

**Southeast Arkansas
Workforce Development
Area Local Plan
Program Years 2024-2027**

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Southeast Arkansas PY 2024-2027 Local Plan

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Southeast Arkansas PY 2024-2027 Local Plan

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 1.1. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA § 108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA §108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of this issuance guidance).

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area (WDA) consists of 10 counties: Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Southeast Arkansas Profile Population Growth (2022-2024): 0.21% Projected Employment Growth (2020-2030): 1.93% Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted) (2020): 7.0% Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, and Lincoln. Two states border the Southeast Arkansas WDA, Louisiana to the south and Mississippi to the east, and the Pine Bluff Metropolitan Statistical Area is located in the Area.

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area (WDA) consists of ten counties: Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, and Lincoln. Two states border the Southeast Arkansas WDA, Louisiana to the south and Mississippi to the east. The Pine Bluff Metropolitan Statistical Area is in the area.

The Southeast Arkansas WDA is expected to increase employment by 1,504 between 2020 and 2030. Goods-producing industries are projected to experience a net loss of 233 jobs, while the Services-Providing industries are predicted to gain 2,165 jobs. The area is estimated to lose 428 Self-employed workers. Population in the region declined 10.84 percent from 2010 to 2020, with a loss of 23,166 residents, bringing its residency to 190,554. The not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for 2020 was 7.0 percent.

Leisure and Hospitality is slated to be the top and fastest growing supersector, gaining 1,439 new jobs, an increase of 30.41 percent. Food Services and Drinking Places drive this growth, with a gain of 1,063 jobs. *Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations are predicted to increase their labor force by 52.46 percent between 2020 and 2030 to become the fastest-growing industry in the Southeast Arkansas WDA.* On the negative side of the labor market, five supersectors are estimated to see net losses, with the **Manufacturing** supersector forecast to cut 377 jobs. In contrast, the **Information** supersector could see a 21.63 percent reduction in its workforce. *Paper Manufacturing* is predicted to be the top declining industry, losing 356 jobs, 13.36 percent of its workforce. *Broadcasting (except Internet)* is estimated to be the fastest declining industry, cutting its small area workforce by 36.36 percent.

Southeast Arkansas WDA employment is expected to increase by 1.93 percent between 2020 and 2030, the slowest WDA in the state. Of the 8,785 job openings projected to be available annually, 3,451 would be from employees leaving the workforce, 5,184 from employees changing jobs, and 150 from growth and expansion. **Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations are predicted to be the top and fastest-growing major group, with a gain of 1,112 new jobs, a 24.15 percent increase.**

*Activities and Education are slated to increase staffing by 69.23 percent, becoming the fastest-growing occupation in the area. On the negative side of the economy, **Office and Administrative Support Occupations** is expected to be the top declining major group, losing an estimated 467 jobs, 5.92 percent of its workforce. The **Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations** major group could decline slightly faster at a rate of 5.99 percent. *Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers are predicted to be the top declining occupation, with a loss of 243. Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service, are estimated to lose a third of their workforce to become the fastest declining occupation.**

To meet the demands of employers in the SEAWDA, efforts have been made to develop a strong business services team in the area. The program provider now employs a Business Services professional diligently training and working with local businesses to assess needs and challenges. Over sixty new employers have been engaged in a WIOA business services activity, ranging from outreach meetings to participating as a work experience worksite, to hiring events, to discussing implementing training programs, including apprenticeships, to address skills gaps and workforce issues in Southeast. In addition, the team is now using Arkansas Job Link to track and record contacts made with local businesses.

People with disabilities in Southeast Arkansas face several economic challenges, including higher unemployment rates and lower median earnings compared to their non-disabled peers. To improve employment outcomes, there is a need for:

- **Inclusive Training Programs:** Providing accessible training for various disabilities to equip individuals with in-demand skills.
- **Supportive Employment Services:** Enhancing job placement services that understand the unique needs of people with disabilities.
- **Employer Incentives:** Offering tax credits and other incentives to employers who hire and accommodate workers with disabilities.

Resources and Support Programs:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** These services help individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and retain employment.
- **Disability Rights Arkansas:** An advocacy group that provides resources and support for individuals with disabilities.
- **Inclusive Employment Initiatives:** Programs aimed at promoting the hiring of people with disabilities and providing necessary workplace accommodations.

By addressing these challenges and leveraging available resources, Southeast Arkansas can improve the economic conditions and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, aligning with WIOA goals and creating a more inclusive workforce.

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Labor Market Information.

**SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
2020-2030 INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS BY MAJOR DIVISION**

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
000000	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	77,773	79,277	1,504	1.93%
006010	Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	6,218	5,790	-428	-6.88%
101000	Goods Producing	19,327	19,094	-233	-1.21%
101100	NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING	3,510	3,718	208	5.93%
110000	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,452	3,659	207	6.00%
210000	Mining	58	59	1	1.72%
101200	CONSTRUCTION	2,047	1,983	-64	-3.13%
101300	MANUFACTURING	13,770	13,393	-377	-2.74%
	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	7,959	7,649	-310	-3.89%
	Durable Goods Manufacturing	5,811	5,744	-67	-1.15%
102000	Services Providing	52,228	54,393	2,165	4.15%
102100	TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES	12,291	12,293	2	0.02%
420000	Wholesale Trade	1,849	2,014	165	8.92%
440000	Retail Trade	7,292	6,955	-337	-4.62%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	2,611	2,784	173	6.63%
220000	Utilities	539	540	1	0.19%
102200	INFORMATION	245	192	-53	-21.63%
102300	FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	2,510	2,506	-4	-0.16%
520000	Finance and Insurance	1,907	1,903	-4	-0.21%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	603	603	0	0.00%
102400	PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES	3,349	3,814	465	13.88%
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	966	1,138	172	17.81%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	341	329	-12	-3.52%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,042	2,347	305	14.94%
102500	EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	17,632	17,706	74	0.42%
610000	Educational Services	7,073	6,947	-126	-1.78%
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	10,559	10,759	200	1.89%
102600	LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY	4,732	6,171	1,439	30.41%
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	634	990	356	56.15%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	4,098	5,181	1,083	26.43%
102700	OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT)	2,795	3,396	601	21.50%
102800	GOVERNMENT	8,674	8,315	-359	-4.14%

Top 10 Growing Industries Ranked by Net Growth

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
722000	Food Services and Drinking Places	3,714	4,777	1,063	28.62%
813000	Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	1,483	2,261	778	52.46%
624000	Social Assistance	2,652	3,024	372	14.03%
561000	Administrative and Support Services	1,955	2,260	305	15.60%
311000	Food Manufacturing	3,789	4,012	223	5.89%
424000	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	963	1,143	180	18.69%
111000	Crop Production	1,121	1,294	173	15.43%
541000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	966	1,138	172	17.81%
493000	Warehousing and Storage	607	703	96	15.82%
484000	Truck Transportation	791	862	71	8.98%

Top 10 Fastest Growing Industries Ranked by Percent Growth (Minimum Employment of 25)

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
813000	Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	1,483	2,261	778	52.46%
722000	Food Services and Drinking Places	3,714	4,777	1,063	28.62%
424000	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	963	1,143	180	18.69%
541000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	966	1,138	172	17.81%
493000	Warehousing and Storage	607	703	96	15.82%
561000	Administrative and Support Services	1,955	2,260	305	15.60%
111000	Crop Production	1,121	1,294	173	15.43%
488000	Support Activities for Transportation	351	404	53	15.10%
624000	Social Assistance	2,652	3,024	372	14.03%
484000	Truck Transportation	791	862	71	8.98%

Top 5 Declining Industries Ranked by Percent Growth (Bottom Five)

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
322000	Paper Manufacturing	2,664	2,308	-356	-13.36%
999100	Federal Government, Excluding Post Office	1,577	1,371	-206	-13.06%
814000	Private Households	490	317	-173	-35.31%
452000	General Merchandise Stores	2,176	2,023	-153	-7.03%
611000	Educational Services	7,073	6,947	-126	-1.78%

Top 5 Declining Industries Ranked by Percent Growth (Bottom Five)

NAICS Code	NAICS Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
515000	Broadcasting (except Internet)	22	14	-8	-36.36%
814000	Private Households	490	317	-173	-35.31%
517000	Telecommunications	126	93	-33	-26.19%
443000	Electronics and Appliance Stores	103	78	-25	-24.27%
491100	Postal Service	343	271	-72	-20.99%

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	77,773	79,277	1,504	1.93%	3,451	5,184	150	8,785
11-0000	Management Occupations	7,224	7,170	-54	-0.75%	304	320	-5	619
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	2,249	2,380	131	5.82%	63	132	13	208
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	432	433	1	0.23%	8	22	0	30
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	524	533	9	1.72%	13	26	1	40
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	651	612	-39	-5.99%	12	47	-4	55
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	1,674	2,056	382	22.82%	67	119	38	224
23-0000	Legal Occupations	236	265	29	12.29%	7	10	3	20
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	4,841	4,831	-10	-0.21%	189	214	-1	402
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	318	379	61	19.18%	15	22	6	43
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	4,235	4,245	10	0.24%	111	132	1	244
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	3,888	4,202	314	8.08%	248	240	31	519
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	3,026	2,938	-88	-2.91%	111	166	-9	268
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	4,605	5,717	1,112	24.15%	404	518	111	1,033
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,152	2,264	112	5.20%	127	161	11	299
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	1,564	1,588	24	1.53%	100	121	2	223
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	6,110	5,877	-233	-3.81%	317	476	-23	770
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	7,891	7,424	-467	-5.92%	360	463	-47	776
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	2,534	2,639	105	4.14%	104	292	10	406
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	2,535	2,492	-43	-1.70%	77	175	-4	248
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,907	4,042	135	3.46%	125	245	14	384
51-0000	Production Occupations	9,693	9,269	-424	-4.37%	349	687	-42	994
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	7,484	7,921	437	5.84%	339	595	44	978

Top 10 Growing Occupations Ranked by Net Growth

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,170	2,712	542	24.98%	237	258	54	549
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,124	2,465	341	16.05%	147	130	34	311
21-2011	Clergy	384	624	240	62.50%	21	29	24	74
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	381	620	239	62.73%	30	43	24	97
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,342	1,468	126	9.39%	58	95	13	166
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	379	495	116	30.61%	32	52	12	96
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,018	1,107	89	8.74%	66	74	9	149
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,279	1,352	73	5.71%	58	114	7	179
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	391	460	69	17.65%	18	49	7	74
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	1,002	1,068	66	6.59%	31	79	7	117

Top 10 Fastest Growing Occupations Ranked by Percent Growth (Minimum Employment of 25)

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
21-2021	Directors, Religious Activities and Education	91	154	63	69.23%	5	9	6	20
27-2042	Musicians and Singers	58	97	39	67.24%	5	4	4	13
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	381	620	239	62.73%	30	43	24	97
21-2011	Clergy	384	624	240	62.50%	21	29	24	74
13-1131	Fundraisers	31	44	13	41.94%	1	2	1	4
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	95	126	31	32.63%	2	4	3	9
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	379	495	116	30.61%	32	52	12	96
11-3010	Administrative Services and Facilities Managers	119	155	36	30.25%	4	7	4	15
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	47	60	13	27.66%	3	6	1	10
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,170	2,712	542	24.98%	237	258	54	549

Top 10 Occupations Ranked by Annual Exits

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,170	2,712	542	24.98%	237	258	54	549
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	3,710	3,467	-243	-6.55%	221	125	-24	322
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,124	2,465	341	16.05%	147	130	34	311
41-2011	Cashiers	1,447	1,341	-106	-7.33%	119	134	-11	242
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1,874	1,790	-84	-4.48%	102	151	-8	245
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,427	1,340	-87	-6.10%	76	82	-9	149
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,018	1,107	89	8.74%	66	74	9	149
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,752	1,641	-111	-6.34%	64	92	-11	145
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,342	1,468	126	9.39%	58	95	13	166
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,279	1,352	73	5.71%	58	114	7	179

Top 10 Occupations Ranked by Annual Transfers

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,170	2,712	542	24.98%	237	258	54	549
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1,874	1,790	-84	-4.48%	102	151	-8	245
41-2011	Cashiers	1,447	1,341	-106	-7.33%	119	134	-11	242
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53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,279	1,352	73	5.71%	58	114	7	179
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,342	1,468	126	9.39%	58	95	13	166
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	955	999	44	4.61%	56	95	4	155
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,752	1,641	-111	-6.34%	64	92	-11	145
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,427	1,340	-87	-6.10%	76	82	-9	149

Top 10 Occupations Ranked by Annual Openings

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,170	2,712	542	24.98%	237	258	54	549
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	3,710	3,467	-243	-6.55%	221	125	-24	322
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,124	2,465	341	16.05%	147	130	34	311
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	1,874	1,790	-84	-4.48%	102	151	-8	245
41-2011	Cashiers	1,447	1,341	-106	-7.33%	119	134	-11	242
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,279	1,352	73	5.71%	58	114	7	179
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,342	1,468	126	9.39%	58	95	13	166
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	955	999	44	4.61%	56	95	4	155
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,018	1,107	89	8.74%	66	74	9	149
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,427	1,340	-87	-6.10%	76	82	-9	149

Top 5 Declining Occupations Ranked by Net Growth (Bottom Five)

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	3,710	3,467	-243	-6.55%	221	125	-24	322
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,752	1,641	-111	-6.34%	64	92	-11	145
41-2011	Cashiers	1,447	1,341	-106	-7.33%	119	134	-11	242
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,047	953	-94	-8.98%	35	69	-9	95
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,427	1,340	-87	-6.10%	76	82	-9	149

Top 5 Fastest Declining Occupations Ranked by Percent Growth (Minimum Decline of 5)

SOC Code	SOC Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Change	Total Annual Openings
43-2011	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	18	12	-6	-33.33%	1	1	-1	1
31-9094	Medical Transcriptionists	21	15	-6	-28.57%	1	2	-1	2
51-4021	Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	101	79	-22	-21.78%	3	6	-2	7
43-5051	Postal Service Clerks	85	67	-18	-21.18%	4	3	-2	5
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	221	175	-46	-20.81%	7	7	-5	9

Source (All Charts): [LT-LWDA-20-30.pdf \(arkansas.gov\)](#)

State of Arkansas Workforce Development Areas-Longterm Industry and Occupational Projections: 2020-2030 (Pg

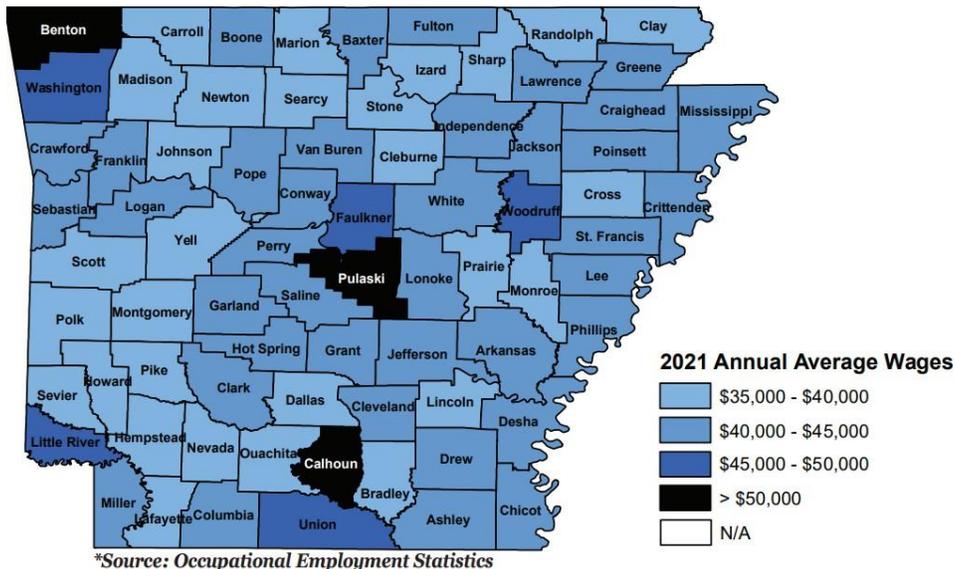
Wages by County

Source: Discover Arkansas

2019 Median Household Income - Census

5-year estimates

County	Income
Cleburne County	\$44,483
Fulton County	\$35,405
Independence County	\$44,319
Izard County	\$42,876
Jackson County	\$34,109
Sharp County	\$34,671
Stone County	\$38,188
Van Buren County	\$38,499
White County	\$44,029
Woodruff County	\$32,845



Source: Discover.arkansas.gov Labor Market Report- September 2023

1.2 Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA§108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

One of the most significant challenges facing Southeast's workforce is that it has one of the lower levels of education in the state. The Southeast region has a disappointing lack of Adults aged 25 or older with more than a High School diploma. Armed only with a high school diploma, job seekers are hard-pressed to meet the employers' needs. Job seekers must receive hands-on technical training in a broad sense.

