling graduate programs for 2018-19. It also reports 103 students in fall 2018 and 33 graduates in Psychology graduate programs for 2018-19.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

DRS Recruitment Efforts

DRS will continue its efforts to recruit and advance employees of traditionally under–represented groups such as people with disabilities, seniors, women, and members of racial or ethnic minority groups.

DRS Re–training Efforts for Existing Rehabilitation Professionals

DRS is in full compliance with the CSPD requirement and its standard to employ only rehabilitation counselors who (1) possess a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a counseling–related field, or (2) are employees who have two years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. As stated above, DRS makes no exceptions to the state standard when hiring new rehabilitation counselors. Therefore, the agency provides for existing personnel to receive the training necessary to meet requirements of the state standard.

As part of its non–discriminatory employment practices, DRS ensures that all personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. The DRS affirmative action plan is updated annually, and the agency has formally adopted this policy of non– discriminatory employment practices.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

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

To ensure a high standard of competency and credentials for its qualified rehabilitation professionals, DRS has established job classifications. The lowest standard for Rehabilitation Counselors requires a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, social work, or closely related behavioral science field; or two years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Senior Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling–related field; and (2) two years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid professional experience in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Certified Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling–related field; (2) current national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or Certified Vocational Evaluator or current West Virginia licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor; and (3) at least three years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid professional experience as a rehabilitation counselor.

DRS has established the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. An employee in this position is under direct supervision and performs work at the entry level in a probationary, training capacity which is intended to qualify the employee for specific duties for this position. The employee may become eligible for the position of Rehabilitation Counselor after two years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Minimum qualifications for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position are a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university in counseling and guidance, social work, nursing, special education, or related behavioral science or human service field; or a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with three years of full–time or equivalent part–time experience in the position of Rehabilitation Services Associate.

DRS strives to recruit graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation like the one at WVU, but it does not require the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential as the minimum qualification for a new counselor. Graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling are eligible for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which sets the national standards for quality rehabilitation counseling services in the U.S. DRS encourages the achievement of CRC by

existing counselors and gives special preference to applicants with the CRC credential and qualified applicants with disabilities and from minority backgrounds.

The DRS standard is specific to rehabilitation counselors only and is consistent with registration requirements of WVDOP—the DRS state hiring authority. WVDOP administers and scores unassembled examinations to potential rehabilitation counselor candidates.

To ensure that counselors and other personnel remain up to date with evolving labor force needs and the needs of individuals with disabilities, DRS provides ongoing training opportunities for its field staff in group and individual settings. This occurs through educational activities such as the State training conference, periodic district–level training sessions, continuing education credit opportunities (Certified Rehabilitation Counselor), and training sessions by DRS Quality Assurance Specialists and DRS Employment Specialists. These activities allow DRS counselors and field staff to enhance their knowledge of labor force needs and ultimately better serve individuals with disabilities.

Individuals not meeting the above personnel standards for rehabilitation professionals are ineligible to interview for vacant rehabilitation counseling positions. Classification specifications for each position utilized by DRS are available through the WVDOP website: https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/wv/classspecs.

When employing new rehabilitation counselors, DRS makes no exceptions to its standard and provides the training necessary to meet requirements of the state standard only to existing personnel. These efforts are described later in this section.

Should qualified candidates be unavailable, the DRS Director, Assistant Directors, Human Resources Manager, and the Unit Manager or District Manager may re–assess staffing/consumer needs and re–assign qualified employees to assume duties of the vacant position. Qualified DRS retirees may also be re–hired on a contractual/intermittent basis until permanent qualified employees can be hired.

The career ladder for advancement within the rehabilitation counseling ranks requires additional experience and credentials as well as increased responsibilities.

DRS Requirements for Qualified Rehabilitation Paraprofessionals

In order to more efficiently meet the needs of its consumers, DRS upgraded several clerical positions to paraprofessional status. A Rehabilitation Services Associate must be a high school (or equivalent) graduate and have at least four years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid experience in paraprofessional or responsible clerical office support work, which requires familiarity with casework procedures and delivery of direct consumer services in a state vocational rehabilitation services agency. A bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university may be substituted for the required experience. The WVDOP specification for the Rehabilitation Services Associate position may be accessed at https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/wv/classspecs.

A Rehabilitation Services Associate assists qualified rehabilitation counselors in several ways: providing information about the rehabilitation process and services available to interested applicants and members of the general public; obtaining information needed to complete the application process; initiating vocational diagnostic interviews; arranging medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations for DRS consumers; and assisting consumers in applying for student financial aid.

DRS employed 36 Rehabilitation Services Associates as of November 2019. These paraprofessionals are assigned to DRS offices throughout West Virginia. To ensure statewide coverage, at least one is located within each DRS district.

System of Staff Evaluation

DRS requires that each permanent employee receive an annual job performance evaluation. Work performance of probationary employees is reviewed upon completion of the third and sixth (and for certain job classifications, twelfth) months during a probationary period. This evaluation system enables DRS to monitor the job performance of all staff members and identify areas of weakness and skill deficiencies that need training or remediation, as well as areas of strong performance. The evaluation also provides a systematic method of determining training needs for all staff members.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

To ensure a high standard of competency and credentials for its qualified rehabilitation professionals, DRS has established job classifications. The lowest standard for Rehabilitation Counselors requires a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling and guidance, social work, or closely related behavioral science field; or two years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Senior Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling–related field; and (2) two years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid professional experience in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Certified Rehabilitation Counselors require: (1) a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or counseling–related field; (2) current national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or Certified Vocational Evaluator or current West Virginia licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor; and (3) at least three years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid professional experience as a rehabilitation counselor.

DRS has established the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. An employee in this position is under direct supervision and performs work at the entry level in a probationary, training capacity which is intended to qualify the employee for specific duties for this position. The employee may become eligible for the position of Rehabilitation Counselor after two years of full–time or equivalent part–time paid experience in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee. Minimum qualifications for the Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee position are a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university in counseling and guidance, social work, nursing, special education, or related behavioral science or human service field; or a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with three years of full–time or equivalent part–time experience in the position of Rehabilitation Services Associate.

DRS strives to recruit graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation like the one at WVU, but it does not require the CRC credential as the minimum qualification for a new counselor. Graduates of accredited master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling are eligible for certification by the CRCC, which sets the national standards for quality rehabilitation counseling services in the U.S. DRS encourages the achievement of CRC by existing counselors and gives special preference to applicants with the CRC credential and qualified applicants with disabilities and from minority backgrounds.

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System of Staff Evaluation

DRS requires that each permanent employee receive an annual job performance evaluation. Work performance of probationary employees is reviewed upon completion of the third and sixth (and for certain job classifications, twelfth) months during a probationary period. This evaluation system enables DRS to monitor the job performance of all staff members and identify areas of weakness and skill deficiencies that need training or remediation, as well as areas of strong performance. The evaluation also provides a systematic method of determining training needs for all staff members.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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

Staff Development and Training Activities

The selection of DRS participants for training activities is based upon documented organizational, unit, or individual training needs. Training programs will be provided for all classes and types of staff members on an internally assessed priority basis. Particular emphasis is placed on programs addressing assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, policy and procedure, ethics, and rehabilitation technology. DRS does not discriminate in the selection of trainees for these programs based on age, sex, religion, disability, and national or ethnic origin.

DRS is committed to utilizing only institutions or training facilities that are accessible programmatically and architecturally free of other barriers with respect to trainees with disabilities. In addition, DRS will ensure that program materials are accessible in the most appropriate format for all participants with disabilities (assistive communication devices, interpreters, large print, audio tapes, Braille material, etc.). The technology to ensure these accommodations is available through various support units within DRS. Moreover, to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities in facilities of higher education, DRS houses a rehabilitation counselor on campus at Marshall University.

The majority of the training needs are met through local training and the agency's annual State Training Conference. DRS also maintains strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with institutions of higher education, particularly those receiving funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to train rehabilitation professionals. This is to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared for employment.

Throughout FY 2019, DRS continued to utilize a group training approach for newly hired counselors and RSAs. The training is led by QA Unit staff members and consists of three two–day sessions, provided on a quarterly basis for new hires. The first session is titled "New Counselor/RSA Training" and provides introductory materials as well as training on case management and agency policies and procedures. The second and third sessions cover Decision Tree Training, detailing appropriate case work practices from referral to closure. In addition to the training, a CRP services overview is provided in a one-on-one format. While staff members are on location in Nitro, WV, they receive a Rehabilitation Services Program overview and a tour of the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit.

This approach ensures that all rehabilitation counselors and paraprofessionals receive standardized and accurate training. QA Unit staff members conduct regular case record reviews

to ensure compliance with federal, state, and agency casework standards. Any deficiencies identified from the reviews are addressed through appropriate training.

All Staff Development Unit–sponsored programs provide continuing education credits that assist DRS CRCs, Licensed Professional Counselors, and members of other certified groups to maintain or obtain their certification. DRS has received approval authority from the CRCC to provide CRC continuing education credits for training programs meeting CRCC criteria.

In FY 2019, 32 DRS managers and supervisors attended management training events to meet the requirements for the West Virginia Division of Personnel Policy 18, which mandates specialized training for all supervisors and managers. New managers and supervisors are required to take eight classes in the first two years. All appropriate DRS staff members attended these required courses.

During FY 2019, the agency held several training conferences. In July, 80 staff members participated in the Blind/Visually Impaired Conference to improve services to that population. In August, 160 rehabilitation staff members participated in the agency's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Training Conference and 94 staff members attended the agency's Clerical Conference. The agency also held a joint training conference, the WV Capacity Building Institute, with the WV Department of Education, Office of Special Education. These conferences help ensure that all staff members are connected to the overall mission and vision of the agency.

In 2019, 34 different training sessions were approved for CRC credits, totaling 48.25 clock hours. DRS staff confront the challenge of refining and improving their skills and knowledge while dealing with the current explosion of knowledge, technology, and treatment modalities. The agency will continue to make intensive efforts to provide ongoing information that will ensure the skills of DRS employees are responsive to the needs of the people they serve.

With respect to training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS maintains a working relationship and a formal memorandum of understanding with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS). In West Virginia, the WVATS, under the Center for Excellence in Disabilities at West Virginia University, is the administrator of the assistive technology grant. DRS is also represented on the West Virginia Assistive Technology Board and works with WVATS in a number of ways, including:

– Maintain an updated resource database for Assistive Technology services in West Virginia;

– Participate in special projects (i.e., finding and advocating for accessible recreational resources);

– Provide information resources, awareness and training for consumers and professionals in assistive technology services and devices;

– Provide information to WVATS partners regarding DRS and other disability related subjects; and

– Participate as a member on an interagency team, Partnerships in Assistive Technologies, with a focus of interagency collaboration for the provision of Assistive Technology training and conferences.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

Staff Development and Training Activities

The selection of DRS participants for training activities is based upon documented organizational, unit, or individual training needs. Training programs will be provided for all classes and types of staff members on an internally assessed priority basis. Particular emphasis is placed on programs addressing assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, policy and procedure, ethics, and rehabilitation technology. DRS does not discriminate in the selection of trainees for these programs based on age, sex, religion, disability, and national or ethnic origin.

DRS is committed to utilizing only institutions or training facilities that are accessible programmatically and architecturally free of other barriers with respect to trainees with disabilities. In addition, DRS will ensure that program materials are accessible in the most appropriate format for all participants with disabilities (assistive communication devices, interpreters, large print, audio tapes, Braille material, etc.). The technology to ensure these accommodations is available through various support units within DRS. Moreover, to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities in facilities of higher education, DRS houses a rehabilitation counselor on campus at Marshall University.

The majority of the training needs are met through local training and the agency's State Training Conference. DRS also maintains strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with institutions of higher education, particularly those receiving funds from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to train rehabilitation professionals. This is to ensure that personnel needed within DRS are appropriately and adequately prepared for employment.

Throughout FY 2019, DRS continued to utilize a group training approach for newly hired counselors and RSAs. The training is led by QA Unit staff members and consists of three two–day sessions, provided on a quarterly basis for new hires. The first session is titled "New Counselor/RSA Training" and provides introductory materials as well as training on case management and agency policies and procedures. The second and third sessions cover Decision Tree Training, detailing appropriate case work practices from referral to closure. In addition to the training, a CRP services overview is provided in a one-on-one format. While staff members are on location in Nitro, WV, they receive a Rehabilitation Services Program overview and a tour of the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit.

This approach ensures that all rehabilitation counselors and paraprofessionals receive standardized and accurate training. QA Unit staff members conduct regular case record reviews to ensure compliance with federal, state, and agency casework standards. Any deficiencies identified from the reviews are addressed through appropriate training.

All Staff Development Unit–sponsored programs provide continuing education credits that assist DRS CRCs, Licensed Professional Counselors, and members of other certified groups to maintain or obtain their certification. DRS has received approval authority from the CRCC to provide CRC continuing education credits for training programs meeting CRCC criteria.

In FY 2019, 32 DRS managers and supervisors attended management training events to meet the requirements for the West Virginia Division of Personnel Policy 18, which mandates specialized training for all supervisors and managers. New managers and supervisors are required to take eight classes in the first two years. All appropriate DRS staff members attended these required courses.

During FY 2019, the agency held several training conferences. In July, 80 staff members participated in the Blind/Visually Impaired Conference to improve services to that population. In August, 160 rehabilitation staff members participated in the agency's Pre-ETS Training

Conference and 94 staff members attended the agency's Clerical Conference. The agency also held a joint training conference, the WV Capacity Building Institute, with the WV Department of Education, Office of Special Education. These conferences help ensure that all staff members are connected to the overall mission and vision of the agency.

In 2019, 34 different training sessions were approved for CRC credits, totaling 48.25 clock hours. DRS staff confront the challenge of refining and improving their skills and knowledge while dealing with the current explosion of knowledge, technology, and treatment modalities. The agency will continue to make intensive efforts to provide ongoing information that will ensure the skills of DRS employees are responsive to the needs of the people they serve.

With respect to training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, DRS maintains a working relationship and a formal memorandum of understanding with the WVATS. In West Virginia, the WVATS, under the Center for Excellence in Disabilities at West Virginia University, is the administrator of the assistive technology grant. DRS is also represented on the West Virginia Assistive Technology Board and works with WVATS in a number of ways, including:

– Maintain an updated resource database for Assistive Technology services in West Virginia;

– Participate in special projects (i.e., finding and advocating for accessible recreational resources);

– Provide information resources, awareness and training for consumers and professionals in assistive technology services and devices;

– Provide information to WVATS partners regarding DRS and other disability related subjects; and

– Participate as a member on an interagency team, PATHS, with a focus of interagency collaboration for the provision of Assistive Technology training and conferences.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

West Virginia does not have large populations of ethnic groups who speak a language other than English. Consequently, DRS has not experienced difficulties making its programs accessible and available statewide. The agency's main language accessibility needs concern people who are deaf, and each DRS district is staffed with a specialist counselor providing full access to programs and services for people who have deafness or hearing impairments.

DRS continues to work with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to train and certify interpreters in order to strengthen the network of providers for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf–blind. Numerous workshops and seminars are conducted to increase the number of interpreters, improve their communication skills, and provide better statewide coverage. These coordinated efforts will continue as needed.

DRS also ensures that its employees and consumers with blindness or visual impairments receive information and materials in their preferred mode of communication through various accommodations. Upon request, various DRS support units provide such services as assistive communication devices, large print and/or Braille materials, audiotapes, and electronic (computer) copies.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

DRS will continue to coordinate its system of personnel development with the West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act/No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This coordination will include collaborative efforts to share information, liaison activities, and cooperative training endeavors for DRS school counselors, teachers, and WVDE employees, particularly those assigned to the Office of Special Education.

The DRS state level liaison attends WVDE training functions related to special education and disseminates information about education policy or law changes to DRS school counselors as needed. DRS school counselors also receive information during their annual meeting. DRS school counselors also participate in cross–training efforts. In some areas of the state, DRS school counselors and managers participate in local interagency planning groups where training issues are discussed and planned.

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;

To comply with provisions of Title I, Section 101, State Plans, of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and Section 721, State Plans, of the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (WV SRC) conducted a three–year comprehensive statewide assessment of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) services needs of individuals with disabilities in West Virginia. The WV SRC established a sub-committee on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), which includes a representative from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), to work with the State Plan and Program Evaluation (SPPE) Unit of DRS in conducting the needs assessment study in 2018. The WV SRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment was established in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 to oversee the needs assessment activity. Joint committee members including those selected by WV SRC and DRS personnel were fully committed to the needs assessment study and want to ensure successful completion of its objectives.

Four major objectives of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment study included examination of the rehabilitation needs of: (1) individuals with significant and most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services; (2) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program; (3) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and (4) youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre–employment transition services or other transition services. The role of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) as service providers was reviewed to address the need to establish, develop, or improve CRPs in West Virginia.

To maintain effective and comprehensive service delivery programs for West Virginians with disabilities, the needs assessment identified various service needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. Some needed services such as transportation, housing, and personal assistance are beyond the scope of the state VR program and thus, require coordination and cooperation among a diverse range of public and private agencies and other

organizations serving West Virginians with disabilities. The needs assessment recognized the service providers' perceptions of the needs of consumers with disabilities, including rehabilitation services associates, counselors, supervisors and managers of DRS, CRPs, and Workforce Development Board members throughout West Virginia.

As part of the WV SRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, the SPPE Unit conducted the needs assessment study for the agency in conjunction with WV SRC, which was fully involved from inception to the reporting of the results.

As part of the intake process for VR services, a question regarding service needs was posed to potential DRS consumers at the time of application. The reported service needs were then recorded in the DRS electronic case management system. In 2018, SPPE staff members conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 persons with disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. Included in these active cases with expressed VR service needs across the state were 90 persons with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds, 13 individuals aged 65 or older, and 655 transitioning youth. The findings of this analysis are presented below.

THE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF CONSUMERS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED SERVICE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

In 2018, SPPE staff members, under guidance of the WV SRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. These individuals represent a good sample of consumers with significant disabilities that will continue to seek assistance from agencies in coming years, *ceteris paribus*. All 55 counties in West Virginia were represented in the sample. The demographic profile of these individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 51.7% male, 47.0% female, 1.2% no response, and 0.1% did not self-identify;

Race: 90.8% White, 9.0% Other (African American/Hispanic/ American Indian/Asian), 0.2% Unspecified;

Age: 59.2% under 22 years old, 16.8% 22-34 years, 9.0% 35-44 years, 13.7% 45-64 years, 1.3% 65 years or older; and

Primary Impairment: 6.4% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 18.2% Physical Impairments, 75.4% Mental Impairments.

