

WYOMING PYS 2024-2027

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## OVERVIEW

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

### OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

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

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))<sup>1</sup>

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

#### HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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

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

ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>2</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission, if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

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

## I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

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

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

This is a unified plan

## COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

No

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

No

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

No

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

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

No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

## B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

## II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State’s current economic environment and identifies the State’s overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term “populations”, these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

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

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

### 1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

#### A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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

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

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

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

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

##### III. EMPLOYERS’ EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

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

### **1. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis**

*The tables and figures referenced in Parts A and B of this section are available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA\\_State\\_Plan\\_Tables\\_2024.pdf](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA_State_Plan_Tables_2024.pdf).*

## A. Economic Analysis.

After enduring unprecedented job losses during the Covid-19 pandemic, Wyoming added jobs and saw increases in the population, labor force, and number of persons working in 2022 and the first half of 2023.

During the pandemic, Wyoming entered its second period of economic downturn in the last decade (see Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2). The Research & Planning (R&P) section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has defined an *economic downturn* as a period of at least two consecutive quarters of over-the-year decline in both average monthly employment and total wages based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). The two most recent downturns lasted from second quarter 2015 (2015Q2) to fourth quarter 2016 (2016Q4), and from second quarter 2020 (2020Q2) to first quarter 2021 (2021Q1). Declining energy prices preceded both of these downturns, although each downturn also had its own unique characteristics.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020Q2 marked a 20-year low in terms of Wyoming employment. However, as of 2023Q2, Wyoming experienced nine consecutive quarters of over-the-year job growth. In 2023Q1 and 2023Q2, Wyoming returned to pre-pandemic employment levels last seen in 2019. The most recent QCEW data available at the time of this report were from 2023Q2.

### i. Existing Demand Sectors and Occupations

Industries are classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Broad sectors are given a two-digit NAICS code, such as mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21) and construction (NAICS 23). Within each two-digit sector are several three-digit subsectors, four-digit industries, five-digit detailed industries, and six-digit detailed national industries. For example, three subsectors are placed within mining: oil & gas extraction (NAICS 21), mining, except oil & gas (NAICS 22), and support activities for mining (NAICS 213). A variety of six-digit national detailed industries are found in each sector; for example, in construction are such detailed industries as new single-family housing construction (NAICS 236115), industrial building construction (NAICS 236210), and oil & gas pipeline construction (NAICS 237120).

More information about the NAICS structure is available at <https://www.census.gov/naics/?99967>.

Wyoming's economy is driven by the health of mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21). Economic expansion occurs when demand for and prices of oil, coal, and natural gas are high. Conversely, economic contraction occurs when demand for and prices of these resources wane.

Overall, employment increased from 273,178 in 2022Q2 to 279,992 in 2023Q2 (an increase of 6,814 jobs, or 2.5%; see Table 2). Nearly all industries showed substantial over-the-year employment gains, led by professional & business services (1,249, or 6.0%), local government, including public schools, colleges & hospitals (1,105, or 2.5%), mining, including oil & gas (916, or 5.7%), leisure & hospitality (729, or 1.9%), and construction (693, or 3.2%). Compared to the lowest point of the pandemic in 2020Q2, Wyoming's average monthly employment increased from 252,329 – an addition of 27,663 jobs, or 11.0%.

For this plan, *existing demand industries* were determined by using data from R&P's most recent growing and declining industries report for 2023Q2. Growing industries are identified at the subsector (three-digit NAICS) level, and are defined as those with employment levels increasing by 5% or more from prior-year levels for two consecutive quarters (in this case, 2023Q1 and 2023Q2). Only subsectors with average quarterly employment sizes of 100 or more were



included in this analysis. R&P identified 17 such existing demand industries that met these criteria (see Table 3), including support activities for mining; professional & technical services; support activities for transportation; and merchant wholesalers, durable goods.

*Existing demand occupations* were identified using the New Hires Job Skills Survey (*New Hires Survey*), conducted by R&P every quarter based on a sample of *new hires* (individuals who were hired by an employer they had previously worked for). The purpose of this survey is to collect information about jobs that are filled in the state, such as occupation, typical job duties, wages and benefits, license and certification requirements, necessary job skills, employers' satisfaction with their new hires' skills, and more. By linking New Hires Survey data with several administrative databases, R&P can identify demographics of new hires, such as gender and age. New Hires Survey results are published annually and contain a wealth of information about the state's job and labor markets. For more information, please see <https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/newhires.htm>.

The most current New Hires Survey data available is from 2020, when Wyoming had 79,650 new hires. Table 4 provides a list of the top 10 most frequently-occurring new hire occupations that required some post-secondary education in 2020. The occupations in Table 4 that require less than an associate's degree could be seen as *existing demand occupations* for which training could be completed relatively quickly. Occupations that require a postsecondary non-degree award (certificate) include heavy & tractor-trailer truck drivers; bookkeeping, accounting & auditing clerks; heating, air conditions, & refrigeration mechanics & installers; nursing assistants; automotive service technicians & mechanics; teaching assistants; and dental assistants.