Historically, the Southeast region has maintained a population where 39 % have at least a High School diploma, 4.3% have an Associate's degree, 10.2% have a Bachelor's degree, and 4.4% have a Graduate or Professional degree. If the projections are accurate, the Southeast region will remain on the lower end of the higher-paying occupations.

Southeast, like many other rural areas across the country, are teetering on the emergence of area widely diverse manufacturing opportunities and would need to be revised to center future possibilities on past shortcomings. The most common skill gap is not isolated to Southeast Arkansas and has been echoed nationally for decades. Parents no longer teach soft skills in the home. Skills that these individuals may lack include: effective communication, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, patience, conflict management, etc. The situation is made worse in homes where generational dependence on welfare is the norm. It is unfair to place the burden on secondary schools and battle to keep students engaged. It is also unreasonable to expect employers to hire individuals who lack soft skills, so the problem will have to be addressed by training programs.

Workforce programs, educational institutions, and training providers must collaborate to address these skills gaps and deficiencies. Southeast has partnered with the City of Pine Bluff to host a Workforce Readiness Training Workshop before our Jefferson County Resource and Employment fair. During the training, participants revised their resumes, discussed their skill sets related to available jobs, and provided tips for preparing for on-the-spot interviews. The Business Services Coordinator has worked with clients from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to provide mock interviews before their job interview(s). Employers must be engaged to identify their needs and to provide jobs to individuals working through training programs. The government must be committed to make and change policies that will align with new training designs that meet the needs and challenges of job seekers.

Key In-Demand Industry Sectors

1. Healthcare and Social Assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Agriculture and Agribusiness
4. Transportation and Logistics
5. Education Services

Required Knowledge and Skills

1. Healthcare and Social Assistance

Knowledge:

- **Medical Knowledge:** Understanding of medical terminology, healthcare procedures, patient care protocols, and compliance with healthcare regulations.
- **Patient Management:** Knowledge of patient management systems, electronic health records (EHR), and healthcare software.

Skills:

- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in medical technology, diagnostic equipment, and patient care tools.
- **Soft Skills:** Strong communication, empathy, teamwork, and critical thinking skills.

2. Manufacturing

Knowledge:

- **Engineering and Technical Knowledge:** Understanding of mechanical, electrical, and industrial engineering principles.
- **Quality Control:** Knowledge of quality assurance processes, manufacturing standards, and compliance with safety regulations.

Skills:

- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in operating machinery, using CAD software, and performing maintenance tasks.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Ability to troubleshoot mechanical issues, optimize production processes, and improve efficiency.

3. Agriculture and Agribusiness

Knowledge:

- **Agricultural Science:** Understanding of crop production, soil science, pest management, and sustainable farming practices.
- **Business Management:** Knowledge of agribusiness management, marketing, and supply chain logistics.

Skills:

- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in using agricultural machinery, precision farming technology, and data analysis tools.
- **Management Skills:** Strong leadership, project management, and financial management skills.

4. Transportation and Logistics

Knowledge:

- **Logistics Management:** Understanding of supply chain management, inventory control, and distribution strategies.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Knowledge of transportation regulations, safety standards, and environmental regulations.

Skills:

- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in logistics software, fleet management systems, and transportation planning tools.
- **Organizational Skills:** Strong organizational, time management, and problem-solving skills.

5. Education Services

Knowledge:

- **Educational Pedagogy:** Understanding of teaching methods, curriculum development, and student assessment techniques.
- **Educational Technology:** Knowledge of educational software, e-learning platforms, and classroom technology integration.

Skills:

- **Instructional Skills:** Proficiency in delivering effective instruction, managing classrooms, and adapting teaching methods to diverse learners.
- **Communication Skills:** Strong communication, interpersonal, and collaboration skills.

• WIOA Collaborative Efforts for People with Disabilities:

• Activities:

• Job Fairs and Hiring Events:

- Organize job fairs specifically aimed at connecting individuals with disabilities with potential employers. These events are tailored to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities by providing accessible venues, interpreters, and other necessary accommodations.

• Workshops and Training Sessions:

- Conduct workshops focused on skill development, resume building, and interview preparation for individuals with disabilities. These sessions are designed to enhance employability and prepare participants for the job market.

• Events:

• Disability Awareness Month:

- Participate in Disability Awareness Month activities by hosting events that raise awareness about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities and promote inclusive hiring practices among employers.

• Community Outreach Programs:

- Engage in community outreach programs to educate businesses and the public about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. These programs often include guest speakers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

• Resources:

• Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

- Collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to provide tailored support and resources to

individuals with disabilities. This includes career counseling, job placement services, and on-the-job training.

• Assistive Technology:

- Offer access to assistive technology and adaptive equipment to help individuals with disabilities perform their job duties effectively. This may include screen readers, speech recognition software, and ergonomic workstations.

• Partnerships with Employers:

- Develop partnerships with local businesses to create internship and apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These partnerships aim to provide hands-on experience and increase the chances of long-term employment.

• Accessibility Audits:

- Conduct accessibility audits for workplaces to ensure they are equipped to accommodate employees with disabilities. Provide recommendations and support for making necessary modifications.

Educational and Skill Levels of the Southeast Workforce

Data contained in the charts below do not include individuals with disabilities.

Subject	Population 18 to 24 years	Less than high school graduate		High school graduate (includes equivalency), no college		Some college or associate's degree		Bachelor's degree or higher	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Arkansas	286,456	38,318	13.40%	93,821	32.80%	132,402	46.20%	21,915	7.70%
Arkansas County, Arkansas	1264	138	10.90%	376	29.70%	691	54.70%	59	47.00%
Ashley County, Arkansas	1509	247	16.4%	661	43.8%	533	35.3%	68	4.5%
Bradley County, Arkansas	732	275	37.6%	267	36.5%	140	19.1%	50	6.8%
Chicot County, Arkansas	732	275	37.6%	267	36.5%	140	19.1%	50	6.8%
Cleveland County, Arkansas	528	114	21.6%	234	44.3%	161	30.5%	19	3.6%
Desha County, Arkansas	827	67	8.1%	430	52.0%	257	31.1%	73	8.8%
Drew County, Arkansas	2518	177	7.0%	561	22.3%	1652	65.2%	128	5.1%

Grant County, Arkansas	1306	170	13.0%	705	54.0	408	31.2	23	1.8
Jefferson County, Arkansas	6107	363	5.9%	3117	51.0%	2588	42.4%	92	8.8%
Lincoln County, Arkansas	1042	329	31.6%	387	37.1%	234	22.5%	92	8.8%

Subject	Population 25 years and over	Less than 9th grade		9th to 12th grade, no diploma		High school graduate (includes equivalency), no college		Some college, no degree	
Arkansas	1,985,770	103,458	5.20%	182,659	9.20%	681,486	34.30%	448,518	22.60%
Arkansas County	11,988	688	5.60%	928	7.70%	5020	41.90%	1962	16.40%
Ashley County	13,411	768	5.7%	1220	9.1%	6823	50.9%	2193	16.4%
Bradley County	7251	409	5.6%	742	10.2%	3111	42.9%	1575	21.7%
Chicot County	7114	511	7.2%	1026	14.4%	2725	38.3	1443	20.3%
Cleveland County	5531	67	1.2%	447	8.1	2584	46.7	1216	22.0%
Desha County	7728	721	9.3%	756	9.8%	3415	44.2%	1487	19.2%
Drew County	11,170	462	4.1%	994	8.9%	4090	36.6%	2289	20.5%
Grant County	12,554	272	2.2%	783	6.2%	5351	42.6%	2969	23.6%
Jefferson County	45,337	1698	5.90%	3427	7.6%	16,927	37.30%	9,096	20.21%
Lincoln County	9871	630	6.4%	1225	12.4%	4753	48.2%	1949	19.7%

Subject	Population 25 years and over	Associate's degree		Bachelor's degree		Graduate or professional degree	
Arkansas	1,985,770	132,221	6.70%	280,677	14.10%	156,751	7.90%
Arkansas County	11,988	1423	11.90%	1340	11.20%	647	5.40%
Ashley County	13,411	795	5.9%	1223	9.1%	389	2.9%
Bradley County	7251	506	7.0%	644	8.9%	264	3.6%
Chicot County	7114	359	5.0%	737	10.4%	313	4.4%
Cleveland County	5531	293	5.3%	607	11.0%	317	5.7%
Desha County	7728	292	3.8%	746	9.7%	311	4.0%
Drew County	11170	683	6.1%	1703	15.2%	949	8.5%
Grant County	12,554	924	7.4%	1648	13.1%	6	4.8%
Jefferson County	45,337	1971	4.30%	7908	17.40%	4310	9.50%
Lincoln County	9871	452	4.6%	609	6.2%	253	2.6%

1.3 Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the local area, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(C); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Southeast Arkansas saw a decrease in the labor force of 418 to 76,542 from 2021 to 2022, but employment increased by 249 to 72,999 for the same period. The labor force and employment have decreased since 2018 by 4,843 and 4,551, respectively. Unemployment decreased by 667 to 3,543 from 2021 to 2022 and the unemployment rate declined to 4.6 percent in 2022. After starting at 4.9 percent in January 2023, the unemployment rate fluctuated, ultimately settling to 4.2 percent in July 2023. The ratio of aged persons to youth is expected to continue to rise. This increase in the number and proportion of aged persons has significant implications for health and social services, education, available workforce, and other areas. Individuals with disabilities have an 84 percent employment rate and face the reality of earning inadequate incomes. Less than 38 percent of Southeast Arkansas population ages 18 to 24 have a high school diploma.

Cashiers were estimated to have the most employees in Southeast Arkansas, with 1,940 employed in 2022 with an average wage of \$25,113. Fast Food and Counter Workers was the second largest occupation, with 1,800 employed, earning an average salary of \$24,974. General and Operations Managers, with an estimated employment of 1,460, had the highest average wage of the ten largest occupations, earning \$77,119 annually. Physicians, All Other topped the Occupations Paying the Most list with an annual salary of \$249,514. Dentists, General, with an average yearly salary of \$200,803, ranked second on the Occupations Paying the Most list. The entry wage estimate for employers of all sizes was \$25,818 for 2022. The median wage estimate for employers with 250-499 employees was \$37,449, while wages for experienced workers averaged \$53,793 for employers in all size categories.

Of the 65,620 estimated employees in the area with hourly wage data, 8,904 made less than \$12 an hour, while 13,972 made \$17 to \$21.99 an hour. Employees making more than \$27 an hour totaled 12,775.

Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods is projected to be the top and fastest growing industry in Southeast Arkansas, increasing its workforce by 175 new jobs, a 17.41 percent gain. On the negative side of the local economy, Paper Manufacturing could lose 266 employees, dropping 10.95 percent of its workforce. Waste Management and Remediation Service is set to be the fastest declining industry, cutting its workforce by 26.51 percent, moving from 83 jobs in 2022 to 61 jobs in 2024. Leisure and Hospitality is anticipated to be the top growing super sector, adding 228 jobs between 2022 and 2024, a 4.28 percent rise in employment.

Management Analysts is projected to lead Southeast Arkansas in numeric change, growing by 64 jobs, reaching an employment level of 374. Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents are predicted to be the fastest-growing occupation, increasing its workforce by 37.29 percent. On the reverse side of the labor market, Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders are anticipated to be the top and fastest declining occupation, losing 58 jobs, or 10.88 percent of its workforce. Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations are estimated to be the top growing major group during the 2022-2024 projection period, with 122 new jobs, moving employment 2.48 percent to 5,036.

The educational and skill levels of the workforce in Southeast Arkansas reflect a blend of challenges and opportunities for improvement. The region faces barriers to employment, including lower educational attainment and skill gaps, but robust initiatives are in place to address these issues. A significant portion of the workforce in Southeast Arkansas lacks higher education. Many adults do not possess a high school diploma, which limits their employment prospects and earning potential. Adult education programs are a critical resource in this region, providing basic skills classes, GED preparation, and career readiness training. These programs aim to improve literacy, numeracy, and other foundational skills essential for employment.

High rates of poverty and limited access to quality education and training resources are significant barriers. These factors contribute to a cycle of low educational attainment and limited job opportunities. Individuals with disabilities, veterans, and migrant workers face additional challenges in accessing employment. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services provides targeted support for these groups, including vocational rehabilitation and specialized job placement services.

Efforts to improve the educational and skill levels of Southeast Arkansas's workforce are ongoing, focusing on addressing both immediate job placement needs and long-term career development. The region can work towards a more skilled and competitive workforce by continuing to invest in education and training programs and providing targeted support for individuals with barriers to employment.

Many individuals with disabilities in Southeast Arkansas face educational challenges that impact their employment opportunities. Efforts are being made to address these challenges through programs that enhance vocational training and education. The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) implements various programs under WIOA to improve access to education, training, and employment for individuals with significant barriers to employment. These programs include vocational training, adult education, and career services designed to help job seekers, including those with disabilities, to improve their skills and find suitable employment.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services provides a range of services to individuals with disabilities, including vocational rehabilitation, pre-employment transition services, and specialized programs like Project

SEARCH. These services are designed to help individuals with disabilities gain the skills and experience necessary to secure and retain employment. Adult Education is available to help individuals improve their literacy and basic skills. These programs are designed to prepare adults, including those with disabilities, for further education, training, and employment.

Programs like the Youth Activities Funding under WIOA focus on providing education and training opportunities for at-risk youth and young adults, including those with disabilities. These programs aim to prepare young people for successful careers through a combination of education, work experience, and support services. The Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District collaborates with local partners to provide targeted training and support services. These initiatives aim to align training programs with the needs of local employers, ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the training required to meet labor market demands.

Labor Force Employment and Unemployment

Southeast Arkansas LWDA 2018-2022 Labor Force/Employment

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Labor Force	81,385	81,524	79,951	76,960	76,542
Employment	77,550	77,671	74,352	72,750	72,999
Unemployment	3,835	3,853	5,599	4,210	3,543
Unemployment Rate	4.7%	4.7%	7.0%	5.5%	4.6%

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

December 2023 Southeast Arkansas Labor Force Statistics

County	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Arkansas	8,969	8,717	252	2.8%
Ashley	6,271	5,904	367	5.9%
Bradley	3,913	3,733	180	4.6%
Chicot	2,708	2,540	168	6.2%
Cleveland	2,964	2,855	109	3.7%
Desha	4,803	4,553	250	5.2%
Drew	7,528	7,216	312	4.1%
Grant	8,456	8,209	247	2.9%
Jefferson	25,068	23,897	1,171	4.7%
Lincoln	3,539	3,385	154	4.4%

Source: <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Employment/Labor-Force-by-County>

1.4 Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training, and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the local area. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Southeast's workforce development activities are coordinated through the following state agencies and WIOA Core partners: Title I-B: Youth, Adult and Dislocated Workers Program, the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), which includes Adult Education, AR Rehabilitation Services, and the Division of Services for the Blind. These agencies are responsible for all the core and non-core programs included in the combined regional and local plan. These agencies are also represented on the local workforce development board.

Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of workforce activities and represent Southeast's version of the American Jobs Center. Southeast has five workforce centers across the region, providing access to many Arkansans. One comprehensive center is in Pine Bluff, and four affiliate centers are located in Monticello, Dumas, Crossett, and Lake Village.

Satellite centers are open one day a week in the following locations: Dewitt and Stuttgart. Satellite Centers are offices located at a local community college where Career Advisors are available part-time to provide WIOA services such as basic career services, job searches, and training assistance to those who cannot come into the local workforce center.

The local workforce development board oversees the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The local board comprises representatives of local businesses, labor, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. In alignment with the States' vision, the board provides front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to their locally determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development, youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, etc.

The local board has procured a one-stop operator for the daily operation of the perspective center(s) in accordance with WIOA 121(d). The Board conducts workforce activities by partnering locally through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to implement core, non-core, and other partner programs. Arkansas Workforce Centers are fully integrated with WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Local partnerships and integration also exist in many areas with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs and others.

Typical customers entering the center are engaged by an intake process designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources for those needs. Sometimes, the resources are initiated by a referral to a partner program. Customers are given solutions and next steps to their questions, barriers, and issues by connecting directly with the appropriate workforce system partner as part of this philosophy.