Comments from the 1,004 DRS case management records were analyzed and grouped into one or more of five general service themes: education, training, health, employment/CRP, and support. More specific service themes, within each general theme, were then determined for each comment.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment/CRP, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 consumers with significant disabilities. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (22.2%): Other (59.2%); 2-yr or 4-yr College (40.8%); Vocational Education (2.7%); High School Education (1.8%); Graduate Degree Education (1.8%); Tutoring (0.9%).

TRAINING (38.7%): Business/Vocational Training (73.3%); Drive Training/Licensing (12.6%); Other (10.5%); Job Search Training/Assistance (7.7%); Career Planning Training (4.9%); On-The-Job Training/Job Trial (0.5%); Work Adjustment Training (0.5%); Independent Living Skills (0.3%).

HEALTH (4.3%): Hearing/Audiological Services (44.2%); Psychological/Psychiatric (25.6%); Other (23.3%); Eye Care (2.3%); Speech/Communication Therapy (2.3%).

EMPLOYMENT/CRP (78.1%): Job Placement (90.1%); Vocational Counseling and Guidance (12.2%); Other (3.3%); Vocational Evaluation (2.0%); Supported Employment (SE, 0.8%); Psychological Evaluation (0.6%); Community-Based Assessment (0.5%); Job Coaching Other Than SE (0.5%); Life Skills Training (0.4%); Small Business Development (0.4%); Worksite Modification or Accommodation (0.4%); Direct Placement by CRPs (0.3%); Work-Related Tools or Equipment (0.3%); Labor Market Information (0.1%).

SUPPORT (8.6%): Financial Assistance (69.8%); Other (9.3%); Assistive Technology (8.1%); Housing Assistance (5.8%); Transportation (5.8%); Orientation/Mobility Services (1.2%); Assistive Devices (1.2%); Vehicle Modification (1.2%).

Of the statewide total of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 655 persons were determined to be of *transition status (age 24 and under)*. The demographic profile of this subset of transition status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 53.0% male, 47.0% female;

Race: 91.5% White, 8.4% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.2% Unknown;

Age: 81.4% under 20 years old, 18.6% 20–34 years; and

Primary Impairment: 4.4% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 11.5% Physical Impairments, 84.1% Mental Impairments.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the *most frequently reported service needs* in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment/CRP, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 655 transitioning youth with significant disabilities. The approximate percentage of transitioning youth with significant disabilities reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (28.1%): Other (58.7%); 2-yr or 4-yr College (42.4%); Vocational Education (0.9%); Graduate Education (0.5%); High School Education (0.3%); Tutoring (0.3%).

TRAINING (45.2%): Business/Vocational Training (72.6%); Drive Training/Licensing (13.5%); Other (11.8%); Job Search Training/Assistance (6.8%); Career Planning Training (5.4%); On-The-Job Training/Job Trial (0.7%); independent living skills (0.3%).

HEALTH (2.9%): Psychological/Psychiatric (42.1%); Hearing/Audiological Services (31.5%); Other (21.1%); Speech/Communication Therapy (5.3%).

EMPLOYMENT/CRP (75.4%): Job Placement (88.3%); Vocational Counseling and Guidance (16.4%); Other (2.4%); Vocational Evaluation (2.4%); Psychological Evaluation (0.8%); Community- Based Assessment (0.8%); Job Coaching Other Than SE (0.5%); Life Skills Training (0.4%), Small Business Development (0.2%); Direct Placement by CRPs (0.2%); supported employment (0.2%).

SUPPORT (9.5%): Financial Assistance (87.1%); Other (6.5%); Housing Assistance (3.2%); Assistive Technology Services (3.2%); Transportation (1.6%).

Of the statewide total of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 90 persons were determined to be of *minority status*. The demographic profile of this subset of minority status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 55.1% male, 44.9% female;

Race: 3.3% American Indian, 2.2% Asian, 75.6% African American, and 18.9% Hispanic;

Age: 52.2% under 20 years old, 21.1% 20–34 years, 6.7% 35–44 years, 17.8% 45–64 years, 2.2% 65 years or older; and

Primary Impairment: 6.7% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 16.7% Physical Impairments, 76.7% Mental Impairments.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment/CRP, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported *service needs of 90 consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds*. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (21.1%): Other (63.2%); 2-yr or 4-yr College (42.1%); Graduate Degree Education (5.3%).

TRAINING (45.6%): Business/Vocational Training (75.6%); Drive Training/Licensing (14.6%); Job Search Training/Assistance (9.8%); Other Training (4.9%); Career Planning Training (4.9%).

HEALTH (7.7%): Other (57.1%); Psychological/Psychiatric (42.9%); Hearing/Audiological Services (14.3%).

EMPLOYMENT/CRP (77.8%): Job Placement (92.9%); Vocational Counseling and Guidance (7.1%); Other (5.7%); Supported Employment (1.4%); Job Coaching Other Than SE (1.1%).

SUPPORT (8.9%): Financial Assistance (75.0%); Assistive Technology Services (25.0%); Other (12.5%).

Of the statewide total of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 13 persons were determined to be aged 65 years or older. The demographic profile of this subset of *individuals with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older* consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 38.5% male, 61.5% female;

Race: 84.6% White, 15.4% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.0% Unknown;

Age: 100% 65 years or older; and

Primary Impairment: 23.1% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 53.8% Physical Impairments, 23.1% Mental Impairments.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment/CRP, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported *service needs of 13 consumers with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older*. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities aged 65 years or older reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (0.0%).

TRAINING (15.4%): Drive Training/Licensing (100.0%).

HEALTH (7.7%): Hearing/Audiological Services (100.0%).

EMPLOYMENT/CRP (76.9%): Job Placement (90.0%); Other (10.0%).

SUPPORT (30.8%): Assistive Technology (25.0%); Orientation/Mobility Services (25.0%); Housing Assistance (25.0%); Vehicle Modification (25.0%).

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF DRS FIELD STAFF ON THE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

DRS is mandated under the federal Rehabilitation Act to periodically conduct a needs assessment of persons with significant disabilities. As part of this process and in conjunction with WV SRC, DRS issued a survey in 2018 to its field staff, including rehabilitation services associates, counselors, supervisors, and managers. The SPPE Unit developed a multiple-choice and open-ended response survey for DRS field staff to provide feedback on the service needs and service gaps of their consumers. The comprehensive survey asked them to offer their perceptions of the service needs and service gaps of persons with significant disabilities being served, including students with disabilities' need for pre–employment transition services (Pre-ETS). The survey also obtained the specific areas where service needs and gaps were perceived to exist. The survey instrument and methodology were based on previous needs assessment studies, as they generated valid and reliable information on the service needs of persons with significant disabilities in West Virginia.

Surveys were distributed by email from SPPE Unit staff to District Managers, who then distributed the surveys to field staff in their purview. Field staff were informed of the value and importance of their responses to the CSNA survey. Field staff were given approximately one month for survey completion and were told to contact SPPE Unit staff with any questions regarding the survey. Field staff were also instructed to submit completed surveys to the SPPE Unit via email. The survey was completed and submitted by 100 DRS field staff, including rehabilitation services associates, counselors, supervisors, and managers.

Respondent Information

The survey collected information about the respondent for use in data analyses and to assist DRS in making targeted and necessary changes based on the service needs and service gaps by office and district.

Respondents were asked to provide information about their primary caseload by selecting from: General Field, Blind/Visually Impaired, School/Transition, Deaf/Hearing Impairment. Respondents could select 'Other' and write-in a caseload not listed.

Respondents were asked to provide their DRS office location(s) and which county or counties in the state they covered.

Respondents were asked to provide the number of years they have worked in field services. Respondents were also asked to indicate job titles they have held at DRS by selecting from the following: Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee, Rehabilitation Counselor, Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Field Office Manager/Supervisor, District Manager, or Rehabilitation Services Associate. Respondents could also select 'Other' and write-in their job title if not listed.

Assessing Service Needs and Service Gaps

The main objective of the survey was to assess the service needs and service gaps for DRS consumers with significant or most significant disabilities. Seventy-one services were placed into six categories: Educational, Training, Health, Employment and CRP, Support, and Pre-ETS. Each service was accompanied by checkboxes in two columns: Need and Gap. Respondents were asked to "please indicate whether most of the consumers you serve in your area can benefit from the service" by placing an 'X' in the Need column for that service. Additionally, respondents were asked to "indicate whether you feel there is a service gap (i.e., services are needed, but not available in sufficient quantities) for each service by placing an 'X' in the Gap column." In each category (with the exception of Pre-ETS), respondents were also given the opportunity to include an "other" service by writing in and acknowledging whether a need or gap existed for that service.

Services from the survey are listed below by category:

Educational Services — High School Education, Special Education Service, Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education, 2-yr or 4-yr College, Graduate Education, Tutoring, and Literacy Instruction.

Training Services — Work Adjustment Training, Business/Vocational Training, Job Search Training/Assistance, On-The-Job Training/Job Trial, Career Planning Training, Training on Disability Rights, Training in Sign Language, Independent Living Skills, Life Skills Training, Drive Training/Licensing, Job Club Skills Training, Instruction in Reading Braille, and Instruction in Lip Reading.

Health Services — Physician's Services, Speech/Communication Therapy, Substance Abuse Treatment, Eye Care, Dental Care, Hospital Services, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Hearing/Audiological Services, and Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment.

Employment and CRP Services — Labor Market Information, Extended Assessment, Work Adjustment Training, Community Based Assessment, Trial Work Experience, Psychological Evaluation, Vocational Evaluation, Vocational Counseling and Guidance, Job Placement, Small Business Development, Worksite Modification or Accommodation, Work Skills Assessment, Life Skills Training, Direct Placement by CRPs, Job Development, Supported Employment (SE), Job Coaching Other than SE, Extended Supported Employment Service (ESES), and Work-related Tools or Equipment.

Support Services — Personal Assistant/Attendant Services, Reader Services, Orientation/Mobility Services, Housing Assistance, Assistive Devices (e.g., cane, wheelchair), Services to Family Members, Child Care, Peer Support, Post-Employment Services (follow-up), Transportation, Vehicle Maintenance/Repair, Financial Assistance, Assistive Technology Services, Interpreter Services, Home Modification, and Vehicle Modification.

Pre-Employment Transition Services — Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities, Workplace Readiness Training, and Self-Advocacy Training.

Overall Service Needs for DRS Consumers

The survey included five questions where respondents were asked to list UP TO FIVE services that consumers need in their service area. The question was repeated for 1) consumers with disabilities in DRS general territories, 2) transitioning youth with disabilities (age 24 and younger), 3) individuals who are deaf/hearing impaired, 4) individuals who are blind/visually impaired, and 5) minority individuals with disabilities. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with consumers described in each question.

Barriers to Employment

Respondents were asked to "indicate (with an 'X') whether any of the following are substantial barriers, preventing the consumers you serve from gaining and/or maintaining employment."

Respondents were provided a list of the following 17 potential barriers:

- Slow Job Market
- Employer Attitudinal Barriers
- Consumer Attitudinal Barriers
- Lack of Long-Term Support after Job Placement
- Lack of Qualified Service Providers
- Loss of Disability Benefits and/or Food Assistance
- Family Support
- Lack of Available Rehabilitation Services from CRPs
- Lack of Physical Access to Employer or Services (e.g., ramps, etc.)
- Adequate Housing
- Lack of Information Regarding Disability Resources
- Lack of Personal Care Attendant Services
- Child Care
- Transportation
- Inadequate Medical Care and/or Medical Insurance
- Lack of Time Spent with VR Counselor
- DRS Budget Restriction

Space was provided to write-in and rate an additional barrier not found on the list, if needed.

Integration with Core Partners

The survey included three open-ended response questions regarding respondents' familiarity, experience, and recommendations on integrating services with Workforce Development System Core Partners of WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education:

1. In the space below, please describe your familiarity with the services that WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education provide and the level of need that our consumers with significant disabilities have for those services.
2. Please comment on your experiences with integrating service with WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education (e.g., using Labor Market Information, referrals to and from WorkForce WV, co-serving a client with Adult Education). In addition to your experiences, please discuss other activities that DRS could conduct with our core partners to further help our consumers with significant disabilities.
3. Please provide recommendations on how to better facilitate our partnerships with WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education (e.g., specific cross-trainings, co-location, etc.).

Other Comments

The survey concluded with two open-ended response questions: 1) "What can DRS provide you to better serve our consumers and help you perform your job more effectively and efficiently?" and 2) "Please provide any additional comments regarding unmet service needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities with whom you work."

Results

Results are based on 100 surveys that were completed and submitted by DRS field staff.

Respondent Information Primary Caseload

General Field caseloads were reported as the primary caseload by 39 (39% of the 100 respondents) respondents, while 34 (34%) reported a primary caseload of School/Transition. Six (6%) reported Blind/Visually Impaired primary caseloads and Deaf/Hearing Impaired primary caseloads were reported by three (3%) respondents. Twenty-one (21%) respondents indicated a primary caseload of "Other." These were generally managers with a specialty caseload, but also included some Rehabilitation Service Associates (RSAs). One of the "Other" respondents indicated a "School/Transition" and "Family" caseload. Two of the "Other" respondents indicated a mixed caseload of General Field and School/Transition. Further examination led to these respondents being categorized as having a primary caseload of School/Transition.

Office Location

The total number of respondents by district and office location are as follows:

District 1 (28 Respondents) — Charleston-14, Point Pleasant-3, Ripley-0, Spencer-1, Teays Valley-7, Multiple-3.

District 2 (20) — Clarksburg-6, Elkins-2, Morgantown-5, Fairmont-2, Weston-2, Multiple-3.

District 3 (6) — Parkersburg-0, New Martinsville-0, Weirton-5, Wheeling-1.

District 4 (10) — Beckley-2, Lewisburg-0, Oak Hill-0, Princeton-3, Summersville-3, Multiple-2.

District 5 (21) — Huntington-14, Logan-2, Marshall University-1, Mullens-1, Welch-2, Multiple-1.

District 6 (15) — Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-4, Romney-0, Multiple-6.

Years of Experience in DRS Field Services

Of the 100 respondents, 98 reported the number of years worked in DRS Field Services. Respondents had varying amounts of experience working in Field Services, from less than one year to 35 years (mean = 9.4 years). Many respondents (34%) reported four or fewer years of Field Services experience.

Titles Held

All 100 respondents reported having held at least 1 title in Field Services. Of the 100 respondents, 19 reported having been Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees, 73 had been Rehabilitation Counselors, 37 had been Senior Rehabilitation Counselors, and 19 had been Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. There were 20 current/former RSAs, 20 current/former Branch Office Managers/Supervisors, and 7 current/former District Managers.

Service Need/Use

Service need/use for each service was assessed to allow respondents to indicate which services their consumers need/use most often. This was done independently of the service gap assessment as some services may be highly needed/used but are readily available and therefore do not require an increase in availability.

Services that were identified as needed by 50% or more of the total respondents are listed for each service category below with the percentage of respondents in parentheses:

Educational Services

Vocational Education (89%), 2-year or 4-year College (78%), Tutoring (73%) High School (66%), Special Education (60%), and Adult Basic Education (59%).

Training Services

Job Search Training/Assistance (85%), Career Planning (75%), Life Skills Training (75%), On-the- job Training/Job Trial (73%), Business Vocational (72%), Independent Living Skills (67%), Drive Training/Licensing (65%), Work Adjustment Training (62%), and Training on Disability Rights (59%).

Health Services

Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment (76%), Substance Abuse Treatment (58%), Physician's Services (57%), and Eye Care (50%).

Employment and CRP Services

Labor Market Information (79%), Vocational Counseling and Guidance (79%), Job Placement (79%), Community Based Assessment (73%), Psychological Evaluation (72%), Work Skills Assessment (71%), Vocational Evaluation (70%), Job Development (68%), Work Adjustment Training (66%), Direct Placement (66%), Life Skills (65%), Job Coaching (other than Supported Employment; 58%), Work-related tools or equipment (53%), and Trial Work Experience (51%).

Support Services

Transportation (81%), Financial Assistance (57%), and Assistive Technology (55%).

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Job Exploration Counseling (72%), Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (72%), Workplace Readiness Training (69%), Work-Based Learning Experiences (66%), and Self-Advocacy Training (64%).

Service Gaps

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Educational Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for educational services were:

Tutoring (48, 48%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-7, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Huntington-8, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-2, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-4, Morgantown-2, Mullens-2, New Martinsville-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-2, Ripley-2, Romney-3, Spencer-2, Summersville-4, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-3, Welch-1, Weston-2, and Wheeling-1.

Literacy Instruction (21, 21%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-1, Clarksburg-2, Fairmont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-1, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-3, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-1, Summersville-3, Teays Valley-1, and Weirton-2.

Adult Basic Education (19, 19%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-1, Huntington-4, Keyser-1, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Morgantown-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton- 1, Romney-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-2, and Wheeling-1.

Vocational Education (18, 18%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-3, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Oak Hill-1, Summersville-3, Teays Valley-1, Weston-2, and Wheeling-1.

Special Education (13, 13%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-1, Keyser-3, Logan- 1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-1, and Summersville-1.

Training Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for training services were:

Drive Training/Licensing (41, 41%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-8, Keyser-4, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-2, Ripley-1, Romney-2, Spencer- 1, Summersville-4, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, and Weston-2.

Life Skills (31, 31%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-8, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-3, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-2, Ripley-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Weirton-2, and Weston-3.

Job Club Skills (30, 30%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-2, Fairmont-1, Huntington-6, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-3, Ripley- 1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, Weston-3, and Wheeling-1.

On-the-job Training/Job Trial (29, 29%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-5, Elkins-3, Huntington-3, Keyser-4, Lewisburg-1, Logan-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Summersville-3, Weirton-3, and Weston-2.

Sign Language Training (29, 29%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Huntington-2, Keyser-1, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-2,

Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-2, Ripley-1, Romney-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley- 5, and Weirton-3.

Health Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for health services were:

Psychological/Psychiatric Treatment (41, 41%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-8, Elkins-3, Huntington-5, Keyser-5, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-3, Morgantown-2, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-2, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Substance Abuse Treatment (40, 40%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-3, Fairmont- 1, Huntington-7, Keyser-5, Lewisburg-2, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-4, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-4, Romney-3, Summersville-4, Teays Valley- 3, Welch-2, Weston-1, and Wheeling-1.

Dental Care (40, 40%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-6, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-6, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-2, Martinsburg-1, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Summersville-3, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-3, Weston-1, and Wheeling- 1.

Speech/Communication Therapy (21, 21%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-4, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-2, Romney-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Welch-1.

Eye Care (18, 18%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-1, Keyser-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-1, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Weston-1.

Hearing/Audiological Services (18, 18%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Farimont-2, Huntington-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-2, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, and Weston-1.