## **ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Emerging demand industries and occupations were identified using R&P's most recent long-term industry and occupational projections for 2020 to 2030, available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2022/WY\\_LT\\_Projections\\_2020-2030.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2022/WY_LT_Projections_2020-2030.htm).

For the purposes of this state plan, R&P identified *emerging demand industries* as the 20 subsectors (three-digit NAICS) with the greatest projected growth from 2020 to 2030. The industries with the greatest projected growth include accommodation, including hotels & motels (4,982 new jobs, or 52.1%), food services & drinking places (3,819, or 19.6%), professional, scientific, & technical services (3,120, or 33.2%), educational services (2,833, or 10.6%), and heavy & civil engineering construction (2,821, or 46.3%).

For this unified state plan, R&P identified *emerging demand occupations* as the top five occupations with the greatest number of total projected openings from 2020 to 2030 for each educational requirement (see Table 6). Occupational projections include three types of openings: *growth* (new jobs), *exits* (persons leaving the workforce), and *transfers* (persons changing occupations). The sum of growth, exits, and transfers is referred to as *total projected openings*.

The vast majority (72.4%) of openings are projected in occupations that require a high school diploma or less (see Figure 3). The occupations with the greatest number of total openings for this educational requirement group included fast food & counter workers (3,028), retail salespersons (2,551), cashiers (2,318), office clerks, general (2,128), and waiters & waitresses (1,668). Many of these occupations are relatively low-paying jobs with high turnover rates that are often found in industries such as retail trade and leisure & hospitality.

Occupations requiring some college and no degree or a post-secondary certificate accounted for 9.6% of all projected openings from 2020 to 2030. These included occupations such as heavy & tractor-trailer truck drivers (1,853 openings), bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks (1,061), nursing assistants (891), teaching assistants, except postsecondary (877), and medical assistants (317).

Occupations requiring an associate's degree made up 2.0% of all projected openings. Occupations in this category included preschool teachers, excluding special education (219 openings), forest & conservation technicians (149), paralegals & legal assistants (146), veterinary technologists & technicians (103), and dental hygienists (88).

Occupations that require a bachelor's degree made up the second largest group of total projected openings (13.6% of all projected openings). The occupations in this category varied, with the greatest number of openings projected for general & operations managers (1,386 openings), registered nurses (641), substitute teachers, short-term (636), accountants and auditors (461), and elementary school teachers, except special education (389).

Occupations requiring a master's, doctoral, or professional degree accounted for just 2.4% of all projected openings. These included such occupations as lawyers (182 openings), educational, guidance, school, & vocational counselors (123), nurse practitioners (86), physical therapists (84), and education administrators, kindergarten through secondary schools (68).

### **iii. Employers' Employment Needs**

As previously mentioned, the Wyoming New Hires Job Skills Survey (*New Hires Survey*) can help identify employers' needs. As part of the survey, employers were asked to rate five work skills in terms of their importance for performing the job's duties: service orientation, critical thinking, reading comprehension, technology design, and operation & control. Across all occupations in 2020, the largest proportion of employers felt critical thinking (79.3%) was important, followed by service orientation (77.5%), and reading comprehension (65.7%). Technology design was considered important by the smallest proportion of employers (37.7%).

The previously discussed short-term employment projections (please see emerging demand industry sectors and occupations section) also include the educational requirement for each occupation. Of the 74,636 total projected openings from 2020 to 2030, the majority (72.4%) were in occupations requiring a high school diploma or less (see Figure 3). Approximately 13.6% required a bachelor's degree, and 9.6% required a postsecondary non-degree award, or some college, no degree. Approximately 2.4% of projected openings were in occupations requiring more than a bachelor's degree, and 2.0% were in occupations requiring an associate's degree.

To further identify and address the needs of Wyoming employers, Wyoming's Public Colleges and University partnered with Emsi (2020) "to complete a program demand gap analysis, which assesses state job openings against educational program completions." This report classified college programs into these four categories:

- High demand, low supply
- High demand, high supply
- Low demand, low supply
- Low demand, high supply

The report identified eight high demand, low supply college programs needed to meet Wyoming employers' needs. These eight college programs were:

- Building construction technology (postsecondary non-degree certificate)
- Culinary arts/chef training (postsecondary non-degree certificate)
- Administrative assistant & secretarial science (associate's degree)
- Health services/allied health/health sciences (associate's degree)
- Business administration & management (bachelor's degree)
- Registered nursing/registered nurse (master's degree)
- Environmental studies (master's degree)
- Psychology, general (doctoral degree)

The eight high demand, low supply programs “have a high number of annual job openings but lack adequate completers,” according to the report. The Emsi report suggested that these programs should be considered for expansion and “consideration should be given to the median hourly wage.”

The two programs requiring a certificate and the two requiring an associate's degree involve a relatively short period of education, while the four requiring a bachelor's degree or higher demand a more long-term commitment to education.