The Adult Education section of ADWS funds local adult education programs, community-based and/or privately-operated literacy councils, and special projects with state and federal grants. The service delivery systems are diverse. Program services are provided through various local entities, including public school systems, community-based organizations, colleges, community colleges, and technical institutes. Local programs offer adult education services such as teaching academic skills to people who function from beginning reading through a high functioning educational level and English as a Second Language (ESL). These services are free and provided in classes held in locations throughout each program's service area. Additional

programs such as Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) and Career Readiness Certification are also offered in educational institutions, career centers, workplaces, and correctional institutions. Adult Education assists all partners through detailed assessments, individual-specific remediation, and preparing individuals for either the workplace or for industry-specific formal training.

Division of Services for the Blind continues to support the Arkansas Workforce Centers. In the Fall of 2019, the program co-located its headquarters within the One-Stop Comprehensive Center in Pine Bluff and regularly visits the affiliate centers throughout the district.

Workforce System Services - Unemployed and Underemployed

Arkansas Workforce Centers offer the full array of career services outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed job seekers. Career services available at the centers vary because of local area inflection and the needs of particular employers and communities. Basic career services are available at all five centers throughout the Southeast region. Each center has computers, printers, copiers, printed resources, and staff to assist job seekers. Many of the services, including Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas LMI Portal, can be accessed anywhere through the internet via computer, smartphone, or tablet. Arkansas Job Link is the state job matching system and the virtual one-stop-shop where Arkansans can centralize all their career search activities. It allows job seekers to self-enter their resume(s) and job search 24/7.

Arkansas Job Link also provides access to a toolbox of job search assistance links, including career exploration, training resources, self-marketing tools, Unemployment Insurance information, and additional job banks. The built-in event calendar communicates upcoming hiring events, job fairs, workshops, trainings, and other workforce activities. In addition, the TorQ system, a web application that empowers job seekers to take on new jobs and career paths using a powerful, unique algorithm that gives employers and workforce professionals rock-solid skills validation for their hiring needs, is an extra resource for Job seekers. The Discover Arkansas LMI Portal provides the general public with information on the most recent labor market.

Jobseeker Services

Individualized career services within the Arkansas Workforce Centers vary across the region, but all the offices offer a full line of activities to prepare job seekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require, such as:

- Labor exchange services that provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information is current and includes information on local, regional, and national labor markets, such as job vacancies, skills necessary to obtain the jobs, in-demand occupations, and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations.
- Workforce Centers provide the following career services: outreach, intake and orientation, initial assessment, Labor exchange services, eligibility determination, referrals to programs, performance and cost information, information on unemployment insurance, financial aid information, and follow-up services.
- Workforce Centers and partners provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include, but are not limited to, individual employment plan (IEP),

individual service strategy (ISS), career planning and counseling, comprehensive assessment, occupational skills assessment, short-term prevocational services, internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships, workforce preparation, out-of-area job search, English language acquisition, basic skills training, and financial literacy.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims are no longer handled at the local office. They are handled through the Unemployment Service Center and via the UI Hotline. Those needing to file for unemployment benefits still have access to computers located in the local office. The local office has handouts available for UI claimants with information on how to file for unemployment, weekly claims, set up direct deposit, UI debit card information, file an appeal, and provide self-addressed envelopes to anyone needing to repay an overpayment.

Training Services

Career services are not always enough to enable job seekers to obtain self-sufficient employment. In some instances, formal training is required. Arkansas Workforce Centers offer multiple training services: occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, skill upgrading and retaining, entrepreneurial training, on-the-job training, customized training and adult education and family literacy activities.

Training services are funded through WIOA programs, Pell Grants, partner programs, state and local grants, scholarships, and private funds. The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board is responsible for establishing and implementing local policies for eligibility, Individual Training Account (ITA) limits, and the identification of in-demand sectors or occupations. Through multiple initiatives and projects, Arkansas has focused training and career development activities on sector strategies /partnerships and career pathway development. The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) has been updated under WIOA Sections 122 and 134 by the Department of Workforce Services at the State level. This list ensures that Arkansans can make informed decisions on training providers and programs based on accurate data, including completion and placement rates, labor market information, and wage expectations. The Arkansas Career Development Center (ACDC) provides vocational training and services that lead to employment opportunities for students served by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Students are referred to the Arkansas Career Development Center for evaluation, training, and placement by the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors in field offices serving each county in the state. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' (ARS) mission is to prepare Arkansans with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives. To achieve its mission, ARS provides a variety of training and career preparation programs. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services also assist with transportation.

Supportive Services

Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services to assist job seekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services. The Southeast region has established supportive service policies that outline types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include, but are not limited to, childcare, transportation, tools and equipment, uniforms, travel expenses, utility assistance, rental assistance, and testing fees. These services are made available as a means of rehabilitation to alleviate barriers for targeted populations. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Southeast has developed relationships with community partners that provide additional assistance and other basic needs.

Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities is business and industry. These activities are taking place in the region and may include: Access to facilities -Use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.; Assessments - Any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills,

interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee; Business engagement - Seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.; Business information - Information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business; Hiring events - A customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job fairs- Event for multiple employers that helps with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions; Job postings - Staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff; Labor market information - Information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and job vacancies survey results; Rapid Response - A variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits; Screening - Any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process; Training and retraining - Any service provided to a business that consists of the training or retraining of current or future employees including OJTs, Incumbent Worker Training, etc. Mobile Units- most services above can be provided at locations outside of Arkansas Workforce Center offices.

Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Services section provides services to individuals with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for people with disabilities concerning attaining employment. A 2008 study (StatsRRTCI) indicated that the employment rate for people with disabilities was 33.9 percent when compared to 79.1 percent for people without disabilities. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. The efforts of the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge in providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas. Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) offers employment services for visually impaired and blind persons as well as rehabilitation by developing life skills, accommodations, and adaptations of daily living. Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind provide other services such as English literacy, citizenship instruction, financial and health literacy services based upon the client's system entry point and needs. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services offers career and technical education and training, transition from school to work or postsecondary education, on-the-job training, and ancillary support services that clients may need for successful employment. ARS offers programs to enhance accessibility and provide necessary accommodations for individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can participate fully in their communities and workplaces. This includes:

- Alternative Financing Program: Helps individuals with disabilities obtain assistive technology devices and services.
- Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/RTW) Program: Assists employees in staying at work or returning after an injury or disability ([ArkDWS](#)).

Southeast Arkansas Workforce System's Strengths and Weakness

The strength of the Southeast Arkansas system is the availability of services throughout the predominantly rural area and a strong partnership with service agencies outside the workforce arena. The system partners have long-term relationships with and are supported in the effort by the local chief elected officials and some key employers. The Southeast community tends to rally around new initiatives and ideas and take pride in their region.

The major weakness in the local system is the lack of public transportation and an abundance of negative press, leading to a far-reaching negative perception of the area's labor force. Housing proves to be an additional weakness in Southeast Arkansas. The need for broadband and internet services in our rural areas often can be a challenge for residents and agencies seeking to serve customers in remote or satellite sites.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 2.1 Describe the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A) to support local economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. *[WIOA § 108(b)(1)(E)]*

The local board will strive to prepare an educated and skilled workforce through partnerships with all core partner agencies, utilizing various training efforts such as Adult Education, Registered Apprenticeship, Institutional Training, Literacy/ Workplace Training, Work Experience, on-the-job training, and customized training.

Stronger partnerships with the two education cooperatives in the region, Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative and Arkansas River Education Service Cooperate, will assist with early intervention in providing services to students who have not completed secondary training but are planning for a career. In addition, more strategic planning with leaders from community colleges and universities, focusing on developing joint point programs designed to be tailor-made for individuals with barriers to employment who need a non-traditional route of navigating through career pathways.

Planning cannot be done in silos. Organizations that seek the same or similar missions must come to the same table and write goals and plans together so that they align and benefit job seekers and keep the process simple. The goal is to build upon and improve the current regional economic condition by recruiting new industries to create opportunities and supporting the growth of existing employers to enhance the economic self-sufficiency of the citizens of Southeast Arkansas. Evidence of this goal being achieved will be the increase of employment and job retention rates for Adults and Dislocated Workers, increased credential rates for Adults, Youth, and Dislocated Workers, and increased training and placement rates for Youth, which will all lead to earnings increase for all WIOA populations. Earnings increase for individuals who may have once been dependent on government assistance or unemployed or undereducated, which will reflect on the overall

conditions of the economy of Southeast Arkansas. These goals align with performance measures negotiated for the area.

The local board will work closely with the board staff to aid in recruiting the adult, youth, and dislocated worker populations to meet all measures set by the state. The local board recommends that Board Staff reach out to old and current training providers to encourage them to become training providers and encourage current providers to maintain their performance entries into the AJLA system. By increasing providers, credential attainment will increase in Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker funding streams. Also, increasing providers and training sites will aid in increasing enrollments in all funding streams. Connecting and supporting small businesses will help the Southeast area attain the employment outcome measures set.

Addressing the high dropout rate and improving educational attainment for adults aged 18-24 in Southeast Arkansas requires a multifaceted approach. Several strategies that Southeast plans to be implemented:

1. Enhancing Access to Adult Education Programs

Adult Education and Literacy Programs:

- Expand access to adult education and literacy programs that offer flexible scheduling to accommodate working adults.
- Promote GED preparation programs and provide support services such as tutoring, transportation, and childcare to reduce barriers to attendance

2. Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE Programs:

- Increase investment in career and technical education programs that provide practical, hands-on training in high-demand industries. This makes education more relevant to job market needs and more engaging for students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings.
- Partner with local businesses to create apprenticeship and internship opportunities that combine education with real-world work experiences

3. Support Services and Counseling

Comprehensive Support Services:

- Provide comprehensive support services, including career counseling, mental health services, and financial literacy education, to help students manage personal challenges that might impede their education.
- Implement mentorship programs that connect young adults with role models and advisors who can guide them through their educational and career pathways.

4. Community Engagement and Outreach

Community Outreach Programs:

- Develop community outreach programs to raise awareness about the importance of completing high school and the opportunities available through adult education programs.
- Engage community leaders, faith-based organizations, and local media to promote educational initiatives and encourage community support

5. Incentives and Financial Support

Financial Incentives:

- Offer financial incentives such as scholarships, stipends, and performance-based rewards to encourage enrollment and completion of educational programs.
- Provide financial assistance for related expenses such as textbooks, transportation, and exam fees to reduce the economic burden on students.

6. Partnerships with Employers

Employer Partnerships:

- Foster partnerships with local employers to create programs that allow employees to pursue their education while working. This could include flexible work hours, tuition assistance, and on-site educational programs.
- Encourage employers to recognize and reward educational attainment, which can motivate employees to pursue further education.

7. Technology and Online Learning

Online Education Options:

- Utilize technology to offer online learning options, providing greater flexibility for individuals who need to balance work, family, and education.
- Develop mobile-friendly educational resources and platforms to reach a broader audience, including rural and underserved areas.

Addressing the educational barriers for adults in Southeast Arkansas requires coordinated efforts across multiple sectors. Enhancing access to education, providing comprehensive support, and engaging the community can reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes for this critical age group.

Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Develop and strengthen partnerships with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community-based

organizations to deliver a platform to prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Expand employer partnerships through the Business Services Team, chambers of commerce, economic development partners, and other opportunities.
2. Increase the use of all work-based learning programs as viable talent development opportunities by continuing the education and communication between partners, employers, and trainers.
3. Continue to partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, adult education, disability service providers, community-based organizations, and non-profits to understand barriers and resources available to individuals so individuals can succeed in training programs in our region.
4. Analyze and address barriers to collaboration between state, regional, and local business services teams.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and job seekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Promote and fund training that leads to industry-recognized credentials and certification in-demand occupations through scholarships, on-the-job training, and work experiences.
2. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives to meet business and industry needs.
3. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by Southeast Workforce system partners.
4. Support the development of functional teams to enhance services.
5. Ensure a comprehensive array of services are provided to employers to meet unmet workforce needs.
6. Outline business solutions and provide training to LWDB staff and stakeholders on mobilizing resources, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services throughout the system.
2. Participate in an image-building outreach campaign to educate Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Southeast Arkansas.

3. Utilize technology, including social media, to better connect job seekers and employers with the talent development system in Southeast Arkansas. Develop partnerships with libraries and other community organizations to provide access to the workforce system via computers.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gap

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Participate in a skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue in Southeast Arkansas.
2. Work with partners in education at all levels to help implement a plan to close skills gaps in Southeast Arkansas. Review current job readiness standards and evaluations being used within the workforce system to find best practices that could be replicated.
3. Use labor market information provided by the Department of Workforce Services and contract with a vendor that will provide detailed labor and skills analysis as well as evaluation of post-secondary education performance to determine effectiveness of training to bridge the skills gaps.
4. Seek grants available to education and employers to fund training programs that address skills gaps.
5. Receive input from employers to address the skills shortages and identify alternative methods of recruiting and training workers, such as exploring nontraditional labor pools and methods of upskilling and offering efficient onboarding processes.

Key Performance Indicators to Measure Success for these Goal Objectives:

1. **Employment Rate:** Tracking the employment outcomes of individuals participating in WIOA programs, including job placement and retention rates.
 2. **Credential Attainment:** Measuring the number of participants who obtain recognized postsecondary credentials, such as certificates, diplomas, or degrees, that align with employer needs.
 3. **Skills Development:** Assessing improvements in participants' skills and competencies critical to Arkansas employers, particularly in high-demand industries.
 4. **Earnings Increase:** Evaluating the impact of WIOA programs on participants' earnings before and after program participation.
 5. **Employer Engagement:** Monitoring employer involvement in workforce development activities and their satisfaction with the skill levels of job candidates.
- 2.2 Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State's workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix D: Planning References and Resources)

Southeast will establish a well-educated, skilled, and working workforce to keep Southeast's economy competitive in the global marketplace. The Southeast Workforce Development understands and embraces its role and responsibility in the bigger picture as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. It is necessary for the Southeast local plan to align with the state plan to achieve uniformity and one common goal.

Aligning the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board's (SEAWDB) vision and goals with the state's vision and goals for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) involves a strategic approach that ensures local efforts contribute to statewide workforce development objectives. This alignment can be achieved by:

1. Shared Vision and Strategic Priorities

State's Vision: The state of Arkansas, under Governor Sanders, aims to develop a workforce system that is quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet regional economic needs

SEAWDB's Vision: SEAWDB plans to align its vision by focusing similarly on quality, employer engagement, and customer service. This includes prioritizing programs that meet the specific needs of Southeast Arkansas's economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and healthcare.

2. Employer Engagement and Industry Partnerships

State Goal: To realign division policies and practices to improve skills that meet employer needs and to engage employers in workforce development efforts.

Local Implementation: SEAWDB plans to strengthen partnerships with local businesses to ensure training programs are relevant and aligned with current job market demands. This includes regular consultation with employers to adjust curricula and training offerings, ensuring that the skills taught are those most needed by local industries.

3. Education and Training Alignment

State Goal: To align training and career pathways with employers' needs and promote high-demand industry certifications and credentials.

Local Implementation: SEAWDB plans to work closely with educational institutions to develop and promote training programs that lead to industry-recognized certifications. This might involve expanding career and technical education (CTE) programs, promoting apprenticeships, and ensuring that adult education programs are accessible and relevant to the needs of local employers.

4. Access to Resources and Support Services

State Goal: To provide comprehensive services that meet the needs of job seekers, including creating a statewide workforce portal that offers job search assistance, training opportunities, and access to support services.

Local Implementation: SEAWDB plans to enhance its one-stop centers to ensure they provide holistic support, including career counseling, resume workshops, job placement services, and access to educational and training resources. Additionally, promoting the statewide workforce portal can help job seekers in Southeast Arkansas access a broader range of resources and opportunities.

5. Regional Focus and Specialization

State Goal: To invest in regional strategic focus centers that align with Arkansas's market strengths and enhance programs at existing Career and Technical Education centers.

Local Implementation: SEAWDB plans to identify and develop strategic focus areas within Southeast Arkansas that align with state priorities, such as advanced manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare.

By investing in specialized training centers and programs, SEAWDB plans to ensure that local workers are equipped with the skills needed for these high-demand sectors.

6. Performance Measurement and Accountability

State Goal: To implement effective performance measurement systems that track employment outcomes, credential attainment, and skills development.

Local Implementation: SEAWDB has adopted state-recommended metrics to evaluate the success of its programs, including employment rates, earnings increases, and the attainment of industry-recognized credentials. Regular reporting and data analysis can help refine programs and ensure alignment with state goals.

By adopting these strategies, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board can effectively align its efforts with the state's vision and goals for WIOA, ensuring a coordinated and impactful approach to workforce development in the region.