Employment/CRP Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for employment/CRP services were:

Vocational Evaluation (37, 37%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-7, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-2, Fairmont-1, Huntington-7, Keyser-5, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Romney-3, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-4, and Weston- 1.

Job Placement (31, 31%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-4, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-2, Huntington-3, Keyser- 4, Lewisburg-1, Logan-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-3, Welch-2, and Weston-1.

Job Development (28, 28%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-5, Elkins-4, Huntington-3, Keyser-4, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-3, and Weston-2.

Trial Work Experience (25, 25%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-2, Romney- 2, Summersville-2, Weirton-4, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Extended Supported Employment Services (24, 24%) -- Charleston-2, Elkins-2, Huntington-5, Keyser-4, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-3, and Weston-1.

Support Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for support services were:

Transportation (64, 64%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-6, Clarksburg-6, Elkins-4, Fairmont-3, Huntington- 7, Keyser-7, Lewisburg-2, Logan-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-4, Moorefield-4, Morgantown-2, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-3, Princeton-3, Ripley-1, Romney-5, Spencer-1, Summersville- 5, Teays Valley-7, Weirton-4, Welch-1, and Weston-4.

Housing Assistance (37, 37%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-4, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Huntington-4, Keyser-1, Lewisburg-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-2, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-3, Romney-1, Summersville-4, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-2, Welch-1, Weston-1, and Wheeling-1.

Financial Assistance (33, 33%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-5, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-3, Huntington-5, Keyser-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-2, Summersville-3, Weirton-2, Welch-2, Weston-1, and Wheeling-1.

Peer Support (32, 32%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-3, Fairmont-3, Huntington- 2, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-2, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, Welch-1, Weston-2, and Wheeling-1.

Child Care (30, 30%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-1, Fairmont-3, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-2, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-3, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, Welch-2, Weston-1, and Wheeling-1.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

The five most commonly reported gaps for Pre-ETS were:

Work-Based Learning Experiences (25, 25%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-3, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-3, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Work Place Readiness Training (25, 25%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-4, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney- 2, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Weirton-1, Welch-1, and Weston-3.

Self-Advocacy Training (19, 19%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, and Weston-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (13, 13%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan- 1, Martinsburg-1, Point Pleasant-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (12, 12%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Note: New categories created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre-existing service category from the survey. For example, the "Overall Training" category was created to include a number of open-ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, "Training options" and "Training services." The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

General Territories

The survey asked participants to "Please list the TOP FIVE services that our consumers with disabilities in DRS general territories need within your service area." There were 82 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (45, 54.88%) -- Beckley-4, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-2, Fairmont-1, Huntington-3, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-4, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-3, Princeton-5, Ripley-2, Romney-2, Spencer-3, Summersville-4, Teays Valley- 5, Weirton-4, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Overall Training (28, 34.15%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-1, Fairmont-3, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-3, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-2, Ripley-2, Romney-2, Spencer-3, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-1, and Welch-1.

Job Placement (23, 28.05%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-4, Clarksburg-3, Fairmont-3, Huntington-2, Keyser-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-2, Point Pleasant-2, Ripley-1, Romney-1, Spencer-2, and Teays Valley-2.

Psychological/Psychiatric Services (17, 20.73%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-5, Fairmont-1, Huntington- 5, Lewisburg-1, Martinsburg-1, Oak Hill-1, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Wheeling-1.

Substance Abuse Treatment (14, 17.07%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-1, Huntington-7, Logan-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, and Weston-1.

Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, "From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 74 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (38, 51.35%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-4, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-5, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-2, Summersville- 5, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, and Wheeling-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (26, 35.14%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-1, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, and Weston-2.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (23, 31.08%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-1, Clarksburg-6, Fairmont- 3, Huntington-1, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-4, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Welch-1.

Workplace Readiness Training (16, 21.62%) -- Charleston-1, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-4, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Teays Valley-2, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Overall Training (15, 20.27%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Keyser-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-2, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-2, and Weston-1.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Respondents were asked, "From your experience with individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 32 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Hearing/Audiological Services (19, 59.38%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-1, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-3, Martinsburg-1, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, Weston-2, and Wheeling-1.

Interpreter Services (12, 37.50%) -- Beckley-1, Clarksburg-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-2, Teays Valley-4, Weirton-1, and Wheeling-1.

Assistive Technology (7, 21.88%) -- Charleston-1, Huntington-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-1, Teays Valley-1, and Wheeling-1.

Job Placement (6, 18.75%) -- Charleston-1, Clarksburg-1, Fairmont-1, Martinsburg-1, Morgantown- 2, Point Pleasant-1, and Teays Valley-1.

Sign Language Training (5, 15.63%) -- Beckley-1, Clarksburg-2, Teays Valley-1, and Wheeling-1.

Blind/Visually Impaired

Respondents were asked, "From your experience with individuals who are blind/visually impaired with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 26 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Assistive Technology (12, 46.15%) -- Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Huntington-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-4, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Romney-2, Teays Valley-1, and Wheeling-1.

Transportation (10, 38.46%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-2, Huntington-1, Keyser-1, Lewisburg-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Oak Hill-1, Princeton-1, Romney-1, Summersville-1, Weirton-2, and Wheeling-1.

Orientation/Mobility Services (7, 26.92%) -- Charleston-1, Clarksburg-2, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Morgantown-3, and Romney-2.

Assessment (5, 19.23%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-1, Lewisburg-1, Martinsburg-1, Princeton-1, and Summersville-1.

Job Placement (4, 15.38%) -- Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Fairmont-1, Keyser-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, and Romney-1.

Minority Individuals

The survey asked, "From your experience with minority individuals with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 64 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (30, 46.88%) -- Beckley-4, Charleston-3, Elkins-1, Huntington-4, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-2, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-2, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-3, Ripley-1, Romney-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-5, Weirton-2, and Welch-1.

Job Placement (17, 26.56%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-4, Keyser-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-2, Teays Valley-3, and Welch-1.

Overall Training (16, 25%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-1, Keyser-3, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-1, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Counseling and Guidance (11, 17.19%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-2, Farimont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Romney-1, Teays Valley-1, and Wheeling-1.

Self-Advocacy (10, 15.63%) -- Clarksburg-3, Huntington-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Princeton-1, and Teays Valley-2.

Barriers to Employment

The top five most frequently indicated barriers were Transportation (92 responses), Slow Job Market (63), Lack of Family Support (63), DRS Budget Restrictions (57), and Employer Attitudinal Barriers (56).

Integration with Core Partners

DRS Field Staff members were asked three open-ended response questions regarding their familiarity, experience, and recommendations on integrating services with Workforce Development System Core Partners of WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education.

1. *In the space below, please describe your familiarity with the services that WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education provide and the level of need that our consumers with significant disabilities have for those services.*

There were 93 responses to this prompt. Responses were categorized on two dimensions: 1) Familiarity with services provided by WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education and 2) level of need for those services. For the familiarity dimension, responses were judged to express either high familiarity, some familiarity, or no familiarity. Twenty-three responses (24.7%) indicated high familiarity, 50 responses (53.8%) indicated some familiarity, and 20 responses (21.5%) indicated no familiarity. For the need dimension, responses were judged to express either high need, some need, or no indication. Seventeen responses (18.3%) indicated high need, 24 responses (25.8%) indicated some need, and 52 responses (55.9%) indicated no need.

* A large proportion of respondents expressed no indication of need, typically by not addressing the dimension of need in their response. This suggests that many respondents may have failed to recognize the two-part nature of the question or may have become so involved in discussing familiarity that they forgot to discuss need. Separating the item into two separate parts may remedy this in the future.

1. *Please comment on your experiences with integrating service with WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education (e.g., using Labor Market Information, referrals to and from WorkForce WV, co-serving a client with Adult Education). In addition to your experiences, please discuss other activities that DRS could conduct with our core partners to further help our consumers with significant disabilities*.

There were 89 responses to this prompt. Responses were categorized on two dimensions: 1) whether the field staff had experience with integrating services with WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education and 2) whether other activities that DRS could conduct with core partners were discussed. In categorizing experience with integrating services, mention of referral of individuals to a core partner was not regarded as service integration.

The responses of 17 field staff (19.1%) indicated experience with integrating services with core partners. Among the remaining responses, 19 field staff (21.35%) mentioned that they had referred consumers to partners or had received referrals from partners. Other field staff explicitly stated that they had limited or no experience with integrating services.

The responses of 19 field staff (21.35%) discussed activities that DRS could conduct with core partners. Among the remaining responses, five field staff (5.62%) discussed activities that core partners could conduct (e.g., forward labor market research information with a client's referral) to make things easier. Several others gave no recommendations.

1. *Please provide recommendations on how to better facilitate our partnerships with WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education (e.g., specific cross-trainings, co-location, etc.).*

There were 82 responses to this prompt. Suggestions with similar themes were grouped and some respondents provided comments that spanned multiple themes. The most common recommendation theme involved training or cross-training (generally focusing on learning what other partners provide), with 45 (54.88%) responses. Having meetings between the partners was the next most common theme (15, 18.29%), followed by information access (11, 13.41%) and communication (7, 8.54%). An additional 11 responses (13.41%) indicated no recommendation (e.g., "N/A" or "No comment").

Comments and Suggestions

There were 83 respondents that provided comments when asked for ways in which DRS could help them perform their job more effectively and efficiently. Suggestions with similar themes were grouped and some respondents provided comments that spanned several themes. The most common response themes were Training (23 respondents, 27.71%), Budget/Staffing (15, 18.07%), Policy Changes (11, 13.25%), Service Provision (11, 13.25%), and Communication (10, 12.05%).

Additional Comments on the Unmet Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

There were 38 respondents that provided additional comments which were grouped into major themes. Fourteen responses (36.84%) were related to service provision. The next most common responses were for Transportation (9 respondents, 23.68%), Policy changes (5, 13.16%), and Budget/staffing issues (3, 7.89%). An additional eight responses (21.05%) indicated no topic (e.g., "N/A" or "None").

Discussion

As part of the FY 2018 CSNA, DRS field staff members were surveyed on the VR service needs and gaps for West Virginians with significant disabilities. The responses will be used in

conjunction with other CSNA activities to develop the PY 2020-2023 Unified State Plan, including agency goals and priorities, and related strategies. A total of 100 DRS field staff members provided detailed insight into the perceived service needs and gaps throughout the state. The current survey responses echo previous CSNA results, with many of the same service needs and gaps being reported. Overall, the most commonly reported service needs for the FY 2018 CSNA were for Transportation, Overall Training, Job Placement, Psychological/psychiatric services, and Substance Abuse Treatment. Transportation has consistently been the most often reported barrier for West Virginians with significant disabilities. DRS continues to implement and monitor various strategies to improve transportation availability.

Minority Populations

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act, the survey asked respondents to identify the service needs of individuals from minority backgrounds. The most commonly reported service needs were Transportation, Job Placement, Overall Training, Counseling and Guidance, and Self-Advocacy; the first four services being identical to the top four service needs for minorities from the FY 2015 CSNA.

CRP Services

As required by the WIOA, the survey asked respondents to identify any need for CRP services, including SE. The top reported CRP service needs were Community Based Assessment, Work Skills Assessment, Direct Placement, Work Adjustment Training, and Life Skills Training. In recent years, DRS has adopted goals and priorities to improve access to CRP services. Through successful strategies, DRS now utilizes a statewide network of 80 CRP locations. These CRPs provide valuable services throughout the state, benefiting West Virginians with significant disabilities. Transitioning youth also benefit from CRP services through the provision of pre-employment transition services, including career exploration.

Transitioning Youth (TY)

Respondents were asked to provide the top service needs for TY with significant disabilities. The top five reported service needs for TY were Transportation, Job Exploration Counseling, Work- Based Learning Experiences, Workplace Readiness Training, and Overall Training. DRS will continue to partner with state and local school systems to ensure access to VR and other pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. Through these partnerships and shared resources, TY will have increased opportunities to achieve competitive, integrated employment.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

In 2018, SPPE staff members, under guidance of the WVSRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide.

Of the statewide total of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities at the time of their DRS application, 90 persons were determined to be of minority status. The demographic profile of this subset of minority status individuals with significant disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 55.1% male, 44.9% female;

Race: 3.3% American Indian, 2.2% Asian, 75.6% African American, 18.9% Hispanic;

Age: 52.2% under 20 years old, 21.1% 20–34 years, 6.7% 35–44 years, 17.8% 45–64 years, 2.2% 65 years or older; and

Primary Impairment: 6.7% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 16.7% Physical Impairments, 76.7% Mental Impairments.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS identified the following as the most frequently reported service needs in each of the categories of Education, Training, Health, Employment, and Support, based on the qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 90 consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds. The approximate percentage of consumers with significant disabilities from minority backgrounds reporting each service need is also listed below.

EDUCATION (21.1%): Other (63.2%); 2-yr or 4-yr College (42.1%); Graduate Degree Education (5.3%).

TRAINING (45.6%): Business/Vocational Training (75.6%); Drive Training/Licensing (14.6%); Job Search Training/Assistance (9.8%); Other Training (4.9%); Career Planning Training (4.9%).

HEALTH (7.7%): Other (57.1%); Psychological/Psychiatric (42.9%); Hearing/Audiological Services (14.3%).

EMPLOYMENT/CRP (77.8%): Job Placement (92.9%); Vocational Counseling and Guidance (7.1%); Other (5.7%); Supported Employment (1.4%); Job Coaching Other Than SE (1.1%).

SUPPORT (8.9%): Financial Assistance (75.0%); Assistive Technology Services (25.0%); Other (12.5%).

AS REPORTED BY DRS FIELD STAFF

Respondents to the DRS field staff survey were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Note: New categories were created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre-existing service category from the survey. For example, the “Overall Training” category was created to include a number of open-ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, “Training options” and “Training services.” The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

Minority Individuals

The survey asked, “From your experience with minority individuals with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area.” There were 64 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (30, 46.88%) -- Beckley-4, Charleston-3, Elkins-1, Huntington-4, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-2, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-2, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-3, Ripley-1, Romney-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-5, Weirton-2, and Welch-1.

Job Placement (17, 26.56%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-4, Keyser-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-2, Teays Valley-3, and Welch-1.

Overall Training (16, 25%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-1, Keyser-3, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Morgantown-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-1, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Counseling and Guidance (11, 17.19%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-2, Farimont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Romney-1, Teays Valley-1, and Wheeling-1.

Self-Advocacy (10, 15.63%) -- Clarksburg-3, Huntington-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-1, Princeton-1, and Teays Valley-2.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY DRS

As has been the case for many years, DRS' direct client services units located at DRS' Nitro location will continue to be critical for DRS to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who would otherwise be unserved and/or underserved, including individuals with disabilities who live in the rural part of the State, blind and visually impaired individuals, and the deaf and hard of hearing. The DRS Environmental Modifications Unit provides consumer services to assure they have the highest level of independence in and around their home and work by providing evaluations, technical assistance, and modifications.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (which are the most recent estimates available as of October 1, 2019) there are approximately 122,252 racial minorities (including multi-racial) in West Virginia, making up 6.7% of the state's total population. Since FY 2015, DRS has slightly exceeded this percentage in terms of minority consumers served (8.4%, 8.1%, 8.3%, 8.8%, and 8.7% for FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019, respectively), indicating overall equal access to services.

2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates data reveals that nine counties in West Virginia have minority populations that exceed 3,000: Berkeley (14,229, 12.7% of total county population); Cabell (8,680, 9.0%); Jefferson (6,947, 12.5%); Kanawha (21,557, 11.5%); Marion (3,452, 6.1%); Mercer (5,364, 8.8%); Monongalia (10,424, 10.1%); Raleigh (9,200, 11.9%); and Wood (3,110, 3.6%).

In each year since FY 2015, the DRS minority service percentage has exceeded the county minority population percentage for eight of the nine aforementioned counties: Berkeley, Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Marion, Mercer, Raleigh, and Wood. The DRS minority service percentage was below the county minority population percentage in each year since FY 2015 for Monongalia county. Below is a list of each of these nine counties (with its respective minority population and percentage in parentheses), followed by the DRS minority service percentage for each county in FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019.

Berkeley (14,229, 12.7%): FY 2015 – 18.1%; FY 2016 – 19.4%; FY 2017 – 18.9%; FY 2018 – 14.1%; FY 2019 – 15.0%

Cabell (8,680, 9.0%): FY 2015 – 10.7%; FY 2016 – 11.0%; FY 2017 – 13.0%; FY 2018 – 15.1%; FY 2019 – 14.0%

Jefferson (6,947, 12.5%): FY 2015 – 18.0%; FY 2016 – 13.4%; FY 2017 – 14.0%; FY 2018 – 15.6%; FY 2019 – 16.6%

Kanawha (21,557, 11.5%): FY 2015 – 18.5%; FY 2016 – 16.8%; FY 2017 – 15.6%; FY 2018 – 16.1%; FY 2019 – 15.9%

Marion (3,452, 6.1%): FY 2015 – 9.1%; FY 2016 – 8.1%; FY 2017 – 7.0%; FY 2018 – 10.2%; FY 2019 – 6.4%

Mercer (5,364, 8.8%): FY 2015 – 13.2%; FY 2016 – 14.5%; FY 2017 – 12.3%; FY 2018 – 13.8%; FY 2019 – 15.2%

Monongalia (10,424, 10.1%): FY 2015 – 7.9%; FY 2016 – 7.7%; FY 2017 – 9.5%; FY 2018 – 8.5%; FY 2019 – 7.4%

Raleigh (9,200, 11.9%): FY 2015 – 14.7%; FY 2016 – 13.5%; FY 2017 – 13.2%; FY 2018 – 13.7%; FY 2019 – 13.1%

Wood (3,110, 3.6%): FY 2015 – 6.3%; FY 2016 – 4.9%; FY 2017 – 5.2%; FY 2018 – 5.0%; FY 2019 – 6.0%

In addition, the 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates data indicated five additional counties in West Virginia with a minority population under 3,000 and a county minority population percentage greater than the State's minority population percentage of 6.7%: Gilmer (1,484; 17.9%), McDowell (2,132; 10.8%), Ohio (2,930; 6.8%), Preston (2,274; 6.7%), and Summers (968; 7.3%). Of these five counties, only Ohio County had a DRS minority service percentage (8.8% in FY 2015, 9.4% in FY 2016, 9.3% in FY 2017, 10.9% in FY 2018, and 12.6% in FY 2019) consistently higher than its county minority population percentage (6.8%). No minorities were served by DRS in FY 2015 and FY 2016 in Gilmer County. Below is a list of each of these five counties (with its respective minority population and percentage in parentheses), followed by the DRS minority service percentage for each county in FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019.