## B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

### I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

### II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

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

### III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

## **B. Workforce Analysis**

As noted, Wyoming has seen consistent employment growth for the last two years, after record job losses during the Covid-19 pandemic. This analysis compares population estimates and data on persons working over the last 22 years. The state's total population peaked at 585,613 in

2015, while the total number of persons working at any time during the year was greatest at 367,572 in 2014.

Wyoming's estimated resident population has increased slightly over the last two years. The population increased from an estimated 578,759 in 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 581,381 in 2022, an increase of 2,622, or 0.5%.

The changes in Wyoming's population and workforce are shown in Table 7 and illustrated in Figure 4. Note that during periods of economic downturn, decreases in persons working are visible even as the population increases or remains flat. The number of persons working in Wyoming decreased from 2019 to 2020, and then grew each year in 2021 and 2022.

### **Individuals with Barriers to Employment and Special Populations**

Note: The data presented in this section on individuals with barriers to employment and special populations include data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The Census Bureau has collected a complete enumeration of the country's population every 10 years since 1790, which is known as the decennial census. In more recent decades, the majority of the population was given the "short form" survey instrument, which only collected age, sex, and race, while a sample of the population was given the "long-form" of the survey, which also collected socioeconomic and housing data. In 2010, the Census Bureau replaced this long-form with the ACS, which collects similar data but is conducted yearly rather than once a decade. This yearly collection schedule allows the data to be released in a timelier manner, which is helpful to the entities that rely on Census data, such as federal, state, and local governments, and researchers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

The ACS is sent to approximately 3 million people across the nation per year. The results are released as one-year, three-year, and five-year estimates based on the number of years of data used to create the estimates. The one-year estimates are the most current, but are less accurate because the sample used to develop them is smaller. Accuracy increases as more data samples are added to the estimation process. The data used for this report are one-year estimates based on data collected between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022. One-year estimates are somewhat less accurate than five-year estimates, especially for areas with smaller populations, such as Wyoming, or for studying population subgroups such as age groups or gender (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008), but they have the advantage of being available earlier than the five-year estimates. For more information about the ACS, examples of the survey instrument, or instructions for filling out the survey, please visit <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>. The data used for this report are from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), provided by the University of Minnesota (Ruggles, S., et al., 2023).

### **Poverty**

The U.S. government measures poverty in two ways. The first is referred to as the *poverty threshold*, which is updated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and used for statistical purposes, such as counting the number of people living in poverty. The second, known as *poverty guidelines*, is a simplified version of the poverty thresholds used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to administer specific federal programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These measurements of poverty vary based on the year and the number of people in the family or household. In 2022, an individual with an income of up to \$13,590 or a family of four with an income of up to \$27,750 would be at or below the poverty threshold (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023).

As shown in Table 8, an estimated 13.5% of Wyoming residents, or 78,574 people, were at or below the poverty threshold in 2022. A similar proportion of individuals younger than age 18 (13.5%) were at or below the poverty threshold. Substantial proportions of individuals ages 18–19 (40.6%) and 20–24 (28.4%) were at or below the poverty threshold; however, note that individuals in these two age groups make up a large proportion of individuals enrolled in college. The smallest proportion was found among individuals 45–54 (8.7%). Table 9 shows that a greater proportion of Wyoming females (14.5%) was at or below the poverty threshold than males (12.6%).

Table 10 contains data for the population who earned 130% of the poverty threshold, or 30% more than the poverty threshold. For 2022, this would include an individual who earned up to \$17,667 in a year or up to \$36,075 for a family of four. In Wyoming, 17.9% of individuals had incomes within this range. Again, the highest concentration of these individuals were ages 18–19 (45.1%), 20–24 (35.2%), or younger than age 18 (19.2%). Table 11 shows that a greater proportion of females (18.8%) was at or below 130% of the poverty threshold than males (16.9%).

Table 12 contains the proportion of individuals whose earnings were within 160% of the poverty threshold. For a single person, this would be an income up to \$21,744, and for a family of four, this would be an income up to \$44,440. In Wyoming, 22.0% of all individuals had incomes within 160% of the poverty threshold. Nearly half (47.4%) of those ages 18–19 had incomes within this range, as did 41.1% of those ages 20–24. Of all individuals younger than 18, 23.8% fell within this range, as did 22.9% of those 65 and older. Nearly one in four women (23.2%) had earnings within this range, compared to approximately one in five males (20.7%), as shown in Table 13.

### **Native American**

American Indians or Alaska Natives (referred to as *Native American* individuals for the purposes of this section) reside in all 23 Wyoming counties (see Table 14). Native Americans accounted for 2.4% of Wyoming’s estimated population, according to 2020 Decennial Census estimates (please note that these ACS data were not available, so Decennial Census estimates were used). In Fremont County, where the Wind River Reservation is located, approximately one in five (20.9%) individuals were Native Americans. Among all Native Americans, approximately one in four (26.8%) were younger than 18 (see Table 15).