2.3 Describe how the local board's vision and goals contributes to each of the governor's goals. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix D: Planning References and Resources) **Note: The State Plan includes several objectives under each goal.**

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community- based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Southeast Arkansas Objectives:

- Develop employer partnerships in diverse manufacturing to support and expand manufacturing engagement.
- Identify and promote best practices (private and public) for developing and sustaining partnerships.
- Expand partnership with economic development to refine sector strategies.
- Increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities.
- Utilize the ACT Work-Ready Communities Platform to convene partners from education, workforce, government, business/industry and economic development.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and job seekers.

Goal 2 Southeast Arkansas Objectives:

- Develop a common intake process for job seekers and businesses that will efficiently connect each with services available from all workforce development partner programs.
- Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
- Support transportable skill sets for transportable careers.
- Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives as a way to meet business and industry needs.
- Utilize Salesforce software to track business engagement activities.

- Utilize all avenues of communication whether it be through electronic means such as social media or printed materials.

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the Southeast Region's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Southeast Arkansas Objectives:

- Increase access to the workforce development system through one-stop approach to services.
- Implement a strong branding and outreach campaign that educates Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in the region.
- Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect job seekers and employers with the talent development system in Arkansas.
- Cross-train all partners about services that all WIOA programs offer.
- Conduct/participate in an open house twice a year at various core partner locations in the 10 county regions. The open house event will give individuals, partners, and business leaders the opportunity to explore the various partner locations which will ultimately help each partner understand the services offered at each location.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Southeast Arkansas Objectives:

- Develop and implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in the Southeast region.
- Utilize the proven effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program and the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) program.

2.4 Describe how the local board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. *[WIOA §108(b)(1)(E)]*

For participants enrolling in educational training, the goal is for the participants to complete their training and obtain their credentials and measurable skills gain. These participants will also be directed toward higher-paying jobs, leading to self-sufficiency. Follow-up services will help ensure that the individual retains employment in the field in which they were trained with the hope that employment extends beyond a year after exit. This goal also stands true for those participants receiving basic and individualized career services. Ultimately, the negotiated outcomes will measure the system's overall effectiveness.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

3.1 Considering the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area,

in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

- A. A description of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another.
- B. A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and
- C. An attached organization chart that depicts the local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. *[WIOA §108(b)(1)(F)]*

A.

Key Stakeholders and Entities:

1. Elected Officials:

- Chief Elected Officials (CEOs): These include county judges and mayors who provide oversight and strategic direction for the local workforce development initiatives. They appoint members to the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) and ensure alignment with regional economic development goals.

2. Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB):

- Board Members: The SEAWDB is composed of representatives from local businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and government agencies. The board provides policy guidance, strategic planning, and oversight for workforce development activities in the region.
- Committees: The SEAWDB includes several committees such as the Youth Committee, Planning Committee, One-Stop Committee, and Services for Individuals with a Disability Committee. Each committee focuses on specific aspects of workforce development, such as youth services, planning, and services for individuals with disabilities.

3. Fiscal Agent:

- Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District (SEAEDD): The SEAEDD serves as the fiscal agent, responsible for managing the financial aspects of workforce development funds, including budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting. This entity ensures the proper use of funds and compliance with federal and state regulations.

4. One-Stop Operator(s):

- Arkansas Workforce Centers: These centers act as the primary hubs for workforce services, providing job seekers and employers with access to various programs and resources. The centers offer services such as job search assistance, career counseling, training programs, and employment-related workshops.

5. Required Program Partners:

- Adult Education and Literacy Providers: These partners deliver basic education and literacy services to adults, helping them improve their skills and qualifications for

employment.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services: These services support individuals with disabilities in gaining and maintaining employment through customized training, job placement, and support services.

6. Major Contractors:

- Adult/Dislocated Worker Program Providers: These contractors deliver training and employment services to adults and dislocated workers, helping them acquire new skills and find suitable employment. Services include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and career readiness programs.
- Youth Program Providers: These contractors offer services to in-school and out-of-school youth, including tutoring, mentoring, work experience, and leadership development activities. The goal is to prepare young people for successful careers through comprehensive support and training.

Functional Relationships:

- SEAWDB and CEOs: The board works closely with elected officials to ensure that workforce development initiatives align with regional economic strategies and priorities.
- SEAWDB and Committees: Committees under the board focus on specific areas of workforce development, providing specialized oversight and recommendations to the full board.
- Fiscal Agent and SEAWDB: The fiscal agent manage the financial resources allocated to workforce development, ensuring compliance and efficient use of funds in collaboration with the board.
- One-Stop Operator(s) and Program Partners: The operators coordinate service delivery at Arkansas Workforce Centers, working with program partners to provide integrated and accessible services to job seekers and employers.
- Contractors and SEAWDB: Contractors delivering Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth programs report to the SEAWDB, which monitors their performance and ensures that they meet program goals and objectives.

B. list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers in the local area and WIOA Title I-B offices; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation.

All centers are open from 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Thursday. 8 am to 12pm- Friday.



AR WORKFORCE CENTER AT PINE BLUFF (Comprehensive)

SERVING JEFFERSON, CLEVELAND, & GRANT COUNTIES

P.O. Box 9028, Pine Bluff, AR 71611

1001 Tennessee St. Pine Bluff, AR 71601

Phone: 870. 619.4803 Fax: 870.495.2785

AR WORKFORCE CENTER AT DUMAS (Affiliate)

SERVING DESHA & ARKANSAS COUNTIES

P.O. Box 10

130 W. Waterman Dumas, AR 71639

Phone: 870.619.4487 Fax: 870.527.4598

AR WORKFORCE CENTER AT MONTICELLO (Affiliate)

SERVING DREW, BRADLEY, & LINCOLN COUNTIES

P.O. Box 619

477 South Main St. Monticello, AR 71655

Phone: 870.224.7075 Fax: 870.376.4271

AR WORKFORCE CENTER AT LAKE VILLAGE (Affiliate)

SERVING CHICOT COUNTY

103 Main St. Lake Village, AR 71653

Phone: 870.619.4744 Fax: 870.376.4602

AR WORKFORCE CENTER AT CROSSETT (Affiliate)

SERVING ASHLEY COUNTY

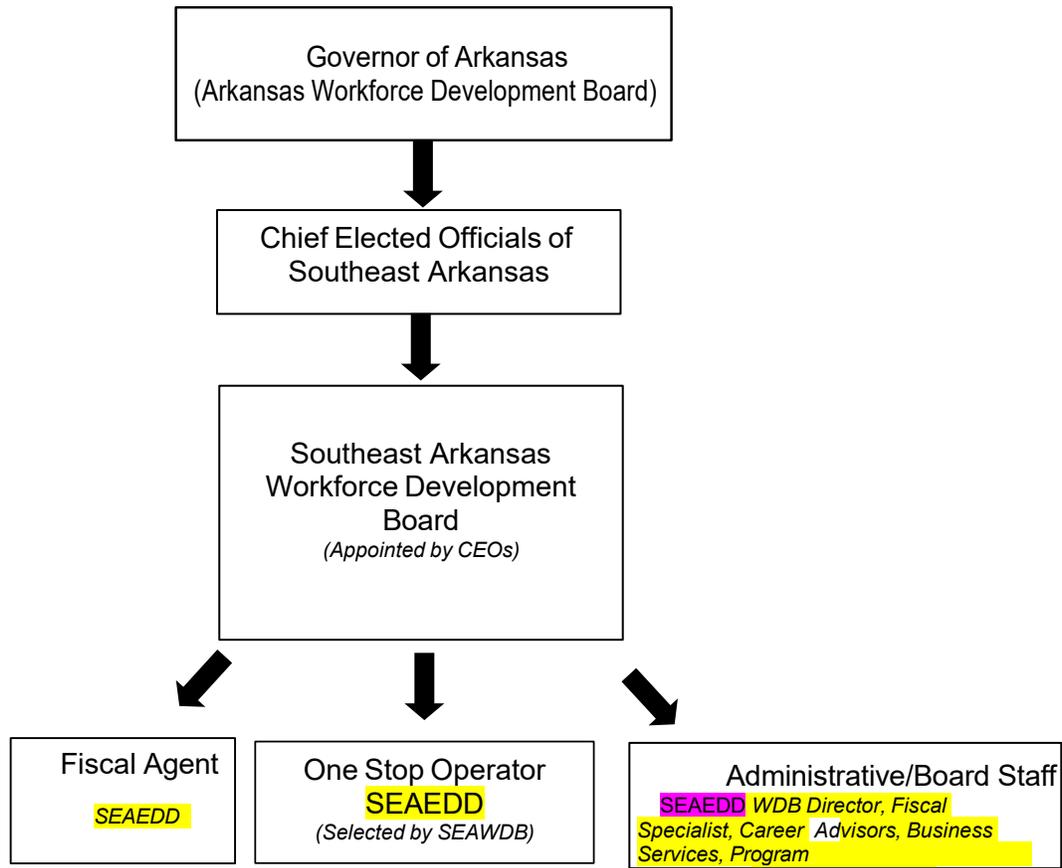
P.O. Box 1220

304 North Alabama Crossett, AR 71635

Phone: 870.619.4737 Fax: 870.376.4936



C. An attached organization chart that depicts the local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. [WIOA §108(b)(1)(F)]



3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b) (1) (E). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development system is based upon the long-established concept of the One-Stop centers. The WIOA rules have identified six core programs that must be available at the One-Stop centers: adult, dislocated worker, youth, adult education and literacy, Wagner Peyser program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker programs are provided by the Southeast local workforce development board; Adult Education programs are provided by UAM College of Technology, University of Arkansas at Monticello, and Phillips College; Wagner Peyser program is provided by Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation is provided by Services for the Blind and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) employs several strategies to ensure alignment and coordination among these programs:

1. Integrated Service Delivery:

- SEAWDB operates a one-stop center that co-locates services from multiple programs. This integrated service delivery model ensures that job seekers can access a range of services in a single location, making receiving comprehensive support tailored to their needs easier.

2. Partnerships with Educational Institutions:

- SEAWDB collaborates with local schools, community colleges, and technical centers to align educational programs with workforce needs. This includes working with institutions to develop and promote CTE programs that provide students with the skills local employers require. Additionally, SEAWDB supports dual enrollment and apprenticeship programs to give students real-world experience while they complete their education.

3. Employer Engagement:

- SEAWDB engages local employers to identify skill gaps and labor market needs. By involving employers in developing training programs, SEAWDB ensures that the skills taught are relevant and meet industry standards. Employer partnerships also facilitate job placement and on-the-job training opportunities for program participants.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making:

- SEAWDB uses data and labor market information to inform its strategies and measure the effectiveness of its programs. This data-driven approach helps identify areas for improvement and ensures that resources are directed toward high-impact activities.

5. Support Services and Case Management:

- SEAWDB provides comprehensive support services, including career counseling, financial assistance, and wrap-around services like transportation and childcare. Case

managers work closely with participants to develop individualized employment plans and connect them with the necessary resources to succeed

• System Description:

• SEAWDB collaborates closely with various entities to carry out the core programs, ensuring an integrated approach to workforce development. This includes regular coordination meetings, joint planning sessions, and shared performance metrics to align efforts and achieve common goals.

• Identification of Partners and Programs:

• Educational Institutions:

- Programs: GED preparation, vocational training, continuing education.
- Role: Provide training and educational services to enhance workforce skills.

• Community-Based Organizations:

- Programs: Supportive services such as childcare, transportation assistance, housing support.
- Role: Help individuals overcome barriers to employment.

• Economic Development Agencies:

- Programs: Business development services, economic planning.
- Role: Align workforce development with regional economic strategies.

• One-Stop Operator (OSO):

- Programs: Integrated service delivery at workforce centers, including job search assistance, resume workshops, and career counseling.
- Role: Ensure services are accessible and coordinated among all partners.

• Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

- Programs: Customized training, job placement services, support for individuals with disabilities.
- Role: Provide targeted support to help individuals with disabilities achieve employment.

• Collaborative Initiatives:

- Examples of collaborative initiatives include joint job fairs, coordinated training programs, and shared resource centers that bring together multiple partners to provide comprehensive services to job seekers and employers.

3.3 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry- recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (3)]

The Southeast Workforce Development Board is committed to expanding access to services for eligible individuals. The Board's Title I Provider, under the direction of the Board, has fostered an atmosphere of coordination and cooperation between all partner agencies. This atmosphere will facilitate the co-enrollment of

individuals, particularly individuals with disabilities and other barriers. Strategic efforts have been made to strengthen the lines of communication between programs. The staff of all core programs is being cross-trained and educated about the services each partner provides. Partner meetings are held on the state and local level, providing a unified service delivery approach to addressing customers' needs. Additionally, co-locations have increased within the Southeast region. Access to programs has been expanded due to the convenience of customers coming to one location to receive multiple services. The staff of core programs is now traveling more to rural areas and non-required partner facilities to increase outcomes through outreach. As barriers are identified, partners are more equipped to share resources with customers who may qualify for supportive, intensive, and basic career services.

The Board and its represented partner agencies are working with the local two- and four-year higher education institutions and the registered apprenticeship programs to develop recognized, high-demand credentials that the industry needs to be successful.

The board has also identified an underserved, diverse manufacturing cluster and will meet to establish a sector partnership with those employers. The intention is to develop portable career pathways and common industry sector credentialing, not just for the Southeast area but for the State. The initial business engagement meeting was hosted on May 18, 2017, with the assistance of Maher and Maher.

3.4 Identify and describe (for each category) the below strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies.**

The Business Services Team consists of local partners and business individuals. The team meets at least once a quarter to discuss strategies to help individuals in our region engage in available programs. When planning events (i.e.employment and resource fairs and forums), the team looks at what events are happening in the region, how we can collaborate with local organizations, and the best location for the event. The team ensures that we advertise each event early and consistently. Outside of general event marketing, the team extends personal invitations to increase participation. Following events, the team discusses what went well and where there can be improvements for future events.

• Facilitation of In-Demand Occupations and Industry Sectors:

- SEAWDB conducts regular labor market analysis to identify in-demand occupations and industry sectors. This involves reviewing employment trends, wage data, and employer feedback to determine the most critical areas for workforce development.
- **Key Industry Sectors:** The prioritized sectors include healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and transportation. These sectors are chosen based on their growth potential, wage levels, and demand for skilled workers.

• Employer Collaboration:

- SEAWDB engages employers through various initiatives to ensure training programs meet the needs of the local labor market.
- **Regular Communication:** SEAWDB maintains regular communication with employers through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings to gather insights on workforce needs and emerging trends.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborative partnerships with industry associations and chambers of commerce are leveraged to align training programs with industry standards and requirements.

- **Responsive Training Programs:** Training providers are encouraged to adapt their programs based on

employer feedback, ensuring that graduates possess the skills and qualifications needed for in-demand jobs.

B. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses.

The Business Services Team aims to educate the business industry about the services available to them through the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The Business Services Coordinator actively attends chamber meetings, job fairs, and other community events. To increase knowledge of services, the Business Service Coordinator aims to increase visibility throughout the district.

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.

One segment of the internal business services team comprises individuals with community and economic development expertise. These individuals continually work with communities and grants designed to attract new industries or support and expand existing industries. Their involvement provides the necessary "seamless" connection, allowing them to both utilize center services and provide feedback as to the needs of a particular industry. Local industrial development groups, local Chambers of Commerce, and educational institutions must be at the table after the sector partnership has been developed to provide an additional perspective on the process.

Additionally, the Board advocates for policy and regulatory reforms supporting workforce development and economic growth objectives. By engaging with policymakers and advocating for policies that promote education, training, and workforce preparation, the Board seeks to create an enabling environment for economic development and job creation in the region.

D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

While the one-stop system has long worked closely with unemployment insurance, the other partner agencies may or may not have been as fortunate. The linkage between partners will be strengthened through communication and co-locations, and familiarity will be developed in partner meetings. Additionally, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Board collaborates with state agencies responsible for administering unemployment insurance programs to identify opportunities for process improvements, service enhancements, and policy reforms that promote alignment with workforce development goals and priorities. By engaging in ongoing dialogue and partnership with these agencies, the Board can address systemic barriers and streamline administrative procedures to meet better the needs of individuals accessing unemployment insurance and workforce development services.

3.5 Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (5)]

The Board will continue supporting and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services through partner agencies and the local economic development district.

SEAEDD has worked with small businesses since the early 1970s, aiding with business plan development and funding through the revolving loan program. The Southeast area also has access to the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluffs Small Business Incubator's services and the Generator that helps entrepreneurs plan for start-ups. Participants interested in entrepreneurial skills will be referred to and connected with skilled professionals or mentors. As a part of the service delivery, internships, job shadowing, and work experience will be coupled with the training.