Gilmer (1,484; 17.9%): FY 2015 – 0.0%; FY 2016 – 0.0%; FY 2017 – 6.3%; FY 2018 – 13.8%; FY 2019 – 14.3%

McDowell (2,132; 10.8%): FY 2015 – 11.4%; FY 2016 – 7.9%; FY 2017 – 6.7%; FY 2018 – 8.9%; FY 2019 – 10.7%

Ohio (2,930; 6.8%): FY 2015 – 8.8%; FY 2016 – 9.4%; FY 2017 – 9.3%; FY 2018 – 10.9%; FY 2019 – 12.6%

Preston (2,274; 6.7%): FY 2015 – 4.4%; FY 2016 – 5.6%; FY 2017 – 6.7%; FY 2018 – 6.5%; FY 2019 – 9.6%

Summers (968; 7.3%): FY 2015 – 3.4%; FY 2016 – 4.8%; FY 2017 – 7.1%; FY 2018 – 8.6%; FY 2019 – 6.5%

To determine potentially underserved areas, the DRS minority service percentage for the five–year period (FY 2015 – FY 2019) for each county was compared to that county's minority population percentage. Counties with mean DRS minority service percentages that are lower than the minority population percentage are considered to be potentially underserved. Of the 14 aforementioned counties, only 5 counties met this criterion: Gilmer, McDowell, Monongalia, Preston, and Summers counties.

DRS utilized geographic information systems (GIS) to pinpoint potential underserved zip codes in Gilmer, McDowell, Monongalia, Preston, and Summers counties. Zip codes that meet two criteria are identified as potential underserved areas: (1) the zip code has a minority population greater than or equal to 50 and (2) there are 10 or fewer minority consumers (as of October, 2019) reported in the agency's database over the last four fiscal years. Applying these criteria reveals 11 potentially underserved zip codes; 1 in Gilmer County (Sand Fork), 2 in McDowell County (Big Sandy and Maybeury), 2 in Monongalia County (Granville and Osage), 4 in Preston County (Albright, Bruceton Mills, Kingwood, and Terra Alta), and 2 in Summers County (Hinton and Pipestem). DRS will pursue outreach efforts in these zip codes to market and expand VR services to individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

FISCAL YEAR 2018 COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE WEST VIRGINIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Introduction

One requirement of the CSNA is an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. In West Virginia, this system is overseen at the state level by the State Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) and locally by seven Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) that preside over localized workforce development system activities. The State and Local WDBs are comprised of representatives from business, labor, and public agencies. The ICT is comprised of eight state partner agencies that encompass the WV workforce development system. The purpose of the ICT is to foster cooperation and coordination of services among partner agencies.

American Job Centers are physical locations where consumers, including those with disabilities, can utilize services provided by partner agencies operating under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WorkForce WV is the agency, within the WV Department of Commerce, that operates American Job Centers across the seven workforce development regions across the state. DRS' involvement in the State WDB, ICT, and LWDBs in addition to its presence at American Job Centers ensures that people with disabilities are considered as employment training needs and services are identified.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

To assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in West Virginia, DRS utilizes a multifaceted, broad approach. This report only covers a single activity and targeted population within the overall comprehensive statewide needs assessment – the rehabilitation needs of individuals served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. This report provides a brief overview of service availability via physical American Job Center locations followed by the results of a survey provided to all members of the ICT, including the directors of all LWDBs.

American Job Center Types and Locations

As of October 2019, there are 35 American Job Center (AJC) locations including 13 comprehensive and 22 affiliate centers. Based on the federal regulations at 20 CFR §678.305 and §678.310, the two types of centers are defined based on the following criteria:

1. Comprehensive AJC – A comprehensive AJC is a physical location where job seeker and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required AJC partners. A comprehensive AJC must have at least one title I staff person physically present. The comprehensive AJC must provide career services, access to training services, access to employment and training activities carried out under sec. 134(d) of WIOA, access to programs and activities carried out by AJC partners listed in 678.400 through 678.410, including the Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, and workforce and labor market information.

2. Affiliate Site – An affiliated site is a site that makes available to job seeker and employer customers one or more of the AJC partners' programs, services, and activities. An affiliated site does not need to provide access to every required AJC partner program. The frequency of program staff's physical presence in the affiliated site will be determined at the local level. Affiliated sites are access points in addition to the comprehensive one-stop center(s) in each local area. If used by local areas as a part of the service delivery strategy, affiliate sites must be implemented in a manner that supplements and enhances customer access to services.

Please note that there are seven workforce development regions in West Virginia, whereas DRS has six regions. The following provides the breakdown of American Job Centers by type and workforce development region:

- Region One consists of five comprehensive centers and four affiliate centers. The LWDB oversees service delivery in 11 counties of southeastern WV: Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming. The region is mountainous and rural in nature. The coal industry continues to experience a large number of dislocations throughout the region as well as the closure of several chain retail stores. Training services are being utilized to assist many citizens in the local areas to retrain in new career pathways. Industry expected growth in the area includes, but is not limited, to: Administrative/Support Services, Construction, Health Care and Social Services, Wood Product Manufacturing, and Professional Services.

- Region Two consists of one comprehensive center located in Huntington and eight affiliate sites including four Community and Technical College (CTC) sites. The affiliate sites provide WIOA services and Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) services in all locations. There are seven counties that make up the region: Putnam, Cabell, Mingo, Logan, Lincoln, Boone and Wayne.

- Region Three consists of one comprehensive center serving the citizens of Kanawha County including dislocated workers, adults, and youth. Staff arrange to go to other locations to provide services based upon need. Kanawha County is mostly urban but has a significant outlying rural population.

- Region Four is served by one comprehensive center and six affiliate centers. It consists of nine counties that comprises a region of rural and urban populations: Calhoun, Clay, Jackson, Mason, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, and Wood. The region is supported by a variety of industries including Health Care, Plastics/Polymers, Professional Services, Warehousing, Transportation, Oil and Gas, and Construction. Government employment at the federal, state, and local levels also employ a considerable number of the region's citizens

- Region Five consists of two comprehensive centers and one affiliate center. Six counties comprise the area overseen by the LWDB: Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, Tyler, and Wetzel. The region is bounded by the Ohio River on the north and west and the state of Pennsylvania on the east.
- Region Six consists of one comprehensive center and three affiliate centers that serve 13 counties in North Central WV: Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur. The region's location along the I-79 corridor is advantageous.
- Region Seven consists of two comprehensive centers. Eight counties are served by the LWDB: Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson, Grant, Hardy, Hampshire, Mineral, and Pendleton. The region offers a contrast of the rural in western counties and fast-paced suburban sprawl of the eastern counties, part of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area.

SURVEY OF ICT MEMBERS

In June 2018, DRS emailed a survey to all members of the ICT. At the time of the survey, in addition to the seven regional WDB directors, ICT membership included the following WV state agencies:

- Bureau of Senior Services
- State Unit on Aging
- Council for Community and Technical College
- Department of Education
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities
- Postsecondary Vocational Education
- Office of Institutional Programs
- Department of Commerce
- DRS
- WorkForce WV
- WV Employment Service
- Development Office
- Community Development Division
- Business Industry Development
- Department of Health and Human Resources
- Bureau of Children and Families
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Stamp Employment and Training
- Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

- Division of Corrections

Survey

The survey consisted of seven questions to collect information about the respondent, the agency they represent, and their perception of the rehabilitation service needs and gaps of the individuals with significant disabilities that they serve. The questions were as follows:

– Name

– Title

– Agency

– Approximately how many consumers with significant disabilities are served by your agency per year?

– Please identify the vocational rehabilitation services most often needed by consumers with significant disabilities served by your agency (up to five services).

– Please identify any vocational rehabilitation service gaps (i.e., services that are needed, but not available in sufficient quantities, if at all) for consumers with significant disabilities served by your agency (up to five services).

– How can DRS assist your agency to better serve your consumers with significant disabilities? Please add any additional comments you wish to provide.

Results

Six surveys were returned via email. Respondents represented WorkForce WV, the Bureau of Senior Services, WV Adult Education, and WDB Regions 2, 3, and 5.

Number of Individuals with Disabilities Served

The approximate number of consumers with disabilities served by each agency varied greatly, from 1 to over 26,000. One respondent was unable to provide this information.

Services Most Often Needed

Six respondents provided service need information. The most commonly reported service needs were transportation, education/training, soft skills training, assessment for accommodations, and job placement.

Service Gaps

Four respondents provided service gap information. The responses included access to services, assessment for learning disabilities, transportation, assistance with training and related costs, job coaching, youth services, and rehabilitation technology.

DRS Assistance and Additional Comments

Respondents indicated a desire for continued cross training and collaboration, more outreach to potentially eligible individuals, and making cross referrals.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED PRE–EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SPPE staff members in 2018, under guidance of the WV SRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. These individuals represent a good sample of consumers with significant disabilities that will continue to seek assistance from agencies in coming years, *ceteris paribus*. All 55 counties in West Virginia were represented in the sample. SPPE staff members separately analyzed the needs comments of the 449 students with disabilities included in the sample. The needs comments were analyzed and grouped based on their indication or implication of need of one or more of five required Pre-ETS:

– Job exploration counseling;

– Work–based learning experiences, which may include in–school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

– Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

– Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

– Instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The demographic profile of these 449 students with disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 50.6% male, 49.4% female;

Race: 92.9% White, 6.9% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.2% Unspecified;

Age: 96.9% under 20 years old, 3.1% 20-34 years; and

Primary Impairment: 4.9% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 10.9% Physical Impairments, 84.2% Mental Impairments.

Of the 449 students with disabilities providing needs comments, 106 (23.6%) indicated or implied a need for one or more Pre-ETS.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the following report presents the results of the qualitative analysis on the needs comments of these 106 students with disabilities who indicated or implied a need for one or more Pre-ETS.

Job Exploration Counseling (72, 67.9%); Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Educational Programs (13, 12.3); Work–Based Learning Experiences (6, 5.7%); Instruction in Self–Advocacy (2, 1.9%); and Workplace Readiness Training (1, 0.9%).

AS REPORTED BY DRS FIELD STAFF

WIOA requires that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment include an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation service needs of "youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre–employment transition services." DRS field staff that serve transitioning youth are one key resource in identifying the service needs of youth with

disabilities in West Virginia. Therefore, needs assessment surveys completed by 100 DRS field staff were analyzed in order to identify students' needs for Pre-ETS.

Respondents

There were 34 respondents, 34% of the 100, that indicated having a primary caseload of School/Transition. However, a number of field staff have a secondary caseload of School/Transition. In total, 77 field staff (77%) reported regarding needs for at least one Pre-ETS category. This number includes 37 field staff (37%) who also reported a service gap for at least one Pre-ETS category. The breakdown of these 77 respondents by position is as follows:

Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee, 12 respondents (15.6%)

Rehabilitation Counselor, 60 respondents (77.9%)

Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, 28 respondents (36.4%)

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, 13 respondents (16.9%)

Branch Office Manager/Supervisor, 17 respondents (22.1%)

District Manager, 6 respondents (7.8%)

Rehabilitation Services Associate, 13 respondents (16.9%)

Note: Percentages do not total 100%, because staff were instructed to indicate previous positions as well as current positions.

Office Location

Respondents were from 25 branch office locations, with some respondents indicating more than one office (typically managers). The Parkersburg and New Martinsville offices were the only locations not represented by the Pre-ETS respondents. The total number of respondents by district and office location are as follows:

District 1 (21 Respondents) — Charleston–10, Point Pleasant–4, Ripley–1, Spencer–2, Teays Valley–6.

District 2 (18) — Clarksburg–7, Elkins–4, Morgantown–4, Fairmont–3, Weston–3.

District 3 (6) — Parkersburg–0, New Martinsville–0, Weirton–5, Wheeling–1.

District 4 (8) — Beckley–2, Lewisburg–2, Oak Hill–2, Princeton–5, Summersville–5.

District 5 (10) — Huntington–7, Logan–1, Mullens–1, Welch–1.

District 6 (14) — Keyser–8, Martinsburg–6, Moorefield–7, Romney–6.

Pre-ETS Needs and Gaps

Within the survey, each service was accompanied by checkboxes in two columns: Need and Gap. Respondents were asked to "please indicate whether most of the consumers you serve in your area can benefit from the service" by placing an 'X' in the Need column for that service. Additionally, respondents were asked to "indicate whether you feel there is a service gap (i.e., services are needed, but not available in sufficient quantities) for each service by placing an 'X' in the Gap column."

Service need/use for each Pre-ETS category was assessed to allow respondents to indicate which services their consumers need/use most often. This was done independently of the

service gap assessment as some services may be highly needed/used but are readily available and therefore do not require an increase in availability.

Pre-ETS categories are listed below with the percentage of respondents indicating need in parentheses:

Job Exploration Counseling (72%)

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (72%)

Workplace Readiness Training (69%)

Work-Based Learning Experiences (66%)

Self-Advocacy Training (64%)

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (25, 25%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-3, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-3, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Workplace Readiness Training (25, 25%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-4, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney- 2, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Weirton-1, Welch-1, and Weston-3.

Self-Advocacy Training (19, 19%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, and Weston-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (13, 13%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan- 1, Martinsburg-1, Point Pleasant-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (12, 12%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Note: New categories created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre-existing service category from the survey. For example, the "Overall Training" category was created to include a number of open-ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, "Training options" and "Training services." The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, "From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 74 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (38, 51.4%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-4, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-5, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-2, Summersville- 5, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, and Wheeling-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (26, 35.1%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-1, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, and Weston-2.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (23, 31.1%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-1, Clarksburg-6, Fairmont- 3, Huntington-1, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-4, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Welch-1.

Workplace Readiness Training (16, 21.6%) -- Charleston-1, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-4, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Teays Valley-2, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Overall Training (15, 20.3%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Keyser-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-2, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-2, and Weston-1.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES PROVISION BY WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOLS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In November 2019, as part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS conducted an assessment of the need and availability of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities at high schools across the state. The five required Pre-ETS activities (as mandated by WIOA) for students with disabilities are:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on opportunities for transitioning from school to work or into postsecondary training or education programs, including college, university (Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities)
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

To assess the availability of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities at high schools, DRS counselors held formal meetings with school principals, vice principals, counselors, special education teachers, and other related staff. During these meetings, DRS counselors asked school staff, for each of the five required Pre-ETS activities, whether the service was currently available to the school's students with disabilities and if so, how the service was provided.

The SPPE Unit rated each of the responses to the five Pre-ETS questions using a 1-3 Likert scale.

A rating of 1 indicated that the school does not provide the service (or has a very limited capacity) to its students with disabilities. A rating of 2 indicated that the school was providing services to some students with disabilities but not all, or by providing a minimal level of service

to all students with disabilities, suggesting remaining unmet need/demand. Finally, a rating of 3 indicates that the school was sufficiently providing the service to its students with disabilities.

Results

In total, 110 high schools from 54 of the 55 counties participated. No schools from Jefferson County participated, despite requests. All six DRS districts were represented.

Total scores for each school's responses were calculated by adding the scores for each required Pre-ETS activity. A total score of 5 would indicate that none of the services were being provided by the school, while a total score of 15 would indicate that all five required activities of Pre-ETS were provided sufficiently by the school. One school had a total score of 5 (Morgantown) and no school had a total score of 15. Total scores ranged from 5 to 13, with a mean of 9.8 and a mode of 10.

For each service, statewide average scores were calculated, ranging from 1 (indicating no provision of service in high schools across the state) to 3 (indicating sufficient service provision by all high schools in the state). The most sufficiently provided Pre-ETS statewide was Counseling on Post- Secondary Opportunities (2.15), followed by Job Exploration Counseling (2.11), Work Based Learning Experiences (2.04), Workplace Readiness Training (1.88) and Instruction in Self-Advocacy (1.66). Across all five Pre-ETS categories, the statewide average score was 1.97.

Across all five required Pre-ETS activities statewide, a rating of 1 was scored for a total of 106 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 16; Work Based Learning Experiences – 10; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 19; Workplace Readiness Training – 20; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 41), a rating of 2 was scored for a total of 356 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 66; Work Based Learning Experiences – 86; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 56; Workplace Readiness Training – 83; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 65), and a rating of 3 was scored for a total of 88 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 28; Work Based Learning Experiences – 14; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 35; Workplace Readiness Training – 7; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 4).

The results of the survey indicate that most high schools in West Virginia are providing some level of required Pre-ETS activity. However, there are locations within the state in which Pre-ETS are not provided or are provided minimally by the school. To ensure that Pre-ETS are available to students with disabilities in high schools statewide, as well as eliminate duplication of services, DRS will prioritize and emphasize Pre-ETS provision in categories and high schools which were rated as 1, with secondary priority to those high schools and Pre-ETS categories which were rated as 2. Additionally, DRS will continue to explore and expand options for Pre-ETS provision and best practices statewide.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

As described above, DRS' direct client services units located at DRS' Nitro location will continue to be critical for DRS to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities identified under the unserved and underserved portion of this assessment, including individuals with disabilities who live in the rural part of the State, blind and visually impaired individuals, and the deaf and hard of hearing. The DRS Environmental Modifications Unit provides consumer services to assure they have the highest level of independence in and around their home and work by providing evaluations, technical assistance, and modifications. The continual maintenance and

improvement of direct client services units located at DRS' Nitro location will be necessary to maintain its operation in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY OF CRPS/CSPS

DRS conducted a survey of CRPs/community service providers (CSPs) with acknowledged vendor status to provide services (including supported–employment services) to DRS consumers across the state. The survey was conducted as a part of the statewide comprehensive needs assessment study of persons with significant disabilities in West Virginia.

DRS distributed the survey via email to 62 DRS–acknowledged CRPs/CSPs to collect input on their provision of services to West Virginians with significant disabilities, their level of communication with DRS, ways in which DRS could improve services or service delivery, and what the CRPs/CSPs urgently needed to better serve West Virginians with significant disabilities. Forty surveys were returned to DRS, for a response rate of 64.5 percent. Surveys were returned from CRPs/CSPs working with DRS offices across the state.

Service Provision

In each of the six DRS districts, all nine categories of services were reported as being provided. Services were also reported as being provided in all 55 counties in West Virginia, with the exception of Pendleton and Clay counties. All nine services were reported as being provided in 43 out of 55 counties (78.2%). Excluding the two unreported counties (i.e., Pendleton and Clay), the remaining counties were reported to be provided with between four and eight CRP services. Additionally, in several counties, various services were reported as provided by multiple CRPs. However, based on records in the DRS CRP directory, all nine categories of CRP services are provided in all 55 counties.