Among Native Americans ages 16 or older, 49.2% were employed and working, 2.8% were unemployed, and 46.8% were not in the labor force (see Table 16).

### **Veterans**

The U.S. Census Bureau (2017a) defines *veterans* as individuals who served in any branch of the United States military during a time of war or peace, for any length of time, at home or abroad. Veterans who are ages 17 or older are included in the ACS statistics. As shown in Table 17, in 2022, 41,140 veterans (including active duty) lived in Wyoming. The proportion of veterans increases with age. Only 1.1% of all veterans in Wyoming were younger than 25, while 43.1% were 65 or older.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (2015) assigns a disability rating to veterans who received a service-connected disability, defined as “an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.” This affects, among other things, an individual’s eligibility and priority for medical services. Approximately 28.6% of the state’s veterans had

some degree of disability rating in 2022 (see Table 18). The largest proportion had a disability rating of 70% or higher (11.9%).

The degree of disability rating varied by age group (see Table 18). The largest proportion of individuals with a 70% disability rating or higher were ages 35–44 (32.1%), while 13.2% of veterans ages 55–64 had a disability rating of 10–20 percent. The largest proportion of veterans with some degree of disability rating were ages 35–44: more than half (51.6%) of veterans in this age group had some degree of the disability rating.

### **English Proficiency**

Table 19 contains data on the ability of individuals in Wyoming to speak English. In 2022, 93.5% of individuals ages 5 or older indicated they spoke only English. Another 0.2% thought they spoke English very well, 4.6% thought they spoke English well, 1.1% thought they spoke English but not well, and only 0.5% indicated they did not speak English at all.

### **Disability**

The number and percent of people residing in Wyoming with a disability in 2022 can be found in Table 20. *Disability*, as defined by the Census Bureau (2017b), includes cognitive, ambulatory, independent living, self-care, vision, and hearing impairments. Although a person may have more than one type of disability, they are only counted once for the purposes of this section.

Overall, 16.0% of the population aged 5 or older had a disability. The proportion of people with a disability increased with age, from 5.6% of individuals ages younger than 18 to 36.4% of individuals 65 or older.

In 2019, the RespectAbility Report ranked Wyoming #10 in the United States with a 45.6% disability employment rate for citizens with disabilities (Uwabera, 2019).

### **Youth**

Wyoming's estimated resident youth population of working age (15–19) increased over the last decade, from 36,889 in 2011 to 38,654 in 2021 (1,765, or 4.8%; see Table 21 and Figure 5). Much of that growth has come over the last few years, increasing by 2,147 (5.9%) from 2019 to 2021. Beginning with the Great Recession in 2008, the number of youth working in Wyoming decreased drastically. In recent years, however, there have been more youth working in Wyoming. There were 22,175 youths ages 15–19 working in Wyoming at any time during the year in 2021, higher than at any point in the last decade. As noted by Moore (2022), Wyoming saw an increase of female workers younger than age 20 from 2019 to 2021.

According to school district enrollment and staffing data from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), fall enrollment for Wyoming's public schools has steadily decreased since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (see Table 22 and Figure 6). From 2013/14 to 2023/24, fall enrollment fell by 1,291 students (-2.1%). Fall enrollment peaked in 2015/16 with 94,002 students.

The WDE has used the Federal Four-Year Adjusted Cohort methodology established by the U.S. Department of Education since 2009/10. Wyoming's four-year (on-time) high school graduation rate mostly trended upward from 2016/17 to 2020/21, before decreasing in 2021/22 (see Table 23 and Figure 7). According to WDE state and district graduation rate data, Wyoming's four-year high school graduation rate for 2021/22 was 81.8%, down from a peak of 82.4% the prior year.

Graduation rates varied by district (see Table 24); in 2021/22, the lowest graduation rates were found in Fremont #38 (18.2%), Fremont #21 (34.8%), Fremont #14 (50.9%), Fremont #25 (59.2%), and Platte #2 (72.2%). Perfect graduation rates of 100.0% were seen in Sheridan #3, Sublette #9, and Washakie #2. Among the state's schools with the highest enrollment, the graduation rates were 83.9% for Campbell #1, 80.1% for Laramie #1, and 77.7% for Natrona #1.

From 2011/12 to 2021/22, a total of 13,193 students from grades 9–12 dropped out of Wyoming public schools, according to W.D.E. data (see Table 25). During that period, the average number of dropouts per year was 1,099, with a high of 1,203 in 2012/13 and a low of 835 in 2019/20. As shown in Table 26 and Figure 8, male students accounted for 58.6% of all dropouts from 2011/12 to 2021/22, compared to 41.4% for female students. The total number of dropouts for 2019/20 by district is presented in Table 27.