3.6 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b)(10)]

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) coordinates education and workforce investment activities with secondary and postsecondary education programs. This strategy ensures that services are enhanced, resources are utilized effectively, and duplication of efforts is avoided. Here's how

SEAWDB achieves this:

1. Collaborative Planning and Partnerships

Joint Planning Committees: SEAWDB collaborates with local educational institutions, including high schools, community colleges (SEARK), and technical centers, through joint planning committees. These committees include representatives from workforce development, secondary education, postsecondary education, and industry to develop aligned strategies that address the needs of both students and employers.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs): SEAWDB establishes MOUs with education partners to formalize collaboration. These agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of each party, ensuring a clear framework for cooperation and resource sharing.

2. Integrated Service Delivery

One-Stop Centers: The one-stop centers operated by SEAWDB co-locate services from multiple programs, including those funded by WIOA and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. This integrated service delivery model ensures that individuals can access a comprehensive range of services in a single location, facilitating seamless transitions from education to employment.

Career Pathways Programs: SEAWDB supports career pathways programs that align secondary and postsecondary education with workforce needs. These programs provide clear sequences of coursework and credentials that lead to employment in high-demand industries, making it easier for students to navigate their educational and career journeys.

3. Employer Engagement and Sector Strategies

Industry Advisory Councils: SEAWDB works with industry advisory councils composed of local employers, educators, and workforce professionals. These councils provide insights into industry trends, skill requirements, and emerging job opportunities, ensuring educational programs remain relevant and aligned with employer needs.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities: By partnering with employers, SEAWDB plans to facilitate work-based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing. These experiences help students apply their classroom learning in real-world settings, gaining valuable skills and making them more competitive in the job market.

4. Data Sharing and Performance Tracking

Shared Data Systems: SEAWDB and its education partners plan to use shared data systems to track student progress and program outcomes. This coordinated approach allows for better monitoring of program effectiveness, identification of gaps, and adjustments to improve services. Data-sharing agreements ensure that relevant information is available to all stakeholders while protecting student privacy.

Performance Metrics: SEAWDB and its partners establish common performance metrics to measure the success of education and workforce programs. These metrics include credential attainment, employment rates, and earnings increases. Regularly reviewing these metrics helps ensure that programs are meeting their goals and contributing to regional economic development.

5. Supportive Services and Counseling

Comprehensive Support: SEAWDB provides comprehensive support services, including career counseling, academic advising, and financial aid assistance. By coordinating these services with education programs, SEAWDB ensures that students receive the support they need to succeed in their educational and career goals.

Individualized Plans: Career Advisors work with students to develop individualized education and career plans. These plans map the steps needed to achieve their goals, including coursework, certifications, and work experiences. This personalized approach helps to keep students on track and motivated.

• Educational Providers in the Southeast Arkansas area:

- The primary educational providers in the Southeast Arkansas area include:

- **Southeast Arkansas Community College:** Offers a range of vocational and technical training programs.

- **University of Arkansas at Monticello and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff:** Provides higher education and specialized training programs.
- **University of Arkansas at Monticello Adult Education Centers:** Offer GED preparation, literacy programs, and specific vocational training courses.

Some ideas that SEAWDB is looking into implementing are:

Integrated GED and Technical Training Programs

- **Description:** Combine GED preparation with technical training in high-demand fields such as healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing. This dual approach allows participants to earn their GED while simultaneously gaining job-specific skills.
- **Implementation:** Partner with local community colleges, technical schools, and employers to create integrated programs. Provide hands-on training and real-world work experience through internships or apprenticeships.

Mobile Learning Labs

- **Description:** Utilize Workforce mobile units equipped with technology and learning resources to bring education and training directly to underserved communities.
- **Implementation:** Collaborate with local libraries, schools, and community organizations to schedule regular visits. Offer a range of services, including GED classes, career counseling, and digital literacy training.

Mentorship and Peer Support Programs

- **Description:** Establish mentorship programs that pair young adults with successful professionals from their communities. Include peer support groups to foster a sense of community and mutual encouragement.
- **Implementation:** Recruit mentors from local businesses, community organizations, and alumni networks. Organize regular meetings, both in-person and virtual, where mentors and mentees can discuss goals, challenges, and progress.

3.7 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (11)]

Southeast Arkansas is highly rural, except for the city of Pine Bluff. Outside Pine Bluff, transportation options are nonexistent, and coordinating supportive services between the partner agencies is critical. All supportive services will be coordinated through the core programs as well as other resources available. Supportive services are coordinated based on program eligibility, the economic need thresholds of the partner agencies, and the availability of program funds. Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, childcare assistance, and other supportive services or necessary assistance (tools and equipment, uniforms, and other clothing) to job seekers to improve success in obtaining and retaining employment. Through assessments and evaluations, Career Advisors determine the needs of each participant and create an Individual Employment Plan or Individual Service Strategy to address the identified barriers. Transportation assistance is provided once the client's need is established and when available. Transportation is paid by check. The participant is reimbursed based upon round trip miles from the participant's home address to training site. Childcare assistance is provided through vouchers to state approved childcare agencies. Other types of assistance, if deemed necessary for successful attainment or completion are provided on case-by-case basis. Referrals to partner agencies are also a part of the delivery system process, supported by board policy, to ensure the participants are receiving the optimal services to meet the individual's need.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) provides a range of services to help individuals with disabilities achieve employment and independence. Here are some of the key services:

1. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services:

- **Career Counseling and Guidance:** Personalized assistance to help individuals explore career options and develop plans to achieve their employment goals.
- **Job Training:** Access to vocational training programs that teach the skills needed for specific jobs or industries. This includes on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and classroom instruction.
- **Assistive Technology:** Provision of devices and technologies that assist individuals in overcoming barriers to employment, such as specialized computer software, mobility aids, and communication devices.

2. Support Services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** ARS helps individuals with disabilities access transportation to and from training programs, job interviews, and workplaces. This may include arranging accessible transportation options or providing financial assistance for transportation costs.
- **Job Placement Services:** Assistance with job searches, resume writing, interview preparation, and connecting individuals with potential employers.

3. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS):

- Designed for high school students with disabilities, Pre-ETS includes services such as job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, and training in workplace readiness skills. These services help students transition from school to post-secondary education or employment.

Arkansas Career Development Center (ACDC) is part of the ARS and offers specialized training programs to prepare individuals with disabilities for the workforce. Here are some of the services provided:

1. Vocational Training Programs:

- **Customized Training:** Programs tailored to individuals' specific needs and abilities, focusing on high-demand occupations. Training is often provided in partnership with local employers to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- **Technical and Trade Skills:** Courses in computer technology, automotive repair, culinary arts, and healthcare. These programs provide both classroom instruction and hands-on training.

The Division of Services for the Blind is dedicated to the independence of Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired and is committed to the principle that these individuals have the right to make informed choices regarding where they live, where they work, how they participate in the community, and how they interact with others.

Within the constraints of state and federal laws and based on available funds, the Division of Services for the Blind fulfills its mission through the following goals: Employment – To assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to secure or maintain employment that is consistent with their skills, abilities, and interests.

1. **Rehabilitation Teaching** – To assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to live as independently as possible through the development of skills, accommodations, or adaptations that are necessary to perform all activities of daily living.
2. **Prevention of Blindness** – To assist in preventing blindness by stabilizing vision and, where possible, restoring vision.

The Division of Services for the Blind provides transportation assistance for their participants.

The Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC) provides a range of services aimed at improving the quality of life for farm workers and low-income individuals in Arkansas. Here are the key services offered by AHDC:

Employment and Training Services

- **Job Placement Assistance:** Helping individuals find employment opportunities in various sectors, including agriculture and non-agricultural jobs.
- **Vocational Training:** Offering training programs that enhance job skills, such as computer literacy, job readiness, and specific vocational skills relevant to the local job market.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Providing opportunities for individuals to gain practical work experience while earning a wage.

Supportive Services

- **Transportation Assistance:** Helping individuals with transportation needs to attend job interviews, training programs, and job sites.
- **Housing Assistance:** Providing referrals and assistance in finding safe and affordable housing.
- **Healthcare Referrals:** Connecting individuals with healthcare services and providing health education.

2. Work-Based Learning:

- **Internships and Apprenticeships:** Opportunities for individuals to gain real-world experience in their chosen field through structured internships and apprenticeships. These programs help build practical skills and improve employability.
- **Job Shadowing:** Short-term placements allow individuals to observe professionals in their work environment, gaining insight into various careers and job functions.

3. Support and Accommodation Services:

- **Accommodation Services:** Assessments and modifications to training environments to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This includes making physical spaces accessible and providing necessary equipment or software.
- **Counseling and Case Management:** Ongoing support from counselors and case managers to help individuals navigate their training and employment journey, address challenges, and stay on track to achieve their goals.

- 3.8 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State's employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), and the local board's service providers in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (12)]The essence of WIOA is integrating service delivery among multiple workforces and talent development programs. Southeast has strong partnerships with state agencies, two- and four-year educational institutions, economic development, registered apprenticeships, and community-based organizations. A priority of the local board and critical to implementing the strategic plan is to eliminate duplication across programs and align core programs. The following strategies will make the alignment of core and optional programs possible.

Reflect Robust Partnerships

Foster the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The one-stop operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates the services of the core partners and other workforce center partners. They have regular partner meetings in the comprehensive center and other locations.

Organize Service by Function

Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program) when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having workforce center staff who are cross-trained to serve all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional

teams, consistent with each program's purpose, scope, and requirements.

3.9 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d) (11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (13)]

The Board, specifically the Board's Planning Committee, serves as a regional clearinghouse reviewing local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy. Responses to the Adult Education RFQ are reviewed, rated, and returned to Arkansas Career Education in accordance with their prescribed timeline. The competitive procurement and the selection of the providers of WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy activities in each local area is the responsibility of the Director of the Adult Education Section of the Arkansas Department of Commerce.

3.10 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Categorize the sector partnerships as active, emerging, or exploring as defined below:

- **Active**
 - Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;
 - Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;
 - Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
 - Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;
 - Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”
 - Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
 - Operates under shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
 - Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.

- **Emerging**
 - Has at least an interim coordinator, convener, or convening team;
 - Has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
 - Includes individuals from workforce development, education, economic development and other programs or organizations in strategic partner roles;
 - Actively working to implement strategic priorities outlined in a launch meeting.

- **Exploring**
 - Is in the infancy stage, but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership;
 - Working to identify partners who would be involved;
 - Determining if the partnership really makes sense for the community.

Active

The vision for collaboration between educators and employers is novel and has yet to come to light for this group of individuals. The partners in this grant have been working together and sharing dreams for an improved vehicle of change and a heightened regard for career and technical education for the past 30 years. More than ever, many of the group see hope for real change and progress. Instead of working independently ('in siloes ' as we say), we recognize this grant as an opportunity to accomplish great things. Good ideas and intentions that may not have been achieved previously due to territorial issues and/or conflicting regulatory processes are coming together. One such vehicle of change and an integral goal of this grant is the Alliance's objective for counties to become ACT® Certified Work Ready Communities. Working toward aggressive goals will produce outcomes that identify future job needs, develop a productive workforce, and ascertain the competencies and skills needed to determine proficiencies and skill gaps in the workforce. To date, all ten counties in Southeast Arkansas have reached ACT Work Ready Community status.

Arkansas has been a statewide partner of ACT® since January 2008 to provide avenues for individuals to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) in the form of the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). In partnership with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and offering the Work Keys curriculum and NCRC testing, some members of the Alliance are familiar with the value of the ACT credential. The Governor of Arkansas and the Department of Career and Technical Education have endorsed the curriculum, and high schools and Secondary Career Centers are offering the courses and testing around the state. In this region, the Southeast Arkansas Community Based Education Center in Warren, the Occupational Education Center in Monticello, and several local high schools have been instrumental in getting young adults through this curriculum and armed with nationally recognized credentials before graduating high school.

All ten counties in the Southeast Arkansas area are participating in the county-level ACT® Work Ready Communities (WRC) initiative. Although the aim is ambitious, the Alliance desires to demonstrate the benefits of increasing each community's attractiveness by becoming a certified ACT Work Ready Community. In agreement with the ACT initiative, the WRC Teams believe that by obtaining job skills requirements from area businesses and industries and having a valid tool to measure individuals' skills, SEARK, SouthArk, UAM, and the UAM Colleges of Technology can plan programs to develop the skills needed to match requirements, and then certify individuals in those essential skills required for area jobs.

Continuously monitor and adjust to ensure that educational services provided from K-16 are based on the realistic needs of current and future businesses. The initiative aligns with Arkansas' workforce development goal of increasing the number of quality jobs/careers attained, improving the quality of lives, and rebuilding communities. Southeast Arkansas needs job growth. Being an ACT® Work Ready Community ensures business and industry leaders that the skills they need for a successful workforce are addressed systematically and productively.

Currently operating under the guidance of the University of Arkansas at McGehee UAM Crossett and SEAEDD, priorities have been established and have moved well past the implementation phase.

Emerging / Active

We are currently working on securing new partners who would be involved. We are planning to start an apprenticeship program with a garment factory soon. We also collaborate with Alleguard, a custom foam company, to conduct an on-the-job training program. The Southeast Workforce Development Board will continue to support large-scale job fairs and community outreach activities. Advertisements will also be printed periodically to help engage additional partners with other services.

Exploring

We are in the infancy stage but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership and working to identify partners who would be involved. We are determining if the partnership makes sense for the Southeast Arkansas community.

Listed are our status of involvement with each sector:

HEALTHCARE: Exploring

EDUCATION: Emerging

MANUFACTURING: Emerging

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS: Exploring

RETAIL SERVICE: Exploring

CONSTRUCTION AND GENERAL TRADE: Exploring

BUSINESS SERVICES: Exploring

3.11 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding to support the local workforce development system? If so, briefly describe the additional funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any plans to pursue them.

To support the Southeast Arkansas local workforce development system beyond WIOA Title I funding, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) plans to pursue various additional funding sources. These efforts include seeking grants, building partnerships, and leveraging local, state, and federal resources. A few key strategies are:

1. Pursuing Federal and State Grants

Department of Labor Grants: SEAWDB will apply for competitive grants offered by the U.S. Department of Labor, such as those focused on apprenticeship expansion, dislocated worker grants, and sector-specific workforce initiatives. These grants can provide significant funding to enhance training programs and support services.

2. Leveraging Local Resources and In-Kind Contributions

Community Contributions: SEAWDB will engage with local government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations to leverage in-kind contributions. These contributions can include facilities for training programs, volunteer services, and donated equipment and materials.

By pursuing diverse funding sources and building strategic partnerships, SEAWDB aims to enhance the sustainability and impact of the Southeast Arkansas local workforce development system. These efforts will help ensure that workforce programs are well-resourced and capable of meeting the needs of the region's job seekers and employers.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

- A. The local board's efforts to ensure the continued improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]**

• Contracted Service Providers:

- The Southeast Workforce Development Board engages with various contracted service providers to deliver specialized workforce development services. These providers offer services such as job placement assistance, career counseling, and skills training.
- Providers are selected through a competitive procurement process that evaluates their capacity, experience, and alignment with the local workforce development goals. Performance is regularly monitored through data analysis, site visits, and feedback from participants.
- **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Process:**
 - The ETPL process ensures that individuals have access to high-quality training programs that lead to employment in high-demand occupations. Training providers must meet specific criteria to be included on the list, including accreditation, successful outcomes, and alignment with industry needs.
 - The local board reviews and approves applications from training providers, ensuring they offer relevant and effective programs. This process involves evaluating program performance, employer partnerships, and participant outcomes.
- **Registered Apprenticeships:**
 - Registered apprenticeship programs are a critical component of the local workforce development strategy. These programs provide hands-on training and work experience in various industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology.
 - The local board collaborates with employers, industry associations, and educational institutions to develop and expand apprenticeship opportunities. These partnerships help ensure that apprenticeship programs meet industry standards and provide participants with valuable skills and credentials.