Communication and Liaison Contact

Thirty-nine out of 40 CRPs (97.5%) provided a rating of their communication with DRS. Options ranged from Excellent to Very Poor. One CRP gave a rating of Very Poor and 34 of the 39 CRPs (87.2%) gave a response of Good or better. When asked whether a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis, 29 of 37 CRPs responded yes, while 8 CRPs responded no (78.4% and 21.6%, respectively). Three CRPs did not respond to this question.

DRS Improvement

Thirty-six of the 40 CRPs gave comments regarding specific things that DRS could do to improve services or service delivery. The most common theme found in the comments was that of outreach, including outreach to high schools and businesses. Another common theme involved improvements in communication, including frequency and quality of communication. The increased frequency of communication included recommendations of regular meetings and trainings with DRS staff (e.g., "….Regularly scheduled local meetings with DRS and the CRP would enable us to discuss clients, problems, solutions more in depth…."). Perhaps related to the theme of communication was a theme of consistency. Some CRPs expressed issue with the consistency in the way different counselors handle solutions (e.g., "…each DRS Counselor wants services done differently and documents completed and submitted differently making the process rather confusing.").

CRP/CSP Needs

Thirty-four of the 40 CRPs gave comments on what the CRP urgently needed to better serve West Virginians with disabilities. Funding and referrals (which generate funding for CRPs)

were, by far, the most reported needs. Funding need comments ranged from the convenient (e.g., "A consistent stream of referrals would make it possible for us to recruit and employ job coaches….") to the necessary (e.g., "[CRP name] needs more referrals to continue providing quality VR services….") As seen in these examples, the CRPs reasons for funding needs also ranged from general to specific.

Other, less commonly addressed themes that could be found in the comments included needs for more transportation help and better relationships with employers to facilitate placement. Other topics were mentioned as well, and some comments merely stated that there were no pressing needs at this time.

Conclusions Based on the Survey of CRPs/CSPs

No less than four services were reported, by CRPs, as being provided in each of West Virginia's counties, with the exceptions of Pendleton and Clay counties. According to DRS' records of CRP information, Pendleton County is served by four CRPs and Clay County is served by five CRPs. Only one of these CRPs responded to the survey but did not indicate serving either county in the survey, which is discrepant from DRS records. Despite this deficiency, all nine CRP services were reported as being provided in all six DRS districts and three-fourths of all West Virginia counties.

Over 85% of CRPs reported a Good or better rating of communication with DRS and only one CRP rated communication with DRS as being Very Poor. This is somewhat contradictory with the fact that only 78.4% of the CRPs claimed that a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis. This raises the slightly counter-intuitive idea that communication does not have to be frequent, or even regularly occurring, in order to be good. Comments regarding communication (which were provided by nearly all of the respondents) reflected this at times, suggesting that communication was good when it occurred. At other times, comments indicated that the lack of regular communication was indeed a problem.

Comments on DRS improvement focused on outreach, improved communication, and consistency among DRS counselors' requests. Comments on CRP needs generally emphasized funding and referrals, requesting that DRS continue to provide (or provide more of) each. This is only logical, as CRPs require these things to remain in existence. Some CRPs though, made it clear that funding from DRS specifically allows them to provide the services that they provide.

CRP SERVICE RESPONSES FROM DRS FIELD STAFF SURVEY

The five most commonly reported gaps for employment/CRP services were:

Vocational Evaluation (37, 37%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-7, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-2, Fairmont-1, Huntington-7, Keyser-5, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Romney-3, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-4, and Weston- 1.

Job Placement (31, 31%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-4, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-2, Huntington-3, Keyser- 4, Lewisburg-1, Logan-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-3, Welch-2, and Weston-1.

Job Development (28, 28%) -- Beckley-2, Charleston-5, Elkins-4, Huntington-3, Keyser-4, Lewisburg-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-3, and Weston-2.

Trial Work Experience (25, 25%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-2, Romney- 2, Summersville-2, Weirton-4, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Extended Supported Employment Services (24, 24%) -- Charleston-2, Elkins-2, Huntington-5, Keyser-4, Logan-1, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-1, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-3, and Weston-1.

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 THE ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED PRE–EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SPPE staff members in 2018, under guidance of the WV SRC–DRS Joint Committee on Needs Assessment, conducted a qualitative analysis of the reported service needs of 1,004 persons with significant disabilities of various age and disability groups statewide. These individuals represent a good sample of consumers with significant disabilities that will continue to seek assistance from agencies in coming years, *ceteris paribus*. All 55 counties in West Virginia were represented in the sample. SPPE staff members separately analyzed the needs comments of the 449 students with disabilities included in the sample. The needs comments were analyzed and grouped based on their indication or implication of need of one or more of five required Pre-ETS:

– Job exploration counseling;

– Work–based learning experiences, which may include in–school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

– Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

– Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

– Instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The demographic profile of these 449 students with disabilities consists of the following characteristics:

Gender: 50.6% male, 49.4% female;

Race: 92.9% White, 6.9% Other (African American/Hispanic/American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Asian), 0.2% Unspecified;

Age: 96.9% under 20 years old, 3.1% 20-34 years; and

Primary Impairment: 4.9% Sensory/Communicative Impairments, 10.9% Physical Impairments, 84.2% Mental Impairments.

Of the 449 students with disabilities providing needs comments, 106 (23.6%) indicated or implied a need for one or more Pre-ETS.

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the following report presents the results of the qualitative analysis on the needs comments of these 106 students with disabilities who indicated or implied a need for one or more Pre-ETS.

Job Exploration Counseling (72, 67.9%); Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Educational Programs (13, 12.3); Work–Based Learning Experiences (6, 5.7%); Instruction in Self–Advocacy (2, 1.9%); and Workplace Readiness Training (1, 0.9%).

AS REPORTED BY DRS FIELD STAFF

WIOA requires that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment include an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation service needs of "youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre–employment transition services." DRS field staff that serve transitioning youth are one key resource in identifying the service needs of youth with disabilities in West Virginia. Therefore, needs assessment surveys completed by 100 DRS field staff were analyzed in order to identify students' needs for Pre-ETS.

Respondents

There were 34 respondents, 34% of the 100, that indicated having a primary caseload of School/Transition. However, a number of field staff have a secondary caseload of School/Transition. In total, 77 field staff (77%) reported regarding needs for at least one Pre-ETS category. This number includes 37 field staff (37%) who also reported a service gap for at least one Pre-ETS category. The breakdown of these 77 respondents by position is as follows:

Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee, 12 respondents (15.6%)

Rehabilitation Counselor, 60 respondents (77.9%)

Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, 28 respondents (36.4%)

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, 13 respondents (16.9%)

Branch Office Manager/Supervisor, 17 respondents (22.1%)

District Manager, 6 respondents (7.8%)

Rehabilitation Services Associate, 13 respondents (16.9%)

Note: Percentages do not total 100%, because staff were instructed to indicate previous positions as well as current positions.

Office Location

Respondents were from 25 branch office locations, with some respondents indicating more than one office (typically managers). The Parkersburg and New Martinsville offices were the only locations not represented by the Pre-ETS respondents. The total number of respondents by district and office location are as follows:

District 1 (21 Respondents) — Charleston–10, Point Pleasant–4, Ripley–1, Spencer–2, Teays Valley–6.

District 2 (18) — Clarksburg–7, Elkins–4, Morgantown–4, Fairmont–3, Weston–3.

District 3 (6) — Parkersburg–0, New Martinsville–0, Weirton–5, Wheeling–1.

District 4 (8) — Beckley–2, Lewisburg–2, Oak Hill–2, Princeton–5, Summersville–5.

District 5 (10) — Huntington–7, Logan–1, Mullens–1, Welch–1.

District 6 (14) — Keyser–8, Martinsburg–6, Moorefield–7, Romney–6.

Pre-ETS Needs and Gaps

Within the survey, each service was accompanied by checkboxes in two columns: Need and Gap. Respondents were asked to "please indicate whether most of the consumers you serve in your area can benefit from the service" by placing an 'X' in the Need column for that service. Additionally, respondents were asked to "indicate whether you feel there is a service gap (i.e., services are needed, but not available in sufficient quantities) for each service by placing an 'X' in the Gap column."

Service need/use for each Pre-ETS category was assessed to allow respondents to indicate which services their consumers need/use most often. This was done independently of the service gap assessment as some services may be highly needed/used but are readily available and therefore do not require an increase in availability.

Pre-ETS categories are listed below with the percentage of respondents indicating need in parentheses:

Job Exploration Counseling (72%)

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (72%)

Workplace Readiness Training (69%)

Work-Based Learning Experiences (66%)

Self-Advocacy Training (64%)

Respondents that indicated a perceived service gap were totaled for each service. The number and percentage of respondents who reported a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (25, 25%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-3, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Weirton-3, Welch-1, and Weston-1.

Workplace Readiness Training (25, 25%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-4, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-2, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney- 2, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, Weirton-1, Welch-1, and Weston-3.

Self-Advocacy Training (19, 19%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Keyser-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Spencer-1, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, and Weston-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (13, 13%) -- Charleston-3, Clarksburg-1, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan- 1, Martinsburg-1, Point Pleasant-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities (12, 12%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Huntington-2, Logan-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-1, Summersville-1, and Weston-1.

Overall Service Needs for West Virginians with Disabilities

Respondents were asked to identify the top five overall service needs for different consumer groups with which they have experience with providing VR services. Respondents were asked to indicate if they did not have experience working with the consumer group. The number and percentage of respondents who indicated a gap for the service are in parentheses followed by the number of responses by DRS office location. Some respondents identified more than one office.

Note: New categories created to incorporate answers that were not specific to a pre-existing service category from the survey. For example, the "Overall Training" category was created to include a number of open-ended responses where the respondent indicated a need for training, but not a specific type; for example, "Training options" and "Training services." The Miscellaneous category contains individual responses that were not clear in meaning or otherwise could not be grouped into a particular theme.

Transitioning Youth

The survey asked, "From your experience with transitioning youth with disabilities, please list the TOP FIVE services that you feel these consumers need in your service area." There were 74 respondents to this question. The most commonly reported service needs were:

Transportation (38, 51.4%) -- Beckley-3, Charleston-2, Clarksburg-3, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Huntington-2, Keyser-3, Lewisburg-2, Marshall-1, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-1, Morgantown-4, Mullens-1, Oak Hill-2, Point Pleasant-2, Princeton-5, Ripley-1, Romney-3, Spencer-2, Summersville- 5, Teays Valley-2, Weirton-4, and Wheeling-1.

Job Exploration Counseling (26, 35.1%) -- Charleston-4, Clarksburg-4, Elkins-3, Fairmont-2, Huntington-3, Keyser-1, Martinsburg-1, Moorefield-1, Point Pleasant-2, Romney-1, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-3, Weirton-1, and Weston-2.

Work-Based Learning Experiences (23, 31.1%) -- Beckley-1, Charleston-1, Clarksburg-6, Fairmont- 3, Huntington-1, Keyser-2, Lewisburg-1, Logan-1, Martinsburg-2, Moorefield-4, Oak Hill-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-3, Romney-2, Summersville-2, Teays Valley-1, Weirton-1, and Welch-1.

Workplace Readiness Training (16, 21.6%) -- Charleston-1, Clarksburg-2, Elkins-1, Fairmont-1, Keyser-2, Martinsburg-3, Moorefield-4, Morgantown-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Romney-2, Teays Valley-2, Welch-1, and Weston-2.

Overall Training (15, 20.3%) -- Charleston-3, Elkins-2, Fairmont-2, Keyser-1, Mullens-1, Point Pleasant-1, Princeton-1, Ripley-1, Spencer-2, Summersville-1, Teays Valley-2, and Weston-1.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE REPORTED PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES PROVISION BY WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOLS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In November 2019, as part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DRS conducted an assessment of the need and availability of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities at high schools across the state. The five required Pre-ETS activities (as mandated by WIOA) for students with disabilities are:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences

3. Counseling on opportunities for transitioning from school to work or into postsecondary training or education programs, including college, university (Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities)
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

To assess the availability of Pre-ETS for students with disabilities at high schools, DRS counselors held formal meetings with school principals, vice principals, counselors, special education teachers, and other related staff. During these meetings, DRS counselors asked school staff, for each of the five required Pre-ETS activities, whether the service was currently available to the school's students with disabilities and if so, how the service was provided.

The SPPE Unit rated each of the responses to the five Pre-ETS questions using a 1-3 Likert scale. A rating of 1 indicated that the school does not provide the service (or has a very limited capacity) to its students with disabilities. A rating of 2 indicated that the school was providing services to some students with disabilities but not all, or by providing a minimal level of service to all students with disabilities, suggesting remaining unmet need/demand. Finally, a rating of 3 indicates that the school was sufficiently providing the service to its students with disabilities.

Results

In total, 110 high schools from 54 of the 55 counties participated. No schools from Jefferson County participated, despite requests. All six DRS districts were represented.

Total scores for each school's responses were calculated by adding the scores for each required Pre-ETS activity. A total score of 5 would indicate that none of the services were being provided by the school, while a total score of 15 would indicate that all five required activities of Pre-ETS were provided sufficiently by the school. One school had a total score of 5 (Morgantown) and no school had a total score of 15. Total scores ranged from 5 to 13, with a mean of 9.8 and a mode of 10.

For each service, statewide average scores were calculated, ranging from 1 (indicating no provision of service in high schools across the state) to 3 (indicating sufficient service provision by all high schools in the state). The most sufficiently provided Pre-ETS statewide was Counseling on Post- Secondary Opportunities (2.15), followed by Job Exploration Counseling (2.11), Work Based Learning Experiences (2.04), Workplace Readiness Training (1.88) and Instruction in Self-Advocacy (1.66). Across all five Pre-ETS categories, the statewide average score was 1.97.

Across all five required Pre-ETS activities statewide, a rating of 1 was scored for a total of 106 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 16; Work Based Learning Experiences – 10; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 19; Workplace Readiness Training – 20; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 41), a rating of 2 was scored for a total of 356 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 66; Work Based Learning Experiences – 86; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 56; Workplace Readiness Training – 83; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 65), and a rating of 3 was scored for a total of 88 responses (Job Exploration Counseling – 28; Work Based Learning Experiences – 14; Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities – 35; Workplace Readiness Training – 7; and Instruction in Self Advocacy – 4).

The results of the survey indicate that most high schools in West Virginia are providing some level of required Pre-ETS activity. However, there are locations within the state in which Pre-ETS are not provided or are provided minimally by the school. To ensure that Pre-ETS are

available to students with disabilities in high schools statewide, as well as eliminate duplication of services, DRS will prioritize and emphasize Pre-ETS provision in categories and high schools which were rated as 1, with secondary priority to those high schools and Pre-ETS categories which were rated as 2. Additionally, DRS will continue to explore and expand options for Pre-ETS provision and best practices statewide.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) calculated its estimate of individuals with disabilities who are eligible for services under this State Plan by applying the state incidence of disability rate for individuals ages 18–64 (17.4%) to the state general population figure for individuals who are ages 18–64 (1,118,913). Both statistics are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012–2016 American Community Survey five–year estimates.

Based on an estimate from the American Community Survey (as of January 2018), there are 194,175 people with a disability in WV between ages 18–64. If DRS authorizes a Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 average of $1,585 of services per consumer in a fiscal year, then over $307 million would be needed to purchase vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for these potentially eligible individuals to move them toward competitive employment outcomes.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

In FY 2021, the Division expects to serve 4,816 consumers with disabilities (excluding potentially eligible students with disabilities), obligating $9.1 million of Title I funds for purchasing services for consumers. This estimate is based on historical data and current trends in caseload levels, Order of Selection, the current and projected impact of COVID-19, and the availability of fiscal and personnel resources. While the agency has experienced a decrease in its number of consumers in recent years, the trend is expected to reverse, and the agency anticipates that the number of individuals in the VR system will increase in future years. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a negative impact on VR service delivery by creating barriers that reduce VR counselors' ability to provide and the consumers' ability to immediately receive face to face services. The COVID-19 pandemic also presents a challenge for potential VR consumers to obtain information about DRS services, especially for students with disabilities who may also find web-based, virtual learning, and information gathering a more challenging experience. These students with disabilities may be in need of additional supports from schools and DRS.

As the agency continues to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, there will continue to be dynamic forces and multiple factors that contribute to the estimated number of consumers served by the agency. One factor is the agency continuing to experience a high level of turnover among its vocational rehabilitation counselors. This contributes to lower service levels due to the learning curve for new counselors. Another contributing factor to the estimates is the provision of pre-employment transition services. The agency has shifted fiscal and human resources to better serve students with disabilities.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

In FY 2021, the Division expects to serve 142 consumers with most significant disabilities (i.e., OS category 1) in supported employment, using Title VI-B (for youth and adults with most significant disabilities) funds and Title I funds, as needed. This estimate is based on historical data and current trends in caseload levels, Order of Selection, the current and projected impact

of COVID-19 (e.g., face to face service provision and job coaching opportunities), and the availability of fiscal and personnel resources. Additionally, DRS is working with the WV Developmental Disabilities Council and the WV Department of Education, Office of Special Education, to identify and serve more students with the most significant disabilities. While the agency has experienced a decrease in its number of consumers in recent years, the trend is expected to reverse, and the agency anticipates that the number of individuals in the VR system will increase in future years.

DRS plans to continue using three prevalent models of supported employment services: individual placement, mobile work crews, and enclaves. Additionally, DRS will encourage and support development of affirmative industries that integrate workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities throughout the community rehabilitation program (CRP) network. DRS considers each placement on an individualized, case-by-case basis to ensure the placement setting meets the definition of an integrated employment setting. For consumers with the most significant disabilities in supported employment, DRS strives for each consumer to achieve a competitive, integrated employment outcome.

DRS policies defining competitive employment settings promote linking CRPs with federal and state work contracts that may exist within the community. Such links expand job opportunities for individuals receiving SE, particularly those who reside in rural locations. This approach also directs Title VI–B and Title I funds into placement–related services and activities.

As of December 2019, DRS has acknowledged vendor agreements with 72 CRPs with 80 service locations to provide services to DRS consumers, including individuals with the most significant disabilities in supported employment. In FY 2019, DRS authorized $160,311.95 in SE services for 73 adults with disabilities and $168,773.56 in SE services for 56 youth with disabilities.

As the agency continues to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, there will continue to be dynamic forces and multiple factors that contribute to the estimated number of consumers served by the agency. One factor is the agency continuing to experience a high level of turnover among its vocational rehabilitation counselors. This contributes to lower service levels due to the learning curve for new counselors. Another contributing factor to the estimates is the provision of pre-employment transition services. The agency has shifted fiscal and human resources to better serve students with disabilities.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

In Fiscal Year 2021, it is estimated that:

– 2,414 individuals will be served in OS Category 1, using an estimated $4,103,800 of Title I funds (average of $1,700 per year). Additionally, out of the 2,414 individuals served in OS Category 1, DRS will serve 142 youth and adults with the most significant disabilities in supported employment utilizing $300,000 in Title VI-B funds, as appropriate.