Updated research from R&P has continued to illustrate how Wyoming youth leave the state as they age. In *Another Decade Later* (2021), Glover tracked the senior class of 2006/07 into the workforce up to 10 years after their senior year. He found that 61.2% of 2006/07 seniors were found working in Wyoming five years after their senior year; that percentage fell to 49.2% 10 years after their senior year. Glover found that trend was similar regardless of senior class, starting with 2006/07 to 2009/10, the most recent year for which 10-year data were available (see Figure 9). Of the 2006/07 senior class found working in Wyoming 10 years later, the greatest proportions worked in health care & social assistance (7.6%), retail trade (5.6%), leisure & hospitality (5.3%), and educational services (5.0%). In the 10 years following their senior year, 1.7% received a postsecondary certificate as their highest level of education, 10.6% an associate's degree, 22.1% a bachelor's degree, and 5.4% a master's degree or higher (see Table 28 and Figure 10).

### **i. Employment and Unemployment**

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program provides estimates on the labor force (number of persons employed plus the number of persons unemployed) and the unemployment rate. Wyoming's labor force steadily declined over the last 10 years (see Table 29 and Figure 11), but showed an increase from the decade low 289,154 in 2021 to 291,756 in 2022 (an increase of 2,602 people, or 0.9%). Wyoming's unemployment rate peaked at 5.9% in 2020, but decreased to 3.6% by 2022. The number of employed individuals increased substantially from 275,748 in 2021 to 281,343 in 2022 (5,595 people, or 2.0%). Meanwhile, the number of unemployed fell to a 10-year low of 10,413 in 2022.

Participation in the labor force has consistently declined over the last two decades, both nationally and in Wyoming (see Figure 12). The *labor force participation rate* refers to the percentage of people ages 16–64 eligible to participate in the labor force who are actively participating in the labor force, either working or looking for work. Wyoming has historically had a somewhat higher labor force participation rate than the U.S., although both have declined in recent years. In 2022, Wyoming's average monthly labor force participation rate of 63.7% was slightly higher than the national average of 62.2%.

In 2022, the number of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefit recipients dropped to its lowest count since at least 1997, the first year for which comparable data are available (Wen, 2023; see Table 30). The number of UI benefit recipients fell from a record high 43,630 in 2020 to a record low 10,597 in 2022 (-33,033, or -75.7%). Also in 2022, the percentage of UI recipients who exhausted their benefits fell to a record low of 15.7%. The lower exhaustion rate indicates

unemployed individuals had an easier time finding employment in 2022 compared to prior years.

Table 31 shows that the highest UI benefit exhaustion rates in 2022 were seen in individuals ages 65 and older (29.1%) and 55–64 (20.8%), while the lowest exhaustion rates were seen in younger workers ages 16–24 (9.6%) and 25–34 (11.2%). This indicates that older unemployed workers generally had more difficulty finding reemployment than younger individuals in Wyoming. In addition, women exhausted their benefits at a greater rate (18.1%) than men (14.6%).

Table 31 also shows that the higher wages an individual makes before being laid off (*total base period wages*), the lower the UI exhaustion rate. A higher pre-layoff wage would make an individual qualify for more weeks of UI benefits. Recipients may receive UI benefits for a maximum of 26 weeks. The maximum weekly benefit amount as of July 2, 2023, was \$595. The more weeks of eligibility for UI benefits also was linked with a lower exhaustion rate, as more time allowed recipients to find a job before exhausting their benefits. For example, 11.6% of recipients who were eligible for 20–25 weeks in 2022 exhausted their benefits, compared to 35.7% of recipients who were eligible for 10–14 weeks.

## **ii. Labor Market Trends**

This section discusses six selected industries identified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The industries discussed in this section are mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21), construction (NAICS 23), retail trade (NAICS 44–45), professional & business services (NAICS 54–56), health care & social assistance (NAICS 61), and leisure & hospitality (NAICS 71–72). Figure 13 shows employment trends in these industries from 2012Q1 to 2023Q2 (note that four-quarter moving averages were used to illustrate long-term trends in industries with seasonal employment patterns, such as construction and leisure & hospitality). The industries discussed in this section play a key role in Wyoming's economy, and many have seen substantial growth over the last two years. Quarterly data from the QCEW were used in the figures in this section to illustrate employment and wage changes.

### **Mining, Including Oil & Gas (NAICS 21)**

Historically, Wyoming's mining sector (NAICS 21) has contributed more wages to the state's total than any other private industry. In 2022, mining's \$1.6 billion in total wages made up 10.6% of the statewide total, and the 16,297 jobs in mining accounted for 6.0% of all jobs (see Table 32). The average weekly wage in mining was \$1,916, notably higher than the statewide average of \$1,083.

Employment in Wyoming's mining industry decreased substantially over the last decade (see Figure 14). Average monthly employment fell from a decade high of 28,178 in 2012Q1 to 13,962 in 2021Q1, a decrease of 13,962 jobs, or 50.0%. In other words, Wyoming lost approximately half of its mining jobs from 2012 to 2021. In 2020, employment in mining fell to its lowest point at any time since at least 2000Q1 (Research & Planning, 2023a). Since then, however, Wyoming's mining industry has seen consistent growth: average monthly employment increased from prior-year levels for eight consecutive quarters from 2021Q3 to 2023Q2.