B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, using technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec.108(b)(6)(B)]

Much of Southeast Arkansas is rural. It is incumbent upon the Board and Title I Provider to utilize technology to provide access. Information about WIOA services can be accessed online and on SEAEDD's website (www.southeastarkansas.org) and the state's website (<https://dws.arkansas.gov/workforce-services/about-dws/>). Career Advisors utilize email and social media (Facebook and Instagram) to communicate and share information with participants. In addition, outside of the five main offices, career advisors travel to satellite locations to serve participants. The satellite locations are Phillips Community College in Stuttgart, AR, and Phillips Community College in DeWitt, AR. Career Advisors are available part-time at the satellite locations to provide WIOA services such as basic career services, job searches, and training assistance to those who cannot come into the local workforce center. An online Google doc form will be generated to request various services from supportive services, appointments, training program information, and other pertinent information participants need. Mobile Workforce Units are equipped vehicles that travel to remote and underserved areas, bringing services directly to the community. These mobile units offer computer access, internet connectivity, and a range of workforce services including job search assistance, resume building, and access to training programs. Mobile units are designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, ensuring that all community members can utilize the services offered. They provide accommodation such as wheelchair access and assistive technology. One-stop centers and mobile units are equipped with assistive technology such as screen readers, magnifiers, and adaptive keyboards to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access services independently. The SEAWDB ensures that its online platforms and resources comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, making them accessible to individuals with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities.

C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop

partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)] (See Appendix D: *Planning References and Resources*)

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the partner agencies will comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding physical and programmatic accessibility. All facilities are accessible, and the staff has been trained to serve participants with disabilities. The Title I provider collaborates with the Division of Services for the Blind and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services staff to ensure that all customers have proper accommodations and resources.

Workforce centers in Southeast Arkansas ensure physical accessibility to serve individuals with disabilities by adhering to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and implementing various modifications and accommodations. Here are some key aspects of physical accessibility provided:

1. Accessible Entrances and Exits

Ramps and Automatic Doors:

- Workforce centers have ramps and automatic doors to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can easily enter and exit the buildings. These modifications are essential for providing equal access to all visitors.

2. Accessible Parking

Designated Parking Spaces:

- Centers have designated accessible parking spaces that are located close to the building entrance. These spaces are wider to accommodate wheelchair lifts and other mobility devices, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can easily access the building.

3. Interior Accessibility

Wide Hallways and Doorways:

- The interior design of the centers includes wide hallways and doorways to accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility devices. This ensures that individuals can move freely within the building and access all services without obstruction.

4. Accessible Restrooms

ADA-Compliant Restrooms:

- Restrooms in the workforce centers are designed to be fully accessible. They include features such as grab bars, lower sinks and mirrors, and enough space to maneuver a wheelchair. These modifications ensure that individuals with disabilities can use the facilities independently and comfortably.

5. Signage and Wayfinding

Braille and Tactile Signage:

- Signage throughout the centers includes Braille and raised tactile characters to assist individuals with visual impairments in navigating the building. Clear and consistent signage helps ensure that all visitors can find their way around the facility easily.

6. Assistive Technology and Devices

Accessible Computer Workstations:

- Computer workstations are designed to be accessible, with adjustable-height desks, screen readers, and other assistive technology. This ensures that individuals with disabilities can use computers and access online resources effectively.

7. Staff Training and Support

Disability Awareness Training:

- Staff at the workforce centers receive training on disability awareness and how to provide effective

assistance to individuals with disabilities. This training ensures that staff are knowledgeable about the needs of individuals with disabilities and can offer appropriate support and accommodations.

Personal Assistance Services:

- For individuals who require additional support, workforce centers provide personal assistance services. This can include help with filling out forms, navigating the facility, and accessing services. These services ensure that all individuals can fully participate in the programs offered.

Supporting WIOA partners in the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Centers to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) involves a comprehensive strategy that includes training, regular assessments, resource allocation, and ongoing support.

The Workforce Centers in Southeast Arkansas undergo annual ADA compliance.

- D. List all required and optional program partners; indicate the program(s) each partner provides and the physical location where the program(s) can be accessed. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

The six core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated and Youth (Title I), Adult Education and Literacy (Title II), Wagner-Peyser Program (Title III) and Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) including Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.

WIOA Title I Services – Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District (SEAEDD) provides Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in the Southeast area to help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services and assist employers through business services. Some of those services include supportive services, work experience, on-the-job training, occupational skills training, registered apprenticeships.

Locations:

Arkansas Workforce Centers at Pine Bluff, 1001 Tennessee St, Pine Bluff, AR (Comprehensive)
130 Waterman, Dumas, AR; 477 S. Main St, Monticello, AR; 103 Main St, Lake Village, AR; 304 N. Alabama, Crossett, AR (All are Affiliate Centers)

Arkansas Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) - To achieve its mission of preparing Arkansans with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives, ARS provides a variety of training and career preparation programs. Services include: career and technical education and training; transition services for high school students with disabilities who are moving from high school to post-secondary education or work; scholarships and leadership programs for students with disabilities; diagnosis and evaluation of capacities and limitation; guidance and counseling; job placement; on-the-job training; physical and cognitive restorative services; assistive technology; community rehabilitation programs and supported employment services.

Locations: Southeast Arkansas is served by two offices.
Arkansas Workforce Centers at Pine Bluff, 1001 Tennessee St, Pine Bluff (Comprehensive Center) and 477 S. Main St, Monticello, AR (Affiliate Center)

Arkansas Division of Adult Education – Services include: GED Classes and Testing, English as a Second Language Classes, individual tutoring for beginning readers, Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE), Career Readiness Certificate Instruction, Career Counseling, digital literacy for the workplace or college prep, and customized workplace classes to bring skill levels up to post-secondary

level.

Locations:

Arkansas Workforce Centers-1001 Tennessee, Pine Bluff, AR (Comprehensive Center); 477 S. Main St., Monticello, AR; 304 N. Alabama St, Crossett, AR; 103 Main St, Lake Village, AR (All are Affiliate Centers)

Arkansas Division of Workforce Services – Wagner-Peyser Program – Services include job services, re-employment services, unemployment insurance, Trade Adjusted Assistance/Trade Readjustment Assistance (TAA/TRA), Veterans Services and WorkPays Case Management, Career Readiness Certificate instruction, and Labor Market information.

Locations:

Arkansas Workforce Center, 1001 Tennessee St, Pine Bluff, AR – Serves All 10 Southeast Counties (Comprehensive Center)

Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) - The priority focus at DSB is to assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to secure and maintain employment in careers consistent with their skills. DSB provides assistance by helping individuals with:

- Counseling and guidance to aid greater independence and access resources.
- Optical devices (magnifiers, etc.)
- Medical treatments and surgeries to prevent blindness, stabilize vision and when possible, to restore vision
- Training (technical, college and certificates like CAN) for the goal of obtaining employment
- Small business start-up costs
- Job services to prepare for the world of work (job readiness, job search, job placement)
- Supported employment
- On the job supports and accommodations
- Assessments (vocational, functional, technical, etc.)
- Independent living training
- Technology items (as accommodations to aid training or employment)
- Benefits counseling (Re: effects of working on SSI or SSDI benefits)

Locations

Arkansas Workforce Centers at Pine Bluff, 1001 Tennessee St, Pine Bluff (Comprehensive Center) and 477 S. Main St, Monticello, AR (Affiliate Center)

Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Programs - Arkansas Human Development Corporation (Title I) – Provides free assistance to seasonal and migrant agricultural workers in AR. Services include tuition assistance, adult basic education, English as a second language, occupational skills training programs, on-the-job training programs, work experience, child care assistance, employment assistance, job placement/follow-up, mileage while attending eligible training programs, stipends while attending eligible training programs and supportive service.

To effectively administer services to migrant seasonal farm workers (MSFWs) who have moved to the Southeast Arkansas area, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) can implement a structured and comprehensive approach. The SEAWDB uses mobile workforce units to reach remote and rural areas where MSFWs are likely to reside and work. Another tool is to partner with local community-based organizations, agricultural employers, and migrant advocacy groups to identify and reach out to MSFWs.

Locations

Arkansas Workforce Center at Pine Bluff, 1001 Tennessee St, Pine Bluff (Comprehensive Center) and Dumas, 130 W. Waterman, Dumas, AR (Affiliate Center)

AARP Foundation – The AARP Foundation's services at the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Centers are designed to support older adults in finding and maintaining employment, enhancing their skills, and achieving financial stability. The AARP Foundation plays a crucial role in helping older adults navigate the job market and secure meaningful employment by providing comprehensive job training, career counseling, skill development, and supportive services.

Each of the partners plays a vital role in the success of the workforce development system by providing a valuable service to the participant and/or employer to build our talent pipeline.

E. Describe how the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB) is implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs to enhance service delivery, streamline operations, and improve participant outcomes.

1. Integrated Service Delivery Platform

Arkansas JobLink (AJL):

- The Arkansas JobLink (AJL) system is a comprehensive online platform used across the state, including Southeast Arkansas, to manage intake and case management for WIOA core programs. AJL allows workforce centers to track participant data, monitor program outcomes, and facilitate communication between staff and clients. It integrates services for adults, dislocated workers, youth, Wagner-Peyser employment services, and vocational rehabilitation programs.

2. Technology-Enabled Intake Process

Online Applications and Registrations:

- Job seekers can complete applications and register for services online through the AJL portal. This streamlined intake process reduces the need for in-person visits and allows for quicker enrollment into programs. The system collects essential information, such as employment history, educational background, and service needs, to create a comprehensive profile for each participant.

Electronic Document Management:

- Workforce centers are transitioning to electronic document management systems that allow for the secure storage and retrieval of participant records. This system improves data accuracy, reduces paper usage, and ensures that staff can easily access and update client information as needed.

3. Case Management and Participant Tracking

Real-Time Data Access:

- Case managers use the AJL system to access real-time data on participant progress, including training enrollment, job placements, and support services received. This real-time access allows for more effective monitoring and timely interventions to support participant success.

Comprehensive Case Management:

- The integrated system supports a holistic approach to case management, enabling case managers to track multiple aspects of a participant's journey. This includes setting goals, scheduling appointments, and documenting interactions and services provided. The system facilitates collaboration among different service providers to ensure coordinated support for each individual.

4. Enhanced Reporting and Analytics

Performance Metrics and Reporting:

- The technology-enabled system provides robust reporting capabilities, allowing workforce centers to generate detailed reports on program performance and participant outcomes. These reports help identify trends, measure the effectiveness of services, and ensure compliance with WIOA requirements.

Data-Driven Decision Making:

- Workforce centers leverage data analytics to inform decision-making and program improvements. By analyzing participant data, staff can identify which services are most effective, address gaps in service delivery, and allocate resources more efficiently.

5. Training and Support for Staff

Staff Training Programs:

- To ensure successful implementation of the integrated system, workforce centers provide comprehensive training for staff on using the AJL system and other technology tools. Training covers data entry, case management functions, reporting features, and best practices for using the system to support participants.

Technical Support:

- Ongoing technical support is available to help staff troubleshoot issues and maximize the system's functionality. This support includes help desks, user manuals, and regular updates to the system to address emerging needs and feedback from users.

4.2 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec.108(b)(7)]

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has reviewed eligible training providers and apprenticeship lists and determined that adequate quality training is available. The Board's Planning Committee periodically reviews and updates the eligible training provider list to ensure that training providers are current and performing at a suitable rate. This is measured by customer satisfaction assessed by the program operator, performance and outcomes reported by training providers, and compliance with accreditation requirements.

Occupational skills training and work experience are services for eligible adult and dislocated workers. Occupational skills training provides participants with tuition and fee assistance in-demand occupational skills training at 2- and 4-year colleges. Work experience offers another avenue for growing the skill set of job seekers in the local area. This provides a "hands-on" approach to learning new job skills.

Adults must be 18 years of age and up. Dislocated workers must meet the criteria defined by WIOA, which generally includes individuals who have been laid off or have received a notice of termination. There may be caps on the amount of tuition and fee assistance provided to each participant. SE has policies for Adults and DLW Eligibility, Adult Priority of Services, Supportive Services Policies for Adults & DLW.

1. Types of Employment and Training Activities

Job Search Assistance and Placement Services:

- **Career Counseling:** Personalized career guidance to help individuals explore job options, develop career plans, and navigate the job market.
- **Job Matching and Placement:** Services that connect job seekers with employers, including job fairs, employer panels, and direct job placement support.

Occupational Skills Training:

- **Vocational Training Programs:** Training in specific trades or occupations, such as healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and skilled trades. These programs are often offered in

partnership with local community colleges and technical schools.

- **Apprenticeships:** On-the-job training programs that combine hands-on work experience with classroom instruction. Apprenticeships are available in various fields, including construction, automotive technology, and healthcare.

Work-Based Learning:

- **Internships and Externships:** Opportunities for individuals to gain practical work experience in their field of interest. These programs help participants build their resumes and establish professional networks.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Programs that provide financial incentives to employers to hire and train workers on the job. OJT programs help individuals gain skills while earning a paycheck.

Supportive Services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Services to help individuals travel to and from training programs and job sites, including bus passes, fuel vouchers, and ride-sharing arrangements.
- **Childcare Support:** Assistance with childcare costs to enable individuals to participate in training and employment activities without worrying about childcare responsibilities.
- **Financial Assistance:** Aid for costs related to training and job search, such as tuition, books, uniforms, and certification fees.

2. Availability of Services

Local Community Colleges and Technical Schools:

- Institutions such as Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK) and the University of Arkansas at Monticello provide various vocational and technical training programs. These institutions work closely with SEAWDB to align their curricula with the needs of local employers.

One-Stop Centers:

- The workforce centers in Southeast Arkansas serve as hubs for employment and training services. These centers offer a variety of programs and resources, including job search assistance, career counseling, skills assessments, and access to training providers.

Partnerships with Employers:

- SEAWDB collaborates with local businesses and industries to develop training programs that meet the specific needs of employers. These partnerships ensure that training is relevant and leads to job placements. Employers often participate in designing and delivering training programs, providing real-world insights and opportunities for work-based learning.

4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec.108(b)(8)]

The Governors DLW Task Force provides the lay off aversion. The statewide Rapid Response team is named the ADWS Rapid Response Team. ADWS Rapid Response coordinates with the Arkansas Workforce Centers to provide services and provides laid-off workers access to a comprehensive range of direct services, benefits, training opportunities, and income support. Assistance may include drafting résumés, interview skills workshops, career counseling, job search assistance, and information about job training opportunities. ADWS Rapid Response also provides multiple benefits to employers, including information about various layoff aversion options that may be available. ADWS Rapid Response may also facilitate access to incumbent worker training programs and skilled job seekers. Arkansas' Rapid Response program manages a fleet of Mobile Workforce Centers. Each Mobile Workforce Center has full internet connectivity, computers, printers, copiers, and fax machines. All Mobile Workforce Centers include a computer with access to Jobs Application with Speech (JAWS) software and are accessible to individuals with disabilities. ADWS transports the Mobile Workforce Centers to locations across the state to supplement local resources.

Following confirmation of a natural disaster, the state Rapid Response coordinator works with local workforce development boards and ADWS leadership to quickly organize service delivery and determine if a Mobile Workforce Center is needed. ADWS staff help impacted individuals file for unemployment insurance and disaster unemployment insurance at the Arkansas Workforce Centers or via the Mobile Workforce Center. Information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs, Arkansas Workforce Center services, and employment and training activities, including Trade Act, Pell Grants, GI Bill, WIOA DLW Program, and other resources are provided to laid off workers.

Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec.108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

1. Type of Youth Workforce Activities

A. Career Exploration and Guidance

- **Job Shadowing and Mentorship Programs:** Youth participants are paired with professionals in their field of interest to gain insights into career paths and workplace expectations. These programs are essential for providing real-world experience and professional guidance.
- **Career Fairs and Workshops:** Regularly organized career fairs and workshops help youth explore different career options, understand labor market demands, and network with potential employers.

B. Education and Training

- **GED and High School Equivalency Programs:** These programs provide an alternative pathway for youth who have not completed high school, offering them the opportunity to earn their equivalency diplomas while receiving additional support and tutoring.
- **Vocational Training and Certifications:** Programs that focus on vocational skills in areas such as healthcare, IT, and skilled trades. These certifications help youth acquire job-specific skills that are in high demand in the local labor market.

C. Work-Based Learning

- **Internships and Apprenticeships:** Partnerships with local businesses to offer paid internships and apprenticeships, providing hands-on experience and a pathway to full-time employment.
- **Summer Employment Programs:** These programs offer temporary employment opportunities during the summer months, helping youth gain work experience and earn income.

D. Support Services

- **Transportation Assistance:** Providing supportive services to cover transportation to ensure that lack of transportation does not hinder participation in workforce activities.
- **Career Counseling and Case Management:** Personalized support through career counseling and case management to help youth set career goals, develop action plans, and access necessary resources.

E. Activities for Youth with Disabilities

- **Customized Employment Plans:** Individualized plans that address specific needs and barriers faced by youth with disabilities, ensuring they receive appropriate accommodation and support.
- **Assistive Technology and Services:** Providing access to assistive technology and specialized services to help youth with disabilities participate fully in training and employment activities.