– 1,667 individuals will be served in OS Category 2, using an estimated $2,833,900 of Title I funds (average of $1,700 per year).

– 735 individuals will be served in OS Category 3, using an estimated $2,205,000 of Title I funds (average of $3,000 per year).

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

All OS Categories will be open during Federal Fiscal Year 2021, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide VR services to all eligible applicants

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.

In Fiscal Year 2021, it is estimated that:

– 2,414 individuals will be served in OS Category 1, using an estimated $4,103,800 of Title I funds (average of $1,700 per year). Additionally, out of the 2,414 individuals served in OS Category 1, DRS will serve 142 youth and adults with the most significant disabilities in supported employment utilizing $300,000 in Title VI-B funds, as appropriate.

– 1,667 individuals will be served in OS Category 2, using an estimated $2,833,900 of Title I funds (average of $1,700 per year).

– 735 individuals will be served in OS Category 3, using an estimated $2,205,000 of Title I funds (average of $3,000 per year).

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

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

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) employs many goals to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly those individuals with the most significant disabilities. Furthermore, DRS recognizes those services essential to needs identified in the comprehensive assessment, evaluation of the Designated State Unit's performance on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) common performance measures to ensure quality services for individuals with significant disabilities, and services vital to the operation and effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in West Virginia.

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and the WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well–integrated workforce development system that provided customer–focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS Executive Management Group (EMG) meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. The SRC was afforded electronic access to the Program Year (PY) 2020 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State

Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The workforce development system (WDS) of West Virginia believes that all of its successful activities positively contribute to the ongoing mission of increasing the labor force participation rate. To maximize its ability to achieve this mission, the WDS has identified the following goals for Program Years 2020–2023:

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the WDS

For WIOA to continue to be successful the workforce development system must be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible. Partners in the workforce development system will work together in order to maximize benefits to our customers and improve WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers

Collaborate with employers utilizing a variety of methods to develop solutions to their workforce needs.

Goal 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals

Identify employment barriers of individuals and develop solutions. The removal of barriers is a key component to improving WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways

Emphasize career pathways to assist individuals entering and moving within the labor force and to educate employers on the advantages of career pathways.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth

Identify employment challenges faced by youth and provide access to postsecondary training/education and employment opportunities to improve WV's labor force participation rate.

Goal 6: Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

WV has the lowest Labor Force Participation Rate in the United States. Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to measurable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment is critical to ensuring that West Virginia's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to expand.

DRS is fully committed to coordinate its activities and services with core and community partners to ensure successful completion of the aforementioned goals. The following goals highlight specific focus areas for DRS that will also contribute to the overall goals of the West Virginia WDS:

DRS Goal 1 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to promote attainment of a high school education or greater, in order to increase their ability to move through meaningful career pathways. Compared to the national average of

30.9%, West Virginia has a much lower percentage of individuals 25 years and older having attained a bachelor's degree (19.9%; from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/WV,US/PST045218). For individuals with disabilities, the percentage is much lower, at 5.8% (from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2018). While a majority (75.6%) of West Virginians with disabilities age 25 or over have a high school education or higher, nearly a fourth (24.4%) of this population does not, compared to only 8.6% of the State's population of 25 or older without a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2018). Close relationships with the WV Adult Education Program (Adult Ed) and the WV Higher Education Policy Commission, as well as State and Local Education Agencies, will help to close this education gap.

DRS Goal 2 – Provide Pre–Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities. Pursuant to requirements of WIOA and findings from the 2018 CSNA, DRS will, in cooperation with State and Local Education Agencies, provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, focusing on students 21 years or younger while still in high school. The provision of Pre-ETS offers students with disabilities information about careers, career opportunities, education and training programs, and self–advocacy. This information and work–based experiences can lead to more well–informed career decision making and can empower students with disabilities to become more educated and skilled, moving toward a career that meets their needs.

DRS Goal 3 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities, committing to the use of the Employment First framework, to enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide. From a Bureau of Labor Statistics' October 2019 report, West Virginia had the lowest workforce participation rate (all individuals, with and without disabilities) among all the states and the District of Columbia, with 55.3% compared to the national average of 63.3%. Individuals with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, have lower employment/workforce participation rates. Labor force participation among persons with disabilities in West Virginia has been steadily declining in recent years. Since 2010, labor force participation among these individuals is estimated to have fallen from 31.7% (63,609) to 26.1% (49,199) in 2018. As of 2018, labor force participation for persons with disabilities in West Virginia was almost 11 percentage points below the national rate of 37.0%. West Virginia has a high poverty rate, with 17.8% of residents below the poverty level compared to 11.8% nationally (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/IPE120218). The poverty rate is especially high for individuals with disabilities, with estimates that 34.5% of West Virginians with disabilities above the age of 18 (64,907 of 187,988) were living in poverty in 2017, the highest rate in the nation. excluding Puerto Rico. Even among those employed, there are still significant numbers of West Virginians who earn below the poverty line.

Workforce WV expects the largest numeric change in employment growth (from 2016 to 2026) to occur in the industries of Health Care and Social Assistance (+19,026; 14.94%), Ambulatory Health Care Services (+9,675; 23.90%), Educational Services (+4,498; 7.52%), Government (+3,996; 5.40%), Construction (+3,701; 12.36%), and Social Assistance (+3,507; 19.67%).

Findings from the 2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicated the need to improve VR services in specific ways to warrant the creation of two additional DRS goals.

DRS Goal 4 – Improve access and availability of transportation options for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. FY 2018 CSNA findings from field staff surveys indicate a need for continued efforts to increase the availability of transportation throughout the state. Based on responses by stakeholders across

the state, including observations and recommendations by the WV State Rehabilitation Council, transportation continues to be an issue and a perceived barrier to employment/training. DRS continues to focus on individualized transportation solutions (ITS) to help alleviate the transportation gap while taking into account the wide array of circumstances that West Virginians with disabilities experience. DRS counselors also encourage consumers' family members to assist with reimbursable transportation. DRS will continue to make sure that consumers are aware of these options and continue to identify targeted solutions to the varied transportation issues for West Virginians with disabilities, focusing specifically on ITS.

DRS Goal 5 – Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers [including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), Independent Living, and other community providers] to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. VR consumers require specialized services provided by CRPs statewide to achieve an integrated, competitive employment outcome. Responses from the CSNA indicate there still is a need for DRS to continue to improve collaborative relationships with all community providers. Findings from the CSNA point to a need to focus efforts on specific geographic areas within the state where miscommunication between community providers and DRS counselors continues.

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;

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well–integrated workforce development system that provided customer–focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia SRC maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia SILC, and the CAP were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS EMG meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. The SRC was afforded electronic access to the PY 2020 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

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wide array of circumstances that West Virginians with disabilities experience. DRS counselors also encourage consumers' family members to assist with reimbursable transportation. DRS will continue to make sure that consumers are aware of these options and continue to identify targeted solutions to the varied transportation issues for West Virginians with disabilities, focusing specifically on ITS.

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B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a full report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in PY 2020, it will continue to collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

– The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

For PY 2018, DRS achieved the following performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – 61.8%

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – $4,595.70

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment – 56.8%

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.

For the development of agency goals and priorities, DRS followed WIOA guidance in the development of the Unified State Plan. DRS worked closely with the WIOA core partners including WorkForce WV and the WV Adult Education. The DRS goals and priorities were developed to support the overall state goals and priorities in achieving a well–integrated workforce development system that provided customer–focused services to job seekers in West Virginia.

The West Virginia SRC maintained involvement throughout the development and assessment of agency goals and priorities in a variety of ways and provided DRS with valued input and recommendations. DRS executive managers, representatives of SRC, the West Virginia SILC, and the CAP were invited to discuss DRS goals and priorities for carrying out the VR and supported employment programs. The Executive Directors of the SRC and SILC attend monthly DRS EMG meetings to discuss various ongoing issues affecting the agency and are privy to the current goals, objectives, and strategies pertaining to specific agency issues. Additional involvement occurs through DRS staff members attending SRC and SILC meetings to share information regarding agency performance, needs assessment, and State Plan activities. The SRC was afforded electronic access to the PY 2020 State Plan for review. Additionally, the SRC formed a subcommittee on needs assessment and the State Plan. The SRC members discuss DRS activities at regularly scheduled meetings and provide input to DRS.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

The Division's Director will determine whether resources will be available to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals throughout the program year. If not, consistent with state and federal laws and regulations, the Director will establish restrictions regarding priority categories for selecting the order in which otherwise eligible individuals may be served. Only the Director may establish an order of selection.

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) will be operating under an order of selection (OS) with all OS categories open, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide services to all eligible consumers.

Description of Priority categories Priority Categories

Following are the order of selection categories currently applicable to the Division's vocational rehabilitation program:

Category 1: Eligible applicants with the most significant disabilities.

Category 2: Eligible applicants with significant disabilities.

Category 3: Eligible applicants with non–significant disabilities.

The Counselor will determine the significance of an individual's disability after conducting a diagnostic study that allows for assessing the permanency of the disability, the number of functional capacities limited by the disability, the number of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services needed, and the time in service required to complete those services. These criteria are used when determining whether the individual's disability is non–significant, significant, or most significant.

Definitions

Individual with a Most Significant Disability (MSD).

An individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self–care, self–direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerances, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
2. Will require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Alternatively, any individual who will be receiving services under an individualized supported employment plan for employment will be determined to be MSD.

Individual with Significant Disability (SD).

An individual who:

1. Has a permanent physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self–care, self–direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerances, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
2. Will require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Individual with Non–Significant Disability.

An individual with a non-significant disability is an individual who:

1. Has a permanent disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
2. Will not require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Time in Service

For the purpose of determining significance of disability, "time in service" is considered to begin upon implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment and end upon entering Status 22 (in employment).

Automatic Classification as an Individual with Significant Disability

An individual who is a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiary or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient will be coded automatically as SD. However, if the individual meets MSD criteria, that designation will apply.

Recertification

An individual may be recertified from SD to MSD if all MSD criteria are met. In such instances, the Counselor will note appropriate circumstances in the Action Statement/Details section of the consumer's case record.

DRS Responsibilities when Implementing an Order of Selection

An OS has no impact on the DRS obligation for case finding and referrals. DRS has a continuing responsibility to make the public and referral sources aware of the services it has to offer individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. Furthermore, DRS shall ensure its funding arrangements for providing services, including third party arrangements and establishment projects, are consistent with the OS. Any funding arrangements that are inconsistent with the OS will be renegotiated.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order OS Administration Process

All OS Categories will be open during Federal Fiscal Year 2021, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide VR services to all eligible applicants with most significant, significant, and non-significant disabilities.

Services necessary for determination of eligibility and assessment of rehabilitation needs are provided to all DRS applicants. Any individual notified by the Counselor of classification as a member of an open priority category shall continue to receive services should that category later be closed.

Plan for Implementing the Order of Selection

All OS Categories will be open during Federal Fiscal Year 2021, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide VR services to all eligible applicants with most significant, significant, and non-significant disabilities.

DRS will strictly adhere to federal regulations in administering its OS. DRS will continue to: (1) implement the order on a statewide basis; (2) notify all eligible persons of their assignment to a particular priority category and their right to appeal this assignment; (3) assure continuity of services to all persons who were receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to the effective date of the closure order; and (4) assure that funding arrangements are consistent with the OS [34 CFR 361.36(e)].

When the order of selection is implemented, DRS will continue to ensure that an eligible individual who is not assigned to an open OS category has access to services provided under the information and referral system [Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Act]. Information and referral services include: (1) providing VR information and guidance to assist the individual to achieve employment and (2) appropriately referring the individual to other federal and state programs, including other statewide workforce development programs, that are best suited to meet the individual's specific employment needs [Section 101(a)(20)(A) of the Act].

When making a referral, DRS will provide the individual with:

– a notice of the referral;

– information about a specific point of contact within the program to which the individual is being referred; and

– information and advice about the most suitable service for assisting the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment [Section 101(a)(20)(B)(ii) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.37(b)(2)].

DRS will continue to maintain the individual's service record to include documentation on the nature and scope of the information and referral services it provides to the individual and documentation on the referral itself [34 CFR 361.47(a)(13)].

DRS will open and close priority categories as needed, so long as the order of the categories is maintained and continuity of services to all individuals selected for services is assured.

DRS will use the individual's date of application to rank individuals within a priority category. This equitable and reasonable factor provides a method of selecting individuals from a waiting list when DRS has enough resources to serve some, but not all, individuals in that OS priority category.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

All OS Categories will be open during Federal Fiscal Year 2021, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide VR services to all eligible applicants with most significant, significant, and non-significant disabilities. However, while DRS currently has the capacity to serve all eligible individuals with disabilities who apply for services, DRS will continue to implement an OS due to an expected influx of applicants and potentially eligible students with disabilities after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. This potential inundation of applicants and students may overwhelm the agency's human resource capacity to serve all eligible individuals who apply for services. At that time, it would necessitate the need to close one or more OS Categories to ensure priority of services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. DRS will continue to monitor caseload size, vacancies, and other related measures to ensure proactive measures are taken, if needed.

In recent years, DRS has experienced difficulties in hiring new vocational rehabilitation counselors in specific geographical areas, as well as barriers resulting from the State's hiring policies and procedures (e.g., non-competitive salary, processing times, etc.). DRS often has competition from bordering states, county school boards, and private employers that offer higher salaries to potential DRS employees. In the meantime, the agency continues to seek additional vocational rehabilitation counselors and works with the state hiring agency to increase the number of applicants to DRS job postings.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

In FY 2021, the agency plans to serve 4,816 individuals with an expected outcome goal of 1,119 rehabilitants within a service time frame of 12 and 28 months and at a cost of $9.1 million for all priority categories.

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

In FY 2021, it is projected that:

– 2,414 individuals in OS Category 1 will be served. Approximately 434 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 651 individuals in this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 28 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be $4,103,800 during FY 2021.

– 1,667 individuals in OS Category 2 will be served. Approximately 480 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 384 individuals in

this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 26 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be $2,833,900 during FY 2021.

– 735 individuals in OS Category 3 will be served. Approximately 205 individuals in this OS Category will exit with employment after receiving services. Approximately 105 individuals in this OS Category will exit without employment after receiving services. The time within which the goal of employment is to be achieved for individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be 14 months. The cost of services for all individuals in this OS Category is estimated to be $2,205,000 during FY 2021.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

All OS Categories will be open during Federal Fiscal Year 2021, as long as sufficient fiscal and personnel resources remain available to provide VR services to all eligible applicants with most significant, significant, and non-significant disabilities.

DRS' Client Services Manual clearly outlines OS Categories to ensure priority services for persons with MSD throughout the state. Priority is given to individuals with the most significant disabilities (OS 1), then to individuals with significant disabilities (OS 2), then to individuals with non-significant disabilities (OS 3). Furthermore, DRS has budgeted sufficient resources to serve all consumers with disabilities in all open OS Categories with priority given to persons with MSD. DRS utilizes data and caseload management reports to monitor and ensure services to OS Category 1, persons with MSD, are maintained through the FY.

DRS will open or close OS Categories as needed; these actions will be included in an amendment to the State Plan. DRS will assess the agency's fiscal and personnel resources and ability to maintain continuous VR services prior to opening or closing each OS Category. DRS will ensure that individuals with MSD are being served, with no individuals with MSD on the waitlist prior to opening the next OS Category.

When a closed category is reopened for services, individuals in that category will be notified in writing by DRS that they can now receive services. DRS will ensure all individuals selected for services will continue to receive those services without interruption.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

DRS has not elected to serve eligible individuals regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The methodology of the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) for distribution of Title VI–B funds is based exclusively on a fee–for–service authorization process with approved vendors of supported employment (SE) services. DRS uses no Title VI–B funds for administrative costs. Utilizing the DRS fee schedule for SE services, rehabilitation counselors

utilize Title VI–B and Title I funds to provide needed SE services for eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.

DRS established a statewide fee–for–service funding approach for job development services for SE– eligible individuals. This structure provides vendors an effective and efficient way of meeting the costs of this critical element of the job placement process. The process provides reimbursement for employment outcomes and brings increased energy and vendor resources to support job development activities.

In Program Year 2019, DRS authorized the full $300,000.00 of its Title VI–B funds to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities in its SE program through community rehabilitation program (CRP) services. When Title VI–B funds ($300,000 total per year with $150,000 available only for youth with disabilities) are exhausted, DRS defrays supported employment program service costs with Title I funds for individuals who require the services or who qualify and have not yet been served under the supported employment program. In Program Year 2018, DRS authorized $173,749 in SE services for 74 adults with disabilities and $174,258 in SE services for 58 youth with disabilities.

DRS plans to continue using three prevalent models of supported employment services: individual placement, mobile work crews, and enclaves. Additionally, DRS will encourage and support development of affirmative industries that integrate workers with disabilities and workers without disabilities throughout the CRP network. DRS considers each placement on an individualized, case-by-case basis to ensure the placement setting meets the definition of an integrated employment setting. For consumers with the most significant disabilities in supported employment, DRS strives for each consumer to achieve a competitive, integrated employment outcome.

DRS policies defining competitive employment settings promote linking CRPs with federal and state work contracts that may exist within the community. Such links expand job opportunities for individuals receiving SE, particularly those who reside in rural locations. This approach also directs Title VI–B and Title I funds into placement–related services and activities.

As appropriate, DRS will use the State funds allocated ($78,000) for ESES to expand employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities (MSD). DRS will continue to educate legislature regarding ESES for youth with MSD to ensure continued funding for ESES.

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

DRS continues to strongly promote and support training and support services for youth with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. DRS uses its fiscal and case management systems to continuously monitor resources (especially reserved funds to be used with youth with the most significant disabilities) being used for Extended Supported Employment Services (e.g., job coaching for supported employment).

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.

Through a combined effort with other disability organizations, $78,000 was appropriated by the West Virginia Legislature for supported employment follow–along services (extended

supported employment services; ESES). DRS serves as the fiscal agent for these funds. DRS has created program guidelines governing the use of state–appropriated funds for extended services under the supported employment program created by state statute in 1993. The sole use of the state funds attached to this program is to provide extended services for individuals not eligible from any other funding source. All providers of supported employment services may access these funds for individuals who are eligible under the guidelines. During Program Year 2018, DRS sponsored 41 individuals in the extended supported employment program so they could maintain and retain their jobs within the community. This figure represents the cooperative efforts of 10 CRPs.