### **Construction (NAICS 23)**

In 2022, construction accounted for 7.8% of Wyoming's total employment with 21,261 jobs and 8.6% of the state's total wages, with \$1.3 billion (see Table 33). The average weekly wage in construction was \$1,198, greater than the statewide average of \$1,083.



Employment in Wyoming's construction sector (NAICS 23) varies by season. As shown in Figure 15, employment tends to be lowest in the winter months of the first quarter, then increases during the spring (second quarter) and peaks during the summer months (third quarter) before declining in the fall (fourth quarter).

Construction drove job growth following the 2015-2016 economic downturn with short-term pipeline construction projects (see Figure 15). Employment in construction decreased during the most recent downturn, but showed moderate over-the-year growth since 2021Q2. Whereas job growth in 2018 and 2019 was driven by the heavy & civil engineering subsector, more recent growth has taken place in the specialty trade contractors and construction of buildings subsectors (Moore, 2023).

### **Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45)**

The 30,378 jobs in Wyoming's retail trade sector in 2022 represented 11.2% of the state's total employment (see Table 34). Retail trade contributed \$1.1 billion in total wages, 7.0% of the statewide total. The average weekly wage of \$684 was substantially lower than the overall statewide average.

As illustrated in Figure 16, Wyoming's retail sector experienced 17 consecutive quarters (more than four years) of over-the-year job losses beginning in 2016Q2. During the pandemic, however, retail trade employment grew in Wyoming and nationally; for example, Baker (2020) described a surge in home improvement projects nationally during the pandemic. Retail trade showed nine consecutive quarters of over-the-year job growth in Wyoming before decreasing slightly in 2023Q1 and 2023Q2.

### **Professional & Business Services (NAICS 54-56)**

Professional & business services is a supersector comprising three sectors: professional & technical services (NAICS 54), management of companies & enterprises (NAICS 55), and administrative & waste services (NAICS 56). Definitions of and activities performed by businesses in these sectors can be found in Box 1.

In 2022, the 20,701 jobs in professional & business services accounted for 7.6% of Wyoming's average monthly employment (see Table 35). This supersector contributed \$1.5 billion in total wages, 10.0% of the total. The average weekly wage of \$1,417 was substantially higher than the statewide average.

In 2023Q2, noticeable over-the-year job growth was seen in sub sectors such as architectural & engineering services (316 new jobs, or 13.5%), services to buildings & dwellings (218, or 6.3%), management & technical consulting services (179, or 10.0%), employment services (147, or 5.7%), and accounting & bookkeeping services (103, or 7.2%; Research & Planning, 2023b).

As illustrated in Figure 17, employment in professional & business services in Wyoming has grown substantially since the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Health Care & Social Assistance (NAICS 62)**

In 2022, Wyoming had 25,746 jobs in health care & social assistance, or 9.4% of all jobs in the state (see Table 36). The \$1.3 billion in total wages accounted for 8.4% of the state's total. The average weekly wage was \$971, lower than the statewide average of \$1,083.

As seen in Figure 18, employment in health care & social assistance grew steadily over the last 10 years, with some occasional dips. Employment declined slightly in 2021, but has consistently

increased since. Average monthly employment reached an all-time high of 25,746 in 2023Q2, up 1,904 jobs (7.9%) compared to 2013Q2.

In addition, as noted by Gallagher *et al.* (2017), “Wyoming’s health care industry has an older workforce. When the aging health care workers retire, possibly having greater health care needs themselves, the need for more health care workers in Wyoming grows.” Research from R&P has shown that Wyoming’s health care & social assistance sector has a high percentage of occupations requiring a bachelor’s degree and a high percentage of individuals ages 55 or older (see Figure 20). With more and more of those individuals reaching the traditional age of 65, Wyoming needs younger, educated individuals to fill those vacancies.

### **Leisure & Hospitality (NAICS 71-72)**

Wyoming’s leisure & hospitality sector provides more jobs than any other industry. In 2022, the 37,453 jobs accounted for 13.8% of total employment in the state (see Table 37). However, the \$1.0 billion in total wages accounted for just 6.6% of the statewide total. This is due to a large number of low-paying jobs in this industry; in 2022, the average weekly wage in leisure & hospitality was \$516, less than half (47.6%) of the statewide total.

Leisure & hospitality lost far more jobs than any other industry in Wyoming during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in 2020Q2 (see Figure 19). Since then, however, leisure & hospitality has shown consistent growth, including nine consecutive quarters of over-the-year job growth from 2021Q2 to 2023Q2.

### **iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

As shown in Table 38, a greater proportion of Wyoming’s population ages 25 and older graduated high school (93.1%) compared to the national average (89.7%), according to 2022 one-year estimates from the ACS. However, the proportion of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was lower in Wyoming (30.2%) than in the U.S. (35.7%). Wyoming also has a greater proportion of the population with some college and no degree (24.0% to 19.1%) and associate’s degrees (11.7% to 8.8%) compared to the national average. This disparity between Wyoming and the national average may be due in part to the number of jobs that require a post-secondary certificate, as that information is not captured in ACS estimates.