2. Availability of Youth Workforce Activities

SEAWDB ensures that youth workforce activities are widely available across the region through partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and local businesses. Mobile workforce units and virtual platforms extend these services to remote and underserved areas, ensuring that all youth have access to these opportunities.

3. Successful Models and Best Practices

A. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

- **Description:** Engaging youth in real-world projects that address community needs or industry challenges. This hands-on approach helps develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.
- **Implementation:** Collaboration with local businesses and community organizations to identify project opportunities and provide mentorship.

B. Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

- **Description:** Programs that prepare youth for entry into registered apprenticeships by providing foundational skills and work readiness training. These programs often include classroom instruction and hands-on training.
- **Implementation:** Collaboration with local apprenticeship sponsors and employers to create seamless pathways from pre-apprenticeship to full apprenticeship programs.

4. Best Practices for Youth Workforce Activities

A. Integrated Service Delivery

- **Holistic Support:** Providing a comprehensive range of services, including education, training, counseling, and support services, in one coordinated program.
- **Case Management:** Using dedicated career advisors to guide youth through their career development journey, ensuring they receive personalized support and follow-up.

B. Employer Engagement

- **Active Involvement:** Encouraging local employers to take an active role in designing and implementing workforce programs. This ensures that training aligns with industry needs and increases job placement rates.
- **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Expanding opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing to provide youth with practical, hands-on experience.

- **WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

- Services may be provided through a referral basis if needed. When services are provided by organizations or individuals other than WIOA staff, written agreements, MOUs, and/or contracts will be utilized. To be eligible for youth services, youth must meet the age requirement of ages to 14 to 24 at the time of enrollment and meet common eligibility requirements.

Program element #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;

Tutoring – designed to improve the academic knowledge and skills of youth in specific areas. It involves a tutor helping a youth acquire knowledge and skills in a particular area. The tutor provides instruction one-on-one, in a group setting, or on the Internet. The tutor provides feedback on the youth's performance, allowing them to learn from their mistakes. Tutoring should be available to those who need additional help with school subjects or have fallen behind academically. Those transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education may also benefit from tutoring. Some youth have learning disabilities or a learning style requiring additional instructional assistance.

Study skills – a set of abilities that allow youth to learn effectively and efficiently. Good study skills will enable a youth to do well in all phases of education and to make all phases of life a learning opportunity. Study skills training involves instruction and practice activities on a range of strategies, from planning and organizing time to reading comprehension, increasing concentration, and test-taking. Instruction may be one-on-one or a group activity. Youth may work alone in some practice activities and in groups for others. The purpose of a study skills program is to help youth improve the skills needed to learn and understand information.

Dropout prevention strategies – interventions designed to keep youth in school until graduation from high school. These strategies ensure that youth stay in school to get their high school diploma and continue with some postsecondary education or long-term employment. WIOA staff work with local guidance counselors to identify and address potential obstacles for graduation.

Recovery strategies – the Arkansas Workforce Centers collaborate with Adult Education who provides basic academic skills, basic computer skills, General Education Development (GED) preparation, and reading/writing proficiency, classes to WIOA Youth. These services can be provided at the Adult Education locations and some services may be provided online. Adult Education has the ability to assist 16-17 year olds who waived out of high school with earning their General Education Development.

A best practice is the WDB authorizes incentives for the participants that achieve goals that contribute to their success. The primary goal of local WIOA youth programming is to ensure youth completion of a HSD/GED.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: UAM College of Technology, Phillips Community College

Program element #2 – Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

Alternative schools offer specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public school system, which may provide work, study, and/or academic intervention for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at risk of dropping out, who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth and/or youth who are in legal custody of the Department of Human Services (or similar entity) and are residing in an institution. This service will be offered through the local Alternative Schools. Southeast works closely with adult education programs throughout the area. Adult Education programs will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED.

A best practice for Southeast is WIOA youth programs will work closely with alternative schools throughout the area. Alternative schools will be one source for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. WIOA youth services will be designed to complement activities occurring within alternative schools. The primary goal will be for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: UAM College of Technology, Phillips Community College, Arkansas Virtual Academy, and Boys and Girls Club

Program element #3 – Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences: (i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) Internships and job shadowing; and (iv) On-the-job training opportunities;

Work Experience is a planned/structured learning experience that takes place in a private for-profit, non-profit, or public sector workplace for a limited period. Work experience is temporary. Work experience for a participant in WIOA helps individuals obtain the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Work experience provides a

helpful means for an individual to gain experience that leads to unsubsidized employment. It should promote the development of good work habits and work skills. Work experience for youth has an academic and occupational education component. The academic/education component is currently being provided by worksite supervisors, partner agencies (such as Adult Education), and/or WIOA staff.

The summer employment opportunities (SEO) include a planned and structured learning experience that takes place in a private or public worksite for up to six (6) weeks. Summer employment opportunities provide new academic/work skills that will lead to future employment. Students who are at a high risk of dropping out of school will be followed throughout the year as a part of a year-round intervention strategy. SEO will offer work experience and provide academic enrichment activities to enhance employability skills. Academic enrichment activities consist of effective and comprehensive services provided to eligible youth, which improve their academic skills and provide effective connections to employers.

Best practices for Southeast is establishing a summer jobs program to provide youth with meaningful work experience, facilitate job shadowing opportunities to expose youth to various careers

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: Local employers in the Southeast region

Program element #4 – Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;

Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training. This service closes the gap between job seekers in the community and employers who need a skilled workforce for their industry. By meeting the needs of current employers, the skilled workforce will help attract new industry to the area.

A best practice for Southeast is enrolling youth into programs that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills for in demand and emerging occupations.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: UAM College of Technology, Phillips Community College, UAPB, and SEARK College

Program element #5 – Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board staff are working closely with local apprenticeship throughout the area. Local apprenticeship organizations will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to be trained and employed in a demand occupation that leads to self-sufficiency.

A best practice for Southeast is making referrals to programs that provide concurrent education. While programs developing basic academic skills, which are included as part of alternative secondary school services and dropout recovery services (program element 2), workforce preparation activities that occur as part of a work experience (program element 3), and occupational skills training (Program element 4) can occur separately and at different times (and thus are counted under separate program elements), this program element refers to the concurrent delivery of these services which make up an integrated education and training model.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: Food Jobs Work, WE Center

Program element #6-Leadership Development Opportunities:

Leadership development opportunities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Other activities included such as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, teamwork and other activities. Leadership development is a broad set of activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. The purpose of leadership development activities is to develop skills and attitudes that are important in all areas of life to include education, employment, family, and community. Many youth do not have those skills and attitudes. Leadership development provides encouragement and support to youth and assists in developing skills and instilling confidence as they transition into adulthood.

Types of leadership development opportunities include but are not limited to: Exposure to postsecondary education; Community and service learning projects; Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring; Organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training; Training in decision-making, including determining priorities; Citizenship training, including life-skills training such as parenting, work-behavior training, and budgeting of resources

Positive Social Behaviors include but not limited to: *Positive attitudinal development*; *Self-esteem* building; Openness to working with individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free; Maintaining positive relationships with responsible adults and peers, and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting; Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success; Avoiding delinquency; Postponed and responsible parenting; Positive job attitudes and work skills.

Best practice for Southeast includes Leadership Development Activities include but are not limited to: Community volunteering; Service learning; Peer mentoring or tutoring; Serving on youth councils, community, or advocacy organization boards; Leadership training, such as how to work in a team, how to run meetings, diversity training; Life skills training, such as parent education, financial education, goal setting, conflict resolution.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: SEAEDD Career Advisors, Boys and Girls Club

Program element #7 - Supportive services, including the services listed in §681.570;

Supportive services include transportation, childcare, clothing, training supplies, meals, medical care, glasses, housing, and other necessary supplies to enable an individual to participate in WIOA youth program activities. The SEAWDB does not currently have a cap on the amount of supportive services allocated for youth meeting the requirements until the Board deems otherwise. Commitments are contingent upon the availability of funds and compliance with SEAEDD and WIOA terms.

A best practice for Southeast is providing youth assistance with transportation, childcare, clothing, supplies, and related needs.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: SEAEDD, Career Pathways Initiative, Phoenix Youth Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind

Program element #8 – Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;

Adult mentoring is a one-on-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth based on trust. High-quality adult mentoring programs include an adult role model who builds a working relationship with a youth and fosters positive life skills development in youth. Youth should receive adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

The purpose of mentoring activities is to help youth succeed in the school or the workplace, facilitate positive social behaviors and learn leadership and citizenship skills.

Benefits of adult mentoring include self-confidence/self-esteem, increase motivation, enhance achievements/aspirations, and ease transition to adulthood.

Best practices for Southeast include referral to community-, faith-based, and/or other organizations to provide one-on-one encouragement and direction.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: Adult mentoring is available through several community based organizations throughout the Southeast area such as employers, teachers, counselors, and prominent members of the community who have experience mentoring youth.

Program element #9 – Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in §681.580;

Follow-up services are activities after completion of participation to monitor youth success during their transition to employment and further education and to provide assistance as needed for a successful transition.

Best practice for Southeast include monthly interactions, including guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: SEAEDD provides this service for youth enrolled in WIOA services,

Division of Services for the Blind, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Some follow-up services include: adult mentoring, contact with employers, financial literacy education, labor market follow-up, post-secondary preparation and supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and housing assistance.

Program element #10 – Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;

Comprehensive guidance and counseling is a process of helping youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs impart skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development. An effective comprehensive guidance and counseling program develops a youth's competencies in self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning.

Many at-risk youth need assistance in making informed decisions and choices. The purpose of comprehensive guidance and counseling is to promote growth in each youth's educational, personal, social, and employability skills. Career and employment counseling includes but is not limited to the provision of career and occupational information including Labor Market Information (LMI). Participants may receive information on various occupations that will assist them in making career choices. As needed, WIOA staff will refer participants to partner programs for counseling on drug, alcohol, mental health, etc. These services are provided by a credentialed counselor specifically for assisting individuals with mental, drug, alcohol, etc. barriers. The participant information is kept separately in a confidential file.

Best practice for Southeast include monthly interactions, including guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit.

Some providers Southeast plans to utilize are: Delta Counseling & Associates, Options, Inc., and New Beginnings Rehab Center.

Program element #11 – Financial literacy education;

Financial literacy education includes direct training of one or more participants with staff. Staff use online information to teach basic skills in bank transactions (bank statement reconciliation, debit/credit), debt management (loans, credit cards, etc.), budgeting (actual vs estimated, savings, etc.), and other useful real-life skills as needed. In addition, local banks will be asked to provide financial literacy workshops to WIOA participants.

Best practices for Southeast include conducting workshops on budgeting, saving, and financial planning; partnering with local banks to offer financial literacy programs.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: SEAEDD, SEARK College, WIOA partners, local banks upon request

Program element #12 – Entrepreneurial skills training;

Southeast will partner with local 2- and 4-year state colleges, local chambers of commerce, and economic development agencies. These members are represented in the Partner meetings.

Best practices for Southeast is providing entrepreneurial skills training supported by activities such as partnerships with economic development agencies and referrals to business development organizations.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: SEAEDD, Local partners, local banks, Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce, The Generator

Program element #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;

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Centers utilize <https://www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov/> and discover.arkansas.gov for up-to-date information about labor market information, employment information, and in-demand industry sectors. This access point is beneficial to metro and non-metro areas due to the 24-hour online access.

Best practices for Southeast include workshops and other services that prepare youth for careers in in demand and/or emerging occupations. Information is provided in the local one-stops or on-line systems such as the Arkansas Job Link. Information about in demand industry sectors or occupations is available in areas, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: Southeast partners with ADWS, SEARK, Philips Community

College, and UAM to provide access for career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Program Element #14-Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities

Southeast provides individual career development and guidance, including career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions. Career pathways are comprehensive approaches that link education, training, and employment opportunities in a cohesive manner, enabling individuals to advance in their chosen fields efficiently.

Best practices for Southeast include organizing visits to local colleges and universities, provide information on scholarships and other financial aid opportunities, and implement college readiness programs that include SAT/ACT prep, application assistance, and financial aid workshops.

Providers/Partners/Resources in Southeast: Local High Schools, UAM College of Technology, Phillips Community College, UAPB, and SEARK College

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an Additional Assistance Youth Barrier Policy. A copy of the policy can be located at <https://www.southeastarkansas.org/workforce-development>

Note: Up to five percent of youth in a given program year (ISY and OSY, who ordinarily would be required to meet the low-income criteria for eligibility purposes, are allowed a low-income exemption based on this barrier).

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) have youth programs for youth with disabilities that focus on employment. ARS and DSB have Supported Employment program models that are appropriate for youth with disabilities and the Pre-Employment Transition Program, which serves youth that are also students in an educational program from ages 16 to 21 in the State of Arkansas.

Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Services for the Blind provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In addition to counseling and guidance, the Division of Services for the Blind provides or arranges for the following core services: career exploration, work-based learning, internships, post-secondary training opportunities, work readiness training, self-advocacy, and independent living and social skills. Additional optional services may also be available.

Best Practices for Delivering Services to Individuals with Disabilities

1. **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Ensuring all career services and resources are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes physical accessibility at service locations and the availability of assistive technologies.
2. **Individualized Support:** Providing personalized career counseling and support tailored to the unique needs and abilities of each individual.
3. **Employer Partnerships:** Building strong partnerships with local employers to create inclusive hiring practices and provide job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
4. **Continuous Training:** Offering continuous professional development for staff to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support individuals with disabilities effectively.
5. **Integrated Services:** Coordinating with other service providers, including educational institutions, vocational rehabilitation services, and community organizations, to provide comprehensive support.

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has established working relationships with partners and multiple youth service providers who will carry out the functions described in each of the required 14 youth elements. Memorandum of Understanding is being signed to outline the duties of each provider. When possible, the program operator- the Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, will provide services as deemed appropriate.

Models that have been effective in the area are pre-apprenticeship and work experiences. Southeast partnered with Arkansas Construction Education Foundation to develop a pre-apprenticeship in hopes of meeting a business/workforce in construction. Another model was successfully implemented but with carpentry as the focus. Participants, all juvenile offenders in the Dermott Juvenile Detention Center, completed and are receiving work readiness training and other transitional services that will ensure a productive future after release.

4.4 Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c) (3) (G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

An ITA is an agreement established by a WIOA title I service provider with a training provider to pay certain required costs on behalf of a participant. It may be written for any allowable type of program of study that is on the state-eligible training provider list (ETPL) and has been approved by the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Any payments to be made directly to the training provider must be listed on the ITA, whether for direct training costs or supportive services (such as books, supplies, and fees). A career advisor uses various forms, including the local area WIOA Training Routing Form, the ITA Form, a Financial Aid Expenditure Form, and documentation from educational institutions, to determine a participant's financial need for WIOA assistance. The participant selects the course of study from the eligible training provider list. The participant must have made an application and received determination from other funding sources and present the award letter to the case manager to show the monetary amounts of unmet financial need. Consideration of all available funds, excluding loans, will determine the person's overall need for WIOA funding. The ITA may be used to cover expenses for tuition, books, supplies and/or tools. The Career Advisor will make sure that there is no duplication of services.

The Planning Committee appointed by the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board Chair reviews the Eligible Training Provider applications. Once full board approval has been made, an Eligible Training Provider list will be distributed to all workforce centers.

Participants approved for training through the ITA system must choose one of the approved programs in order to receive an ITA. ITA's may be adjusted up or down based upon case necessity.

4.5 If contracts for training services are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

Currently, the Southeast Workforce Development Board does not use contracts for training services. Southeast does have an ITA policy and services required. The SEAWDB Board has determined that there will be no maximum funding limit on Training and Supportive Services per participant as long as all applicable requirements are met, until the Board deems otherwise. Commitments are contingent upon the availability of funds and compliance with SEAEDD and WIOA terms. Eligibility is determined at initial intake. Age requirement is 18, but with the waiver coming into place we will be able to do ITAs for In-School-Youth. However, in the event this decision changes, The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board ensures informed customer choice in the selection of training programs through the following processes, regardless of how the training services are provided:

1. **Comprehensive Information Sharing:** The board provides participants with detailed information about all available training programs, including course content, duration, costs, and potential career outcomes.
2. **Individualized Counseling:** Career advisors offer personalized counseling sessions to discuss participants' career goals, skills, and interests. This helps participants decide which training programs align best with their objectives.
3. **Performance Data Access:** Participants are given access to performance data on training providers, including graduation rates, employment rates, and average wages of program graduates. This data helps participants evaluate the effectiveness of different training programs.
4. **Training Provider List:** The Southeast Workforce Development Board maintains an up-to-date list of eligible training providers and programs that meet WIOA requirements. This list is readily available to participants, ensuring they have a wide range of options to choose from.
5. **Financial Aid Guidance:** Information about financial aid options, including grants, scholarships, and other funding sources, is provided to help participants understand the financial implications of their training choices.