As appropriate, DRS will use the State funds allocated ($78,000) for ESES to expand employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities (MSD). DRS will continue to educate legislature regarding ESES for youth with MSD to ensure continued funding for ESES.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Goal 1 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to West Virginians with disabilities to promote attainment of a high school education or greater, in order to increase their ability to move through meaningful career pathways.

DRS will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre–employment transition services (Pre- ETS) for students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their freshman and sophomore years (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 – Provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

The 2018 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre–employment transition service need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), DRS counselors in high schools will provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state. Additional outreach using large posters will target eighth grade, career and technical education, and postsecondary students at locations across the state.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will continue to sponsor the Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits, four-day summer workshops students with disabilities statewide. The CEO Summits will be held in multiple locations across the state to ensure statewide coverage. DRS will utilize the assistance of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to conduct the Summit activities. Class size for each of the Summits will be approximately 20 students. Students will earn a stipend for the time that they attend. DRS will also request WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the Summits to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

– Career planning

– Career preparation

– SSI/SSDI Information

– Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents (e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs).

– Communication

– Conflict Management

– Employer Expectations

– Attendance and Punctuality

– Timeliness of task completion

– Be able to work without supervision

– Positive work ethic

– Manage multiple tasks

– High–growth Jobs

– Personal Brand

– Job Hunting Tools – resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

DRS Goal 3 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities, committing to the use of the Employment First framework, to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WorkForce WV's online Mid Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) system and shared within the WDS.

DRS will continue to serve on Business Service Teams (BSTs) with WorkForce WV, Adult Education, local workforce development boards, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS will continue to use its employment specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 9 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide and employment-related WorkForce WV information. The DRS Employer Resource Guide provides the following information:

– Staffing services

– Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities

– Financial incentives

– Accessibility assessments

– Accommodating employees with disabilities

– Basic disability etiquette

– Attitudinal barriers

– Americans with Disabilities Act

– Locating a DRS office

– Where to find additional resources

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS–employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job–ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice. As of November 2019, 85 employers have agreed to host job shadowing experiences with DRS' POWER program.

Assistive Technology

DRS will continue to provide rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals can become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 – Improve access and availability of transportation options for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continues its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focuses on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors will encourage planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors will identify transportation issues and focus on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This will ensure that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal is not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues also will be addressed by the

standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS will continue to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and will continue to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources.

DRS Goal 5 – Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

- Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web–based, user–friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

- Continue to maintain regular communications between DRS and community providers in each district and at the state level. Each DRS district will continue to host joint meetings with DRS district and branch office staff and CRPs in those districts to provide opportunities for CRP representatives and DRS personnel to discuss local service needs of DRS consumers. Subsequent to each meeting, the local DRS office will be required to send a brief report to the CRP Program Manager. This process will allow all parties involved in the expansion of community–based services to be kept informed of progress and issues. The Division will continue to examine the information and recommendations collected from various meetings between CRP and DRS staff members.

Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

- An e–mail list–serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.

- DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service–related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.

- Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

- Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.

- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.

- Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies.

- Continue to conduct cross training and face–to–face meetings with community partners at the local level.

- Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.

- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.

- Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

DRS will continue to provide rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals can become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the WVATS of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of AT devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

DRS has approximately 26 Branch office locations, providing statewide coverage. These offices are able to serve individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, in all areas of the state. Many cities within WV which have a relatively high proportion of minorities in the population (e.g., Charleston, Huntington, and Beckley) have a DRS branch office located within.

Additionally, DRS will continue to utilize tools and techniques which have allowed the agency to have success in its outreach to minority populations, such as:

– DRS will continue to use geographic information systems (GIS), as appropriate, to pinpoint geographic locations with potentially underserved minority populations in the State. This will allow for more effective and efficient outreach to those populations.

– DRS will continue to depend on local outreach efforts by branch office field staff to bring individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, into the VR system.

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)

DRS Goal 1 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to promote attainment of a high school education or greater, in order to increase their ability to move through meaningful career pathways.

DRS will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the TY population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their freshman and sophomore years (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in the IEP development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 – Provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

The 2018 CSNA indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported Pre-ETS need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of WIOA, DRS counselors in high schools will provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will continue to sponsor the CEO Summits, four-day summer workshops students with disabilities statewide. The CEO Summits will be held in multiple locations across the state to ensure statewide coverage. DRS will utilize the assistance

of CRPs to conduct the Summit activities. Class size for each of the Summits will be approximately 20 students. Students will earn a stipend for the time that they attend. DRS will also request WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the Summits to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

– Career planning

– Career preparation

– SSI/SSDI Information

– Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents (e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs).

– Communication

– Conflict Management

– Employer Expectations

– Attendance and Punctuality

– Timeliness of task completion

– Be able to work without supervision

– Positive work ethic

– Manage multiple tasks

– High–growth Jobs

– Personal Brand

– Job Hunting Tools – resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

As described in Description J, DRS' direct client services units located at DRS' Nitro location will continue to be critical for DRS to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities identified under the unserved and underserved portion of this assessment, including individuals with disabilities who live in the rural part of the State, blind and visually impaired individuals, and the deaf and hard of hearing. The DRS Environmental Modifications Unit provides consumer services to assure they have the highest level of independence in and around their home and work by providing evaluations, technical assistance, and modifications. The continual maintenance and improvement of direct client services units located at DRS' Nitro location will be necessary to maintain its operation in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In recent years, DRS has worked closely with CRPs across the state to increase the availability of Pre-ETS, including CEO summits. Because of the positive working relationship, DRS and CRPs were able to conduct CEO summits in 60 locations across the state. Improvements in efficiency of service delivery has also resulted in reduced costs for services while also expanding availability across the state.

In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

- Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web–based, user–friendly, vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

- Continue to maintain regular communications between DRS and community providers in each district and at the state level. Each DRS district will continue to host joint meetings with DRS district and branch office staff and CRPs in those districts to provide opportunities for CRP representatives and DRS personnel to discuss local service needs of DRS consumers. Subsequent to each meeting, the local DRS office will be required to send a brief report to the CRP Program Manager. This process will allow all parties involved in the expansion of community–based services to be kept informed of progress and issues. The Division will continue to examine the information and recommendations collected from various meetings between CRP and DRS staff members.

Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

- An e–mail list–serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.

- DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service–related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.

- Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

- Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.

- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.

- Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote

interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies.

- Continue to conduct cross training and face–to–face meetings with community partners at the local level.
- Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.
- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.
- Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a full report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in program year (PY) 2020, it will continue to collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

– The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

For PY 2018, DRS achieved the following performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – 61.8%

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – $4,595.70

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment – 56.8%

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Jobs and Hope West Virginia

Jobs & Hope West Virginia is the State's comprehensive response to the substance use disorder crisis. Established by Governor Jim Justice and the West Virginia Legislature, this program offers support through a statewide collaboration of agencies that provide West Virginians in recovery the opportunity to obtain career training and to ultimately secure meaningful employment. DRS is a proud Jobs and Hope partner agency and will continue to provide referrals, information, and services, as appropriate. As of December 2019, in addition to DRS, other Jobs and Hope West Virginia partner agencies include the:

- WV Department of Education;

- WV Department of Health and Human Resources;

- WorkForce WV;

- WV Community and Technical College System;

- WV National Guard;

- WV Higher Education Policy Commission;

- WV Department of Transportation;

- WV Office of Technology;

- WV Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety;

- WV Division of Motor Vehicles;

- WV Supreme Court of Appeals;

- Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs;

- WV State Policy;

- WV Department of Commerce; and the

- WV Department of Veterans Assistance Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the WDS, written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WorkForce WV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.

DRS will continue to serve on BSTs with WorkForce WV, Adult Education, local workforce development boards, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing

informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS will continue to use its employment specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in–house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability–related information, services, and pre–screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has 9 employment specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. DRS' team of employment specialists provide business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability–related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. Employment specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, employment specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides the following information:

– Staffing services

– Training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities

– Financial incentives

– Accessibility assessments

– Accommodating employees with disabilities

– Basic disability etiquette

– Attitudinal barriers

– Americans with Disabilities Act

– Locating a DRS office

– Where to find additional resources

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS–employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to field staff to potentially match a job–ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also works with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with

disabilities. In 2015, DRS debuted the POWER program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice. As of November 2019, 85 employers have agreed to host job shadowing experiences with DRS' POWER program.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

DRS Goal 1 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to promote attainment of a high school education or greater, in order to increase their ability to move through meaningful career pathways.

DRS will continue to monitor the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the TY population. Youth have become a primary focus in vocational rehabilitation and DRS will work closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. Each high school in WV has a DRS counselor assigned to it to guarantee the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their freshman and sophomore years (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors will continue to take part in IEP development of students with disabilities when they are invited to do so. Counselors will also stay in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as they arise. DRS will also work closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education.

DRS Goal 2 – Provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

The 2018 CSNA indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported Pre-ETS need. In accordance with this, and per the requirements of WIOA, DRS counselors in high schools will provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities.

DRS will continue to work closely with the WV Office of Special Education to ensure that special education teachers, parents, and students with disabilities are aware of the availability of Pre-ETS. This work will continue through joint-training conferences with special education staff from across the state. Additional, intensive training on the Pathways to the Future Pre-ETS website will also continue to be provided to special education teachers in upcoming years. As part of its outreach campaign, DRS will continue to place large banners in high schools and distribute Pre-ETS materials to students with disabilities across the state.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS will continue to sponsor the CEO Summits, four-day summer workshops students with disabilities statewide. The CEO Summits will be held in multiple locations across the state to ensure statewide coverage. DRS will utilize the assistance

of CRPs to conduct the Summit activities. Class size for each of the Summits will be approximately 20 students. Students will earn a stipend for the time that they attend. DRS will also request WorkForce WV and WV Adult Education to participate in the Summits to provide additional information to the students.

Topics to be covered:

– Career planning

– Career preparation

– SSI/SSDI Information

– Understanding the importance of necessary personal documents (e.g., social security card, driver's license, birth certificate, pay stubs).

– Communication

– Conflict Management

– Employer Expectations

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– Timeliness of task completion

– Be able to work without supervision

– Positive work ethic

– Manage multiple tasks

– High–growth Jobs

– Personal Brand

– Job Hunting Tools –resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles

DRS Goal 3 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities, committing to the use of the Employment First framework, to enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

Collaboration with WorkForce WV

DRS will maintain regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This will be accomplished through regular meetings of the WDS, written communications, teleconferences, and other media, as appropriate. DRS, particularly through its employment specialists, will also stay informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS employment specialists continuously collect employment information from their business contacts. This information, including job orders for open positions, is immediately input into the WorkForce WV's online MACC system and shared within the WDS.

DRS will continue to serve on BSTs with WorkForce WV, Adult Education, local workforce development boards, and other related entities. Through training and standardizing informational materials, when possible, these teams provide a full range of WDS information

when making visits to employers. This will allow the WDS to maximize the impact of employer visits and ensure that businesses are aware of all resources available through the WDS.

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DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit which provides AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 – Improve access and availability of transportation options for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continues its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focuses on ITS to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors will encourage planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors will identify transportation issues and focus on finding solutions to include in the consumer's IPE. This will ensure that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal is not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues also will be addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS will continue to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and will continue to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources.

DRS Goal 5 – Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers [including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers] to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. A large amount of the success that DRS has in its mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently hinges on its relationships with CRPs. In general, DRS has good working relationships with the various CRPs throughout the State. However, CSNA results suggest that improvements can be made, particularly in specific geographic areas. To facilitate this improvement, DRS has established a number of strategies to put into action:

- Continue to educate field staff, especially the new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web–based, user–friendly vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits will increase awareness of available service options, which

will help to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

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Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV. Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also will include:

- An e–mail list–serv with all current vendors that will be updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.
- DRS counselors in each district will continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and will continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They will collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service–related issues specific to the local service area(s) will aid in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.
- Two rehabilitation specialists covering all districts in the state will provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They will make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices. During these visits, they will provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They will serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.
- Conduct site visits to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements.
- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas.
- Continue to conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings will be held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies.
- Continue to conduct cross training and face–to–face meetings with community partners at the local level.
- Continue to assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide them guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events.

- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument.
- Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

To foster a customer–focused approach to VR services, DRS works with the WV State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council and uses innovation and expansion (I&E) resources to support the activities of these groups. As appropriate, DRS will continue to use I&E funds to discover, generate, and improve upon service delivery processes to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, with the emphasis on Pre-ETS to students with disabilities now in place by WIOA, there are significant opportunities for discoveries that can be made using I&E resources.

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.

DRS has approximately 26 Branch office locations, providing statewide coverage. These offices are able to serve individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, in all areas of the state. Many cities within WV which have a relatively high proportion of minorities in the population (e.g., Charleston, Huntington, and Beckley) have a DRS branch office located within.

DRS also has a significant presence in state colleges and high schools with significant minority populations in all 55 counties of WV.

Due to the rural nature of the state, support for transportation is very important for access to VR services by individuals with disabilities. DRS continues to recognize this barrier as a challenge to VR service delivery statewide. DRS is committed to continuing it pursuit of individualized transportation solutions for its consumers, including those from minority backgrounds.

Additionally, DRS will continue to utilize tools and techniques which have allowed the agency to have success in its outreach to minority populations, such as:

– DRS will continue to use GIS, as appropriate, to pinpoint geographic locations with potentially underserved minority populations in the State. This will allow for more effective and efficient outreach to those populations.

– DRS will continue to depend on local outreach efforts by branch office field staff to bring individuals with disabilities, including those individuals from minority backgrounds, into the VR system.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The following description includes progress in the achievement of the goals for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

DRS Goal 1 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to attain a high school education or greater.

Since the writing of the previous State Plan, the percentage of West Virginians with disabilities having high school diplomas appears to have increased. As of 2017 (most recent data; posted in 2018 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium), high school graduates include 75.6% of individuals with disabilities aged 25 years and older, compared to 69.4% four years earlier.

DRS has worked hard to strengthen its relationship with State and Local Education Agencies and has sought to increase its service capacity to students with disabilities statewide. This includes formal agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), the provision of Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in and outside of school settings, the continuation of DRS' Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP), and coordinated training with Special Education teachers statewide.

DRS monitored the educational achievement of all of its consumers, especially those in the transition youth (TY) population. DRS worked closely and diligently with State and Local Education Agencies to ensure that its TY population receives the services that it needs, including pre-employment transition services for high school students with disabilities. DRS assigned a counselor to each high school in WV to enhance the service provision of students with disabilities. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year (rather than their junior year, as was formerly practiced) in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

DRS counselors took part in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) development of students with disabilities when invited to do so. Counselors stayed in contact with educators to discuss and resolve educational difficulties as needed. DRS also worked closely with WV Adult Education, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education. DRS will continue to conduct these activities as part of its progress toward achievement of this goal.

DRS Goal 2 – Provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities.

DRS has demonstrated considerable commitment to providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities statewide since the implementation of WIOA. In collaboration with Community Access, Incorporated (CAI) and Terzetto Creative, LLC, DRS established the Pathways to the Future website (www.pathwayswv.org), designed to operate as a self-service one-stop for students, parents, and educators in the provision of Pre-ETS that can be accessed at any time. The site provides extensive information and resources regarding career planning, education planning, independent living skills, self-determination, and work-based learning.

Beyond this self-service portal, DRS has been active, both within and outside of school settings to ensure that students with disabilities statewide receive the Pre-ETS needed to promote a more well- informed student base regarding employment, career pathways, independent living and soft skills, and self-advocacy. Numerous initiatives and activities, provided by DRS staff, Education staff, and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), have been delivered to thousands of students across the state in all 55 counties. In doing so, DRS has consistently been able to successfully reserve and spend the WIOA-mandated 15% earmark of federal funds on Pre-ETS. Some of the activities conducted by the agency include:

- Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits – DRS, in conjunction with CRPs, hosts several Summits each year, during the summer, serving hundreds of high school students from across the state. The four-day summits provide tools and information to support students in obtaining long-term career success. The curriculum includes career planning and preparation, self-assessments, completing job applications, interviewing skills, how to dress for employment, work ethic, cell phone and internet safety, and self-advocacy.

- Positive Outcomes Within Education and Rehabilitation (POWER) program – DRS' job shadowing program. POWER offers DRS transition students who are interested in professional careers an opportunity to spend a few hours or a day with a skilled worker in the student's vocational field of interest, allowing the student to explore a specific career of interest by observing an employee perform his or her work duties at his or her place of employment. The experience should provide realistic career information that will aid the student in making career choices.

- Work-Based Learning Experiences – Provided in conjunction with CRPs to pair students with disabilities with local employers willing to provide a short-term employment opportunity. These experiences provide the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site. Students work up to 80 work hours, over 2 – 4 weeks, earning no less than minimum wage. The CRPs are paid to arrange and monitor the experience, as well as pay the students.

The 2018 comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) indicated that job exploration counseling was the most frequently reported pre-employment transition service need. DRS counselors provided Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, in order to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. In program year (PY) 2018, DRS provided Pre- ETS to over 1,000 students with disabilities in WV.

In addition to ongoing program activities, DRS hosted summer workshops (CEO Summits) for transition students entering into their senior year of high school. In 2018, the CEO Summits were held in 11 areas across the state; in 2019, the Summits were held in 60 areas. In 2019, DRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the Summits in as many local areas as possible. Attendance for the CEO Summits in the summer of 2019 was approximately 1,000 students, covering all six DRS districts. Students earned a stipend for the time that they attended. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits.

Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, SSI/SSDI Information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles.

In collaboration with CRPs, the Statewide independent Living Council (SILC) and the WV Centers for Independent Living (CILs), DRS established programs in the summer of 2019 which provided Instruction in Self-Advocacy at 25 locations across the state, serving 294 students with disabilities. These programs provide students with disabilities with the skills necessary to be confident and self- directed self-advocates. Students participating in the programs learned

about their legal rights and responsibilities, the history of the disability movement, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IEPs, and participated in activities to develop their confidence and communication skills, as well as the ability to evaluate their future needs and plans.

In an effort to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields, DRS sponsored a "Build It, Keep It, Share It" – BIKISI – program in the summer of 2019. In the program, through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer. At the end of the training, they take the knowledge – and the computer – home with them. The program is designed to develop student interest in the sciences through computers, to subsequently promote interest in high-paying jobs within in-demand job sectors. In 2019, the program was held in 12 locations and served 363 students with disabilities.

Throughout the academic year, DRS Employment Specialists also provided Pre-ETS at the local high schools. The Employment Specialists conducted mock interviewing, career exploration, and other employment related topics. The POWER program provides students that ability to job shadow careers that they are interested in. The Employment Specialists have worked to identify a vast array of employers located throughout the State. There are currently 85 employers involved in the POWER Program.