These proportions were similar when comparing the state and national populations by gender. Among Wyoming women ages 25 and older, 93.5% were high school graduates, compared to 90.4% nationally, while 32.4% of Wyoming women ages 25 and older had a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 36.8% nationally. Additionally, 24.4% had some college and no degree, compared to 19.2% nationally, while another 13.1% had an associate’s degree, compared to 9.7% nationally.

For men ages 25 and older, 92.7% in Wyoming were high school graduates, compared to 88.9% nationally. Among all Wyoming men ages 25 and older, 28.1% had a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 34.5% nationally. A greater proportion of Wyoming men also possessed some college but no degree, compared to the national average (23.6% compared to 19.0%), and 10.3% had an associate’s degree, compared to 7.9% nationally.

**C. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.**

One of the greatest challenges facing Wyoming is retaining youth, especially for occupations that require post-secondary education. As previously discussed, approximately half of high school seniors from any given year were found working in Wyoming 10 years later. In addition, 22.1% of Wyoming seniors received a bachelor's degree within the next 10 years.

Given the exodus of young workers and the need for educated workers, some industries may find challenges hiring qualified workers in the next decade. Table 39 shows the total number of persons working in Wyoming at any time in 2021 by industry, the percentage of those individuals 55 and older, and the percentage of individuals in the workforce with a bachelor's degree or higher as their highest level of education in 2022. An industry with a high percentage of individuals ages 55 and older and a high percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree may indicate a training need or skills gap. As more and more older individuals age out of the workforce, employers need trained, skilled workers to replace them.

The data in Table 39 were used to create Figure 20, which illustrates the percentage of individuals ages 55 and older with the percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher by industry. In Figure 20, the size of the bubble represents the total number of persons working in that industry; in other words, the larger the bubble, the more people working. In 2021, leisure & hospitality had the greatest number of people working (56,143), hence it is represented by the largest bubble. Conversely, the smallest bubble represents information, the industry with the fewest people working in Wyoming (3,633).

Across all industries in Wyoming, 19.7% of all persons working at any time during the year were age 55 or older, and 33.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher. The upper right-hand area in Figure 20 indicates six industries that had higher than average proportions of older workers and persons with a bachelor's degree or higher: educational services, public administration, financial activities, health care & social assistance, information, and professional & business services.

For example, educational services had the highest percentage of persons 55 or older (25.8%) and persons with a bachelor's degree or higher (71.2%). In other words, approximately one in four individuals working in educational services will reach the traditional retirement age of 65 within the next 10 years, and seven out of every 10 had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Long-term investments in education and training may be required to fill vacancies in these industries as educated individuals age out of the workforce.

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

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

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

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

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

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

#### B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

#### C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

**A. The State's Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional One-Stop Delivery System partners.**

#### **Workforce development and One-Stop Delivery System Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs**

Wyoming's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs are administered by the Program Strategy Team housed within the Policy, Research, and Communications Division and operationalized by the Employment and Training Division, Office of Workforce Programs, Department of Workforce Services (DWS or The Department). Most of the direct assistance to employers and individuals is provided through the American Job Centers, as part of the American Job Center system. In this plan, the terms are used interchangeably. The American Job Centers, which are located throughout Wyoming, use a One-Stop concept that coordinates services with services available through partner organizations in a single location, where possible.

Wyoming realizes the importance of aligning a wide range of publicly and privately-funded education, employment, and training programs while also providing high-quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses through the One-Stop Delivery System. A job-driven workforce development and service-delivery system links the State's diverse talent pool with a specific employer and business needs. One-Stop Centers continue to be a valuable community resource and an important source of assistance for individuals looking for work or incumbent workers looking for opportunities to advance their careers. Wyoming continually aligns workforce, education, and economic development with regional in-demand jobs. This

reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for One-Stop Centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to obtain and retain good jobs. The centers also help businesses find new skilled workers and provide ongoing education and training opportunities to upgrade the skills of their current workers.

All American Job Centers throughout Wyoming are required to offer basic career services, individualized career services, and training services for Wyoming's adult, dislocated worker, and youth workforces. Such people include veterans, public assistance recipients, individuals with disabilities, older workers, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, unemployed and underemployed workers, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act certified workers, and anyone else needing assistance. WIOA, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Wagner-Peyser services, and National Emergency Grant programs, when used, are provided through the Employment and Training Division by merit-based public employees, in coordination with other organizations both within the American Job Centers and the communities they serve.

Basic Career Services are offered to workers through the Wagner-Peyser program, which is available in person and electronically through Wyoming's Management Information System, HireWYO (formerly Wyoming at Work). In-person services include assistance with job registration through HireWYO, resume preparation and repository, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. The priority of service, enforced through federal and state policies, is provided at all centers.

Staff-assisted services, including WIOA individualized career services and training, are also offered at the American Job Centers. These services are coordinated with other programs, both within and outside of the American Job Centers, for clients' benefit. Through the centers, workers also have access to the full array of other services provided by DWS, including access to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system.

The Department uses workforce information, including economic and labor market data provided via its Research & Planning section, for planning and decision making. This information is critical in determining the Department's target industries/occupations, in working with DWS' partners in business and education, and for ensuring appropriate matching of job openings and skills development.

Partner programs and organizations are jointly responsible for Wyoming's economic development and collaborate to create a seamless, customer-focused workforce development and One-Stop Delivery System. This integrated service-delivery system enhances access to a variety of educational, training, and workforce programs, all having a common goal of an economically self-sufficient workforce for Wyoming. Five of the six core programs are co-located under the Department as required by WIOA and include the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. Many locations also include other partner programs such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Trade Adjustment Act program (TAA), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, OSHA, Workers' Compensation, and Job Corps. The sixth core program, Adult Education, is administered by the Wyoming Community College Commission and is available virtually, via telephone, and through referrals at the One-Stop Centers. All six core programs and many partner programs make up the One-Stop Delivery System in Wyoming.

DWS has skilled Workforce Specialists located at American Job Centers statewide. These offices provide customers with detailed labor market information necessary to make educated

decisions regarding their educational needs, training opportunities, and career goals. Additionally, a statewide system of resources and referral provides:

- Well-equipped resource rooms at each American Job Center that features computers with resume writing software, various books and videos on resume writing and interviewing, college catalogs, typing and spelling tests, and other resource materials;
- Regularly scheduled cost-free workshops at the American Job Centers for resume writing, interviewing techniques, job seeking tips, online job searching, and more;
- Interest and aptitude assessment tools for career exploration;
- Job training programs that assist with the cost of additional education and job training for individuals who need to obtain or upgrade skills to enter self-sufficient employment;
- Referrals to the Adult Education program for individualized and group instruction in literacy for eligible learners. Areas of study are reading, writing, language, math, and computer skills. English literacy instruction and civics classes are also available for non-English speaking adults and people pursuing U.S. citizenship;
- High School Equivalency Certificate testing centers administered through the Wyoming Community College Commission are responsible for administering high school equivalency tests to youth and adults; and
- Referrals to Wyoming's community colleges, the University of Wyoming, Registered Apprenticeship, and other vocational training programs.

### **Adult and Dislocated Worker programs**

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in conjunction with Wagner-Peyser employment services, are the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career services to meet the diverse needs of adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Under WIOA, adults and dislocated workers may access career and training services. Training is supported via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), composed of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Wyoming also provides enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and customized training.

Three categories of career services are available to adult and dislocated worker customers, which include basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services.

*Basic career services* are available to all individuals in the One-Stop Delivery System and include:

- Eligibility determination of whether an individual meets the program qualifications;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the State's worker profiling and reemployment services for unemployment insurance claimants), and orientation to information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System;
- Initial assessment of literacy and mathematical skill levels including English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and, when appropriate, career counseling, including the provision of information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and information about nontraditional employment opportunities;

- Performance information and program cost information about eligible training services providers by program and type of provider;
- Information on local area performance accountability measures, and additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System;
- Information relating to supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care, child support, medical or child health assistance, benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance, assistance under the State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services provided through those programs;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for training and education programs;
- Information and assistance filing claims under Unemployment Insurance programs; and
- Labor exchange services, which, as the primary services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff, fall under the basic career services mentioned above.

*Individualized career services* are made available when a determination is made that more customized services are needed for an individual to obtain or retain employment. One-Stop Center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. Individualized career services may include:

- Comprehensive, aptitude, and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing, use of other assessment tools, and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve their employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning and case management for ongoing career pathways strategies to enhance the participant's success;
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experience are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical-thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, and ultimately employment;

- Financial literacy services encompass information and activities on topics that include checking accounts, creating a budget, establishing and maintaining credit, and identity theft;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs; and
- Supportive services to assist clients with barriers to job search and training activities to reach employment and/or post-secondary goals.

*Follow-up services* are provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Follow-up services may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional career planning and counseling;
- Contact with the participant's employer, including assistance with work-related problems;
- Peer support groups;
- Information about additional educational opportunities; and
- Referral to supportive services available in the community.

### **Employment status determination**

In addition to providing career and training services to unemployed individuals, a population of job seekers remains who are underemployed. Underemployed individuals may include:

- Individuals employed less than full-time who seek full-time employment;
- Individuals who are employed in positions that are inadequate considering their skills and training;
- Employed individuals who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Sec. 3(36); and
- Individuals who are employed but whose current earnings are insufficient compared to their previous jobs.

Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and are considered a priority population may be eligible to receive career and training services under the Adult Program. Individuals who are eligible for the Dislocated Worker