6. **Feedback and Reviews:** Participants are encouraged to provide feedback on their training experiences, and this information is shared with future participants to help them make more informed decisions.

7. **Workshops and Information Sessions:** Regular workshops and information sessions are attended to educate participants about the variety of training programs available and the benefits of each.

By implementing these processes, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board ensures that participants can make well-informed decisions when selecting training programs, promoting customer choice, and maximizing the effectiveness of WIOA-funded training services.

4.6 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)]; [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

All training providers will complete an online electronic application through Arkansas JobLink. All training must be directly linked to employment opportunities either in the local area or in an area to which an individual is willing to relocate. Any training for a participant that is paid for by WIOA funds must be on the Projected Employment Opportunities List for the state or local area. To be included on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), providers must submit an electronic application to the local board for their approval. Additionally, demand occupations and targeted industry sectors specific to the Southeast area are focused on. Eligible participants must also apply for PELL Grant funds through the two- or four-year college they will be attending. Students must also apply for scholarships, additional grants, etc. in addition to obtaining WIOA funds. The Projected Employment Opportunities List can be found at <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Occupation/Projected-Employment-Opportunities-List>

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board ensures that the training programs offered align with in-demand occupations through a systematic and data-driven process.

1. Labor Market Analysis:

- **Data Collection:** Gather data from various sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), state labor market information, industry reports, and local economic development agencies.
- **Trend Analysis:** Analyze trends in employment, industry growth, and occupational projections to identify high-growth sectors and in-demand occupations.

2. Employer Engagement:

- **Surveys and Interviews:** Conduct regular surveys and interviews with local employers to understand their workforce needs and the skills they are looking for in potential employees.

3. Advisory Committees:

- **Regular Meetings:** Hold regular meetings with these committees to review and update training offerings based on industry feedback and labor market changes.

4. Skills Gap Analysis:

- **Identify Gaps:** Compare the skills required by employers with the skills possessed by the current workforce to identify any gaps.

5. Collaboration with Educational Institutions:

- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local community colleges, vocational schools, and universities to ensure their training programs align with industry needs.

6. Program Evaluation:

- **Performance Metrics:** Implement metrics to evaluate the success of training programs, such as job placement rates, participant feedback, and employer satisfaction.

7. Policy Alignment:

- **Compliance with WIOA:** Ensure that all training programs comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements, focusing on high-demand sectors.
- **State and Local Policies:** Align training initiatives with state and local workforce development policies and economic development strategies.

8. Registered Apprenticeship:

Integration:

- Registered apprenticeships are a critical component of the local plan, providing participants with structured, hands-on training in high-demand fields.
- Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction, allowing participants to earn wages while gaining valuable skills.

•Role in Training Programs:

- The Southeast Workforce Development Board collaborates with employers to develop apprenticeship programs tailored to industry needs.
- Participants are placed in registered apprenticeship programs that align with their career goals and the demand in the local labor market.
- The Southeast Workforce Development Board promotes registered apprenticeships as a viable pathway to high-skilled, high-paying jobs and works to expand the availability of apprenticeship opportunities in the region.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d) (11), in place between the local board and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated in the area with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

The agreement between Vocational Rehabilitation and the Board provides for staff cross training, technical assistance, and single points of contact with regards to employers. The parties also agree to utilize the Southeast common referral document which identifies services and eligibility for all required partner agencies and services. The local board will, with the area fiscal agent, share cooperative agreement oversight responsibilities. The development of these agreements at the local level must include the local area manager and the agreement must be signed by the local area manager from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and the Chief Officer of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

Development of these agreements at the local level must include the local manager (field office

district manager or the top executive at the organizational units of ARS). The agreement must be signed by the local manager, the supervising Senior Leader from ARS and the Commissioner of ARS or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and Chief Fiscal Officer of ARS.

The local rehabilitation committee provides oversight of the cooperative agreements as well as facilitates compliance as established in the MOU's between core partners. Cross-training is conducted using a variety of methods such as in person, workshops, and online.

5.2 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official(s). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. (SEAEDD) was named by the Chief Elected Officials to serve as the Fiscal Agent for grant funds. SEAEDD is located at 721 South Walnut Street in Pine Bluff.

5.3 Describe the competitive processes to award the subgrants and contracts for activities funded by WIOA Title I programs within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

The Board authorized the One Stop Committee to develop and advertise a formal request for qualifications (RFQ) for One Stop Operator / Youth Service Provider in March 2023. The entire RFQ was published on March 29-April 12, 2023 in the legal section of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. Applicants had until April 19, 2023, to respond. The One Stop Committee recommended to the Board to grant two extensions to the contract due to Committee member changes and the Board approved. The One Stop Committee reviewed and scored the application for the One Stop Operator and made their recommendation to the full board at the October 18, 2023, Board Meeting. The Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. was selected to be the One Stop Operator and Title I Provider through June 30, 2026, with an option to renew for two additional program years. All future procurements will be handled in a manner consistent with the Uniform Guidance procurement provisions.

5.4 Describe the local area's negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Note: See Appendix C: Planning References and Resources "Performance Targets Template".

Southeast has negotiated with the state and has come to an agreement on the local performance measures as reflected in the chart below. By meeting these negotiated performance levels, the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of workforce development services, ultimately leading to a stronger local economy and better job opportunities for residents. **Employment Rates: High employment rates indicate that the workforce system is successful in helping participants find jobs. Median Earnings: Higher median earnings signify that participants are securing well-paying jobs. Credential Attainment: A high rate of credential attainment indicates that participants are completing training programs and obtaining recognized certifications. Measurable Skills Gain: High rates of measurable skills gains suggest that participants are acquiring new skills and competencies.**

Southeast State Negotiated Performance Goals

Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance Adult Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	81.00%
Employment Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	81.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,750
Credential Attainment Rate	75.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	75.70%
Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance Dislocated Worker Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	86.50%
Employment Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	85.30%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$11,252
Credential Attainment Rate	77.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	75.60%
Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance Youth Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Employment/Education Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	75.6%
Employment/Education Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	79.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,978
Credential Attainment Rate	60.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	67.90%

- 5.5 Describe the indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (17)]

Financial and Programmatic reports such as Quarterly Reports, Audits, and Performance Reports will be provided regularly to the full board at Board meetings for the Board to remain informed of all activities throughout the Title I funding. The WIOA program compliance officer employed by SEAEDD will perform internal monthly desk reviews of the fiscal operations of the one-stop operator. The monitor will also provide an annual program service monitoring report to the One Stop Committee of the local board. There will also be a yearly OMB A-133 of the fiscal agent and One Stop Provider. A third-party entity will also monitor the One-Stop Operator to avoid a conflict of interest. This service will be procured and handled by the One- Stop Committee.

The Planning Committee will review applications for the Eligible Training Provider List as necessary. They will make their recommendations to the entire board.

The Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board uses several indicators to measure the performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent, eligible providers, and the one-stop delivery system. These indicators are aligned with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 108(b)(17). Some of the key indicators to be used:

Indicators for Local Fiscal Agent

- 1. Compliance with Financial Regulations:** The fiscal agent is evaluated based on their adherence to federal, state, and local financial regulations. This includes proper accounting practices, timely financial

reporting, and compliance with audit requirements.

2. **Budget Management:** Effective budget management is assessed by monitoring the allocation and utilization of funds. The fiscal agent's ability to manage the budget within approved limits and to adjust for unexpected changes is crucial.
3. **Timeliness of Fund Distribution:** The fiscal agent is measured on their efficiency in distributing funds to eligible providers and other stakeholders. Delays in fund distribution can impact program delivery and effectiveness.

Indicators for Eligible Providers

1. **Program Completion Rates:** This measures the percentage of participants who complete their training programs. High completion rates indicate effective program delivery and participant engagement.
2. **Employment Outcomes:** The success of eligible providers is gauged by the employment rates of their participants after program completion. This includes the percentage of participants who find employment in their field of training.
3. **Credential Attainment:** The number of participants who earn recognized credentials upon completing their programs is a key indicator of the quality and relevance of the training provided.
4. **Participant Satisfaction:** Feedback from participants regarding their training experience and outcomes is collected and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the providers.

Indicators for One-Stop Delivery System

1. **Customer Flow and Service Utilization:** The volume of job seekers and employers using the one-stop centers, along with the types of services they access, helps measure the system's reach and effectiveness.
2. **Performance Metrics:** Key performance metrics include the employment rate, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains of participants served by the one-stop system.
3. **Employer Engagement:** The level of engagement and satisfaction of employers with the services provided by the one-stop centers is an important indicator. This includes the number of job postings, placements, and collaborative initiatives with businesses.
4. **Efficiency and Responsiveness:** The ability of the one-stop centers to provide timely and efficient services to job seekers and employers is monitored. This includes reducing wait times and improving service delivery processes.
5. **Integrated Service Delivery:** The effectiveness of the one-stop system in providing integrated services through partnerships with various stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers, and community organizations, is evaluated.

Data Collection and Reporting

- **Performance Reports:** Regular performance reports are generated to track the progress of the local fiscal agent, eligible providers, and the one-stop delivery system against the established indicators.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The data collected is analyzed to identify areas for improvement, and action plans are developed to address any gaps or issues identified.

- 5.6 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(20)]

On February 21, 2024, the Local Plan committee met to discuss changes that needed to be implemented in the plan. This consisted of local partners and LWDB members. **The public had 30 days to have their comments input in the local plan either electronically or in person.**

Information regarding the public commentary will be added after the 30-day comment period. Workforce Center partners provided input in the plan at the partners meeting and via telephone calls and emails. Business, partner agencies, educators, and economic developers from throughout the local area are all represented on the board and had the opportunity to comment. **Some other ways these businesses, labor organizations, and educational institutions was made aware of the public comment period was through their fellow counterparts, Southeast Workforce Development Board and SEAEDD meetings, the SEAEDD website, and the Statewide newspaper.**

5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan, the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];

A public notice was placed in the newspaper advising that the public have 30 days from that date to submit comments on the proposed plan. The updated plan was made available on SEAEDD's website, through email, and at SEAEDD's physical address. Information about the public comment period is announced during local workforce development board meetings open to the public.

B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and

Comments collected during the public comment will be presented to the board for review and consideration. **However, no comments were received during the public comment period.**

C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

Disagreements or concerns received during the public comment period will be addressed following the board's review of these disagreements or concerns. Concerns will also be included as an attachment to the local plan.

5.8 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each workforce center within the local area.

Mr. Gary Goggans
WIOA One Stop Operator/EEO Officer
477 South Main St
Monticello, Arkansas
(870) 224-7075

Section 6: Plan Assurances

Planning Process and Public Comment		References
6.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the public for a period that is no less than 30 days.	WIOA Sections 108(d); 20 CFR 679.550(b)
6.2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The final local plan is available and accessible to the public.	20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
6.3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIOA Section 107(e); 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550
Required Policies and Procedures		References
6.4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board makes publicly available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.	20 CFR 679.390
6.5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce development board or entity that they represent and provides for the resolution of conflicts.	WIOA Section 107(h); 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)
6.6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.	WIOA Section 121(c); 20 CFR 678.500-510
6.7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one- stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.	WIOA Section 121(c)(v)
6.8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and the Governor.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(9) and 116(c); 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b)
6.9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA.	WIOA Sections 121(d) and 123; 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400
6.10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; 20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) 680.410-430

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.	WIOA Section 181(c); 20 CFR 683.600
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.	WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); 20 CFR 678.305
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements.	2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW42.52.180; TEGL2-12; 29CFR Part 93.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.	WIOA Section 167
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sections 16(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603, WIOA Section 116(i)(3)
Administration of Funds		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable	WIOA Section 108(b)(16); 20 CFR

	federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	679.560(a)(15); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR680.300-310
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.22 The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.	WIOA Section 108(b)(15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.23 The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Section 184(a)(3); 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.24 The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.850
Eligibility		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.27 The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-320
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.28 The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570

<p>6.29 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.</p>	<p>Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09</p>
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Appendix C: Performance Goals
Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals
Name of Local Workforce Development Area: Southeast

Southeast State Negotiated Performance Goals

Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Adult Performance	
Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	81.00%
Employment Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	81.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,750
Credential Attainment Rate	75.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	75.7%
Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Dislocated Worker Performance	
Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	86.50%
Employment Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	85.30%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$11,252
Credential Attainment Rate	77.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	75.60%
Core Indicators of WIOA Program Performance	PY24 State Negotiated Goals
Youth Performance	
Employment/Education Rate- 2nd Quarter After Exit	76.60%
Employment/Education Rate- 4th Quarter After Exit	79.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,978
Credential Attainment Rate	60.00%
Measurable Skills Gains	67.90%

Appendix D: Planning References and Resources

I. State of Arkansas's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (*State Plan*)

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the State's ability to serve job seekers and employers. WIOA will enable the State to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Arkansas will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system. We will do this by providing the highest quality of service to job seekers and employers through well-coordinated approaches at the state and local levels. System access will be enhanced through the use of technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers. While access will be improved for all job seekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve.

The four main goals in the State's Combined WIOA Plan are as follows:

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community -based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
2. Identify and promote best practices (private and public) for developing and sustaining partnerships.
3. Expand partnership with economic development to refine sector strategies.
4. Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
5. Increase accountability and clarity of action between all workforce related boards.
6. Increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities.
7. Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities.
8. Partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.
9. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to

- improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).
10. Expand small business participation.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and job seekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

Develop a common intake process for job seekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment that need to be addressed.

1. Develop an integrated data system that will enable the sharing of information between partner agencies to more efficiently service both employers and job seekers.
2. Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
3. Support transportable skill sets for transportable careers.
4. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives as a way to meet business and industry needs.
5. Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services.
6. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
7. Develop a menu of services available at each service delivery access point that provides a list of the services and training opportunities available through Arkansas's talent development system.
8. Utilize customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the State's talent development system.
9. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services.
2. Change employer and jobseeker perceptions of the workforce system.
3. Develop an image-building outreach campaign that educates Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in the State.
4. Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect job seekers and employers with the talent development system in Arkansas.
5. Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Conduct a statewide skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue.
2. Develop and implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Arkansas.
 3. Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program and the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) program.

II. State Policy and Guidance.

State policy can be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

III. Labor Market and Workforce Information.

A. Discover Arkansas

Labor Market Information Portal Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) is posted online using the Discover Arkansas web portal located at www.discoverarkansas.net and is available to the general public.

B. Arkansas State Plan Economic and Workforce Analysis

The Arkansas Combined State Plan includes an analysis of the current workforce. The data provided in Section II of the state plan under strategic elements may be very helpful to local boards in conducting a local area and regional economic and workforce analysis.

To provide local workforce boards in the state with tools for development planning in their own areas, data were downloaded and prepared from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Labor Market Information (LMI) website, <http://www.discoverarkansas.net>. These data were then turned into interactive visualizations, which are available at the following websites. These visualizations can be downloaded as an image or in PDF format. The goal is to help stakeholders at the state and local level better understand future industry and occupational needs and to provide workforce development boards with the tools needed to better serve their areas.

The data available at <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/> includes:

- Industries in 2018
- Job Growth in 2028
- Projected Job Growth by Workforce Development Area
- Projected Job Growth by Industry
- Percent Workforce in 2028

These data demonstrate the current makeup of the workforce by major industry, as well as projections of the number of jobs these industries will need in 2022. To the right of the visualizations are "filters" to help explore the data choosing multiple regions to compare, such as United States vs Arkansas, Arkansas vs. workforce region, or directly compare regions.

The data available at <http://arkansasresearchcenter.org/arc/index.php?cID=154> includes

- Arkansas Occupations, Current and 2022 Projections, which includes data visualizations concerning occupations in Arkansas, both currently and projections for 2022. Occupations are listed by their Standard Occupation Code (SOC) title. The SOC system is hierarchical. SOC Major codes are the top level occupational areas, such as "Construction and Extraction Occupations." At the next level would be SOC Minor, one of which for the above would be "Construction Trades Workers." Finally there is SOC Detail, such as "Stonemasons" or "Carpenters." This web tool allows users to manipulate the data by indicating the level of detail desired.

IV. Other Resources.

- TEN 1-15; Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide; July 6, 2015
- TEGL 37-14; Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System; May 29, 2015
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)