In 2016 and 2017, DRS partnered with CAI to implement a program, entitled "Pathways to the Future," to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program addressed the five required Pre-ETS for high school students with disabilities through an expansion of the STEP. The program assisted school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community-based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project helped level the playing field between resource-rich metropolitan areas and isolated rural settings that often have few services available. In addition, a strong statewide outreach to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders was a component of the project. The project had the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community-based Work Exploration programs.
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Community Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of specialists to work with DRS, WorkForce WV, and WV Department of Education (WVDE) staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross-sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.

DRS enlisted the services of Terzetto Creative to create/maintain a "Pathways to the Future" website (www.pathwayswv.org), which serves as a self-service resource for students with disabilities statewide to receive Pre-ETS. The website provides valuable information and tools regarding career planning, education planning, independent living, self-determination, and work-based learning. The website was bolstered by banners that were placed in high schools in all 55 counties of the state. Additionally, several pages of the College Foundation of West Virginia's website (www.cfwv.com) have links to the Pathways website. These banners and links directed students with disabilities to the website and its resources.

DRS Goal 3 – Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to enable them to obtain competitive employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide.

With the passage of WIOA, DRS has made several adjustments to its service provision model, including a greater emphasis toward youth and students with disabilities. Due to the legislative mandate of reserving and spending at least 15% of federal funds on the provision of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities, DRS has found it necessary to place VR-eligible individuals who do not have the most significant disabilities on a waitlist. However, if sufficient resources become available, individuals will be removed from the waitlist. Despite this difficulty, DRS has found success in its long-standing mission of empowering and enabling individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently. In Program Year (PY) 2018, DRS served 7,016 participants, including 5,469 youth with disabilities, while enabling 930 job seekers with disabilities to obtain or retain employment. Collaboration with WorkForce WV and Local Workforce Development Boards

DRS has maintained regular communication with WorkForce WV to stay abreast of trends in employment, including changes in education and training requirements. This has been accomplished through regular meetings of the workforce development system (WDS), written communications, teleconferences, and other media. DRS, particularly through its Employment Specialists, stayed informed of emerging careers and occupations via WorkForce WV's Labor Market Information website. DRS Employment Specialists have also continuously collected employment information from their business contacts. This information is shared within the WDS. DRS registers its job-ready consumers with WorkForce WV in order to better serve employers by providing them with a base of potential employees.

DRS maintained and continues to maintain a presence with each of West Virginia's seven Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs): Region 1 WDB; Region 2 – South Western WV WDB, Inc.; Region 3 – WDB of Kanawha County, Inc.; Region 4 Mid-Ohio Valley WDB; Region 5 – Northern Panhandle WDB; Region 6 WDB, and Region 7 WDB. DRS has signed MOUs and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) with each board. Each Local WDB has a DRS representative who is active in the Board's activities and decision-making process.

Use of DRS Employment Specialists

DRS used its Employment Specialists to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs.

DRS has an in-house Employer Services Section that specializes in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The DRS Employer Services Section has nine Employment Specialists that cover all 55 counties in West Virginia. Each Employment Specialist has a unique understanding of local labor market information (LMI) including what jobs are available, what jobs are in demand or decline, and employer networks.

DRS' team of Employment Specialists provided business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability- related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities.

Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities.

Employment Specialists therefore contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, DRS utilizes labor market information provided by WorkForce WV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county. When meeting with employers, Employment Specialists provide valuable information, including the DRS Employer Resource Guide. The resource guide provides information regarding staffing services, training programs and incentives for hiring people with disabilities, financial incentives, accessibility assessments, accommodating employees with disabilities, basic disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, locating a DRS office, and where to find additional resources. DRS Employment Specialists conducted over 800 employer visits with more than 500 employers in Program Year 2018.

The Employer Services Section maintains a database of each DRS-employer interaction with VR employment specialists. The information collected includes the business name, contact person, and current job openings by occupation. If needed, a referral to the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. This list is distributed to Counselors to potentially match a job-ready VR consumer with a current job opening. Through positive working relationships, 47 employers, including some of the largest in the state, now send job postings directly to DRS' Employer Services Section.

The Employer Services Section also worked with employers to better serve transitioning youth with disabilities, including providing career exploration opportunities for students with disabilities through the POWER program. POWER is a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest. The POWER program allows the student the opportunity to experience an occupation prior to committing to training. It guides the student to take a serious, realistic look at the occupation, allowing the student to make a more informed choice. Currently, there are 85 employers statewide that participate in the POWER program.

Assistive Technology

DRS provided rehabilitation technology solutions to individuals with disabilities as needed so that those individuals could become employed or maintain employment. DRS has developed working relationships and agreements for the coordination of activities with the West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS) of the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities. The WVATS' role is to provide access to and help with the acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities. WVATS also provides device demonstrations, device loans, training, AT information, and technical assistance.

DRS has a rehabilitation technology unit which provided AT consultations and solutions to eligible VR consumers with AT needs statewide. With the coordination of services between DRS and WVATS, assurances are made that needed AT solutions can be provided to individuals with disabilities.

DRS Goal 4 – Improve access and availability of transportation options at the community level for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment.

DRS continues to work toward finding individualized transportation solutions for West Virginians with disabilities as needed for their employment goals. In Program Year (PY) 2017, DRS expended $122,115 on transportation services for 891 consumers and in PY 2018, DRS authorized $93,540 in transportation services for 746 consumers.

Transportation is an ongoing issue for West Virginians with disabilities, due to the rural nature of the state. A large proportion of the State's inhabitants live far away from jobs, agency offices, and other resources. DRS continued its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and focused on individual transportation solutions (ITS) to satisfy immediate transportation needs. To help reduce these barriers, DRS counselors encouraged planning for transportation needs early in the development of a consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, counselors identified transportation issues and focused on finding solutions to include in the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This ensured that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal was not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues were also addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews. Beyond ITS, DRS continued to assign responsibility to a staff member in each branch office to maintain a list and working knowledge of local transportation options and continued to participate in local and state initiatives to coordinate and expand transportation resources. These activities will be ongoing as DRS strives to accomplish transportation access for all of its consumers in need.

DRS Goal 5 – Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers.

A comparison of findings from the 2015 CSNA and the 2018 CSNA indicates that there is still a need to continue to improve collaborative relationships with community providers. While a greater percentage of CRP survey respondents acknowledged that a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis (i.e., 68.1% in 2015 vs. 78.4% in 2018), a lower percentage of CRP survey respondents rated their communication with DRS to be Good or better (91.5% in 2015 vs. 87.2% in 2018).

2015 – Forty-seven out of 47 CRPs/community service providers (CSPs) provided a rating of their communication with DRS. Rating options included Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor, and Very Poor. No CRPs/CSPs gave a rating of Very Poor and 43 of the 47 CRPs/CSPs (91.5%) gave a response of Good or better. Additionally, CRPs/CSPs were asked whether a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis. Thirty–two (32) CRPs/CSPs responded yes, while 15 CRPs/CSPs responded no (68.1% and 31.9%, respectively).

2018 - Thirty-nine out of 40 CRPs provided a rating of their communication with DRS. Options ranged from Excellent to Very Poor. One CRP gave a rating of Very Poor and 34 of the 39 CRPs (87.2%) gave a response of Good or better. When asked whether a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis, 29 of 37 CRPs responded yes, while 8 CRPs responded no (78.4% and 21.6%, respectively). Three CRPs did not respond to this question.

DRS continues to utilize CRPs to provide services to its consumers. In PY 2017, DRS authorized $3,017,766 in CRP services to 1,417 consumers. In PY 2018, DRS authorized $2,582,420 in CRP services to 1,043 consumers. DRS continued to educate field staff, especially new counselors, about CRPs and their services. Use of the new 'CRP Locator' tool (a web-based, user-friendly, vendor guide) and counselor CRP site visits increased awareness of available service options, which helped to maintain collaborative relationships with CRPs and enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. DRS continued to maintain regular communications with community providers in each district and at the state level. Progress on communication will continue to be made as the Division acquires more understanding of the issues and barriers facing the CRP and DRS staff members in their service provision to persons with significant disabilities in WV.

Ongoing communication activities with CRPs also includes:

1. An e-mail list-serv with all current vendors that is updated periodically and utilized to send out training opportunities, policy changes, and general updates when needed.
2. DRS counselors in each district continue to be assigned as liaisons to each CRP and continue to be required to complete a monthly update regarding the CRP. They collect this information by visits and/or phone calls. Having CRP liaisons that regularly discuss service-related issues specific to the local service area(s) aids in maintaining collaborative working relationships and enhancing the availability of services to consumers.
3. Two Rehabilitation Specialists covering all districts in the state provide technical assistance to CRPs and DRS staff. They make site visits to CRP and DRS district and branch offices to ensure that community providers continue to meet DRS standards and requirements. During these visits, they provide technical assistance and schedule training and other meetings that need to occur. They serve as a communication link when issues arise and make themselves available to attend the communication meetings and transition team meetings.

Additionally, the agency works to:

- Increase the service provision of acknowledged vendors and work with community providers to expand their service areas to enhance the availability of community services within needed areas;
- Conduct Transition Team meetings at the district level with DRS, WV Department of Education, and CRP staff members. The meetings are held to promote interagency collaboration by allowing staff from each agency/CRP to become familiar with the different eligibility requirements and service definitions across agencies;
- Conduct cross training and face-to-face meetings with community partners at the local level;
- Assign liaison responsibilities to staff members and provide guidance about the purpose of DRS participation in community events;
- Monitor the DRS counselors/supervisors/managers' perception of the quality of CRP services through a survey instrument; and
- Monitor and assess the impact of the Quality Assurance unit on the counselor's case management practices by using data generated from the quality assurance specialists' review of cases.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

DRS continued to be successful in achieving the agency's goals and priorities. However, a high turnover rate of DRS staff, including VR counselors, presents a barrier to the full achievement of all goals and priorities. Because of this barrier, DRS will continue to maintain its goals and priorities relating to CRPs, transportation, and serving youth with disabilities until the desired outcomes are achieved.

The main impact of high turnover is the need to continually train and educate new staff members. Newly hired staff do not have a full understanding of available resources in their local

area, including transportation and CRP services. This knowledge gap effects many areas of DRS activities and may unfortunately lead to lower levels of CRP utilization, local transportation options, and consumer satisfaction, especially among youth. However, DRS has worked and will continue working to mitigate these impediments to achieving its goals and priorities.

The high turnover rate, not just among DRS staff, but CRP staff as well, can negatively impact CRP service delivery and capacity across the state. For these reasons, DRS has maintained goals and priorities associated with improving the working relationships between DRS and CRP staff in addition to increasing the availability of CRP services within the community.

To combat transportation issues, DRS has continued its commitment to reduce transportation barriers for consumers with disabilities and its focus on ITS to satisfy immediate transportation needs. DRS also encouraged planning for transportation needs early in the development of the consumer's rehabilitation program. At application, DRS counselors identified transportation issues and focused on finding solutions to include in the consumer's IPE. This ensured that the ability of consumers to reach their vocational goal was not impeded by preventable transportation barriers. Transportation issues were also addressed by the standard instrument prescribed for routine use by supervisors and quality assurance staff in case reviews.

DRS is successfully moving forward, despite the barriers faced by the agency, and will continue to work toward successfully achieving all goals and priorities.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

The total authorized dollars for CRP supported employment (SE) services in Program Year (PY) 2018 was $194,460 for 95 consumers with most significant disabilities. This is an increase from PY 2017, when 85 consumers were served and $190,265 were authorized for CRP SE services.

As previously addressed in the discussion of DRS Goal 5, DRS continued to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. A comparison of findings from the 2015 CSNA and the 2018 CSNA indicates that there is still a need to continue to improve collaborative relationships with community providers. While a greater percentage of CRP survey respondents acknowledged that a DRS liaison counselor was in contact on a regular basis (i.e., 68.1% in 2015 vs. 78.4% in 2018), a lower percentage of CRP survey respondents rated their communication with DRS to be Good or better (91.5% in 2015 vs. 87.2% in 2018).

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3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

DRS acknowledges the legal requirement to report on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA. However, data collection on the performance accountability indicators is only beginning, making a full report of DRS performance impossible at this time. As DRS moves forward in its task to place individuals with disabilities into competitive, integrated employment in PY 2020, it will continue to collect and monitor participant data in order to generate reports on:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

– The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

For PY 2018, DRS achieved the following performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA:

– The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – 61.8%

– The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program – $4,595.70

– The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment – 56.8%

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

UTILIZATION OF TITLE I FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

I&E FUNDS FOR THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND WEST VIRGINIA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

DRS fully embraces the Congressional intent that individuals with disabilities and their advocates are full partners in the state rehabilitation program. Therefore, DRS has established a goal to improve its service delivery system through involvement of consumers and their advocates to increase the ease of access to, timeliness of, and quality of rehabilitation services and ultimately to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The Division's concentration of I&E efforts on consumer partnerships demonstrates its commitment to enhanced consumer involvement.

Success in working with consumers and their advocates is fundamentally important in developing and using innovative approaches to achieve long–term success in expanding and improving rehabilitation services, including supported employment. DRS pursues that work primarily through partnership initiatives with the West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (WV SRC) and the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

DRS believes that the activities of these councils provide a promising foundation for the kind of partnership envisioned by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. If that partnership is to achieve its full potential, however, it must receive the necessary support.

Therefore, DRS annually allocates I&E funds to support general operations of the WV SRC and the SILC.

Program Year (PY) 2018 highlights for each appear below.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

I&E funds support operations and activities undertaken by members of the WV SRC, as mandated by WIOA. DRS allocated $52,168 for WV SRC in PY 2019.

As required by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, WV SRC assists DRS by conducting a survey of consumer satisfaction for DRS consumers whose VR cases have been closed. Surveys were mailed to approximately 3,800 individuals in PY 2019. WV SRC uses I&E funds to share costs of contracting an independent consultant to compile a report of survey results.

I&E funding assists WV SRC to prepare, publish, and distribute its annual report.

WV SRC also participates in development and establishment of DRS goals and priorities outlined in this state plan. I&E funds are used for travel costs as necessary.

WEST VIRGINIA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

In combination with Title VII money, I&E funds help support operations and activities undertaken by the SILC. DRS allocated $228,900 for the SILC in PY 2019.

The SILC, in partnership with DRS, jointly develops and submits the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), as appropriate. The SILC continues to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the SPIL. In conjunction with DRS, the SILC prepares and submits the 704 Report for West Virginia.

SILC members and/or employees collaborate with and/or participate in activities of the WV Centers for Independent Living (WVCIL), WV Developmental Disabilities Council, WV SRC, WV Olmstead Council, WV Mental Health Consumers Association, WV American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Medley Hartley Advocacy Project Advisory Council, WV Transportation

Alliance, and the Fair Shake Network. Training for service providers on sexual victimization of individuals with disabilities has been scheduled.

The SILC conducts a survey of consumer satisfaction for consumers who received independent living services. The SILC uses I&E funds to share costs with DRS and WVCIL for distribution of the survey and contracting an independent consultant to compile survey results and prepare an annual report of findings.

The SILC ensures that all meetings are open to the public and provides notice through the WV Secretary of State's Office as well as through statewide media at least two weeks prior to the meetings.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

The West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) vendor acknowledgment process includes an in–service training session for prospective new vendors and training updates as requested. During the training session, participants receive a Service Provider Guide and an introduction to the DRS process for providing supported employment (SE) services. DRS also loans SE training books and materials at no cost.

The quality of SE services is directly tied to the competency of the personnel performing job development and community-based training services. DRS encourages and supports the provision of a broad range of in–service training programs for personnel directly involved in SE service delivery.

DRS is committed to ensuring the availability of SE services throughout West Virginia as reflected in progress toward DRS Goal 5, which is to continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers including community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), Independent Living, and other community providers to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers. There are currently 35 DRS–acknowledged SE vendors from all districts across the state. These vendors make SE services available to an increasing number of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

In accordance with federal regulations, the SE services that may be provided to individuals and youth with disabilities placed in SE include:

1. Evaluation of rehabilitation potential for SE to supplement the comprehensive assessment conducted under the Title I program;
2. Job development;
3. Job placement;
4. Intensive on–the–job training provided by skilled job coaches/employment specialists;
5. Case management services;
6. Job monitoring, whether performed on–site or off–site, that includes regular contact with employees, employers, parents, guardians, and other professionals to reinforce and maintain the job placement;
7. Rehabilitation technology assessment and services as appropriate; and

8. Post–employment services (following transition to extended SE services) that are available from the extended service provider and that are needed to maintain the SE job placement.

As appropriate, youth with disabilities placed in SE may receive transition services. Youth who meet the definition of a student with a disability may also receive pre–employment transition services that include:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work–based learning experiences, which may include in–school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
5. Instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The demand and need for SE services continues to be significant, particularly in rural areas, as well as for those individuals who are transitioning from school to the workforce. DRS continues its commitment to expanding the statewide capacity for SE services.

DRS will continue to provide SE services to its consumers and will acknowledge additional SE service providers where needed. The Division will continue to consider non–traditional approaches to SE service delivery and will increasingly emphasize the development of natural supports wherever possible. DRS anticipates that more individuals will receive services with the increased number of approved SE providers.

DRS authorized SE services to 95 individuals in Program Year 2018.

While SE services may be expected to vary in scope and duration from individual to individual, core services that may be provided to individuals and youth with disabilities placed in SE can include:

1. Assessment of the individual's environmental circumstances;
2. Job analysis and job development;
3. Rehabilitation technology assessment;
4. Job placement following appropriate match of job/consumer characteristics identified in during assessment, job analysis, and job development (services 1 and 2 above);
5. Intensive, one–on–one, on–the–job training;
6. Job stabilization, job coach fading as much as possible; and
7. Extended Supported Employment Services (ESES), optimally including natural supports.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

DRS receives state funds earmarked to provide ESES for SE clients closed as successfully rehabilitated who, after an assessment of their progress and continuing needs for services, are found to require ongoing job coaching to maintain employment and are not eligible for services

through other funding sources. The consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) includes an estimate of the time needed for transition to extended services. Provision of ESES (job coaching) to all eligible SE clients, including youth with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with an approved IPE will not exceed 4 years, as required by federal regulations. Consumers in SE placement are eligible to receive any services traditionally available through the DRS Title I program.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

West Virginia Department of Commerce

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Marijane K. Waldron

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Marijane K. Waldron
Title of Signatory	Director, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
Date Signed	7-6-2021

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	

The State Plan must include	Include
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with	

The State Plan must include	Include
disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	No
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a	

The State Plan must include	Include
statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains	41.0	41.0	41.0	42.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

All WIOA Core Programs

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]

[1] "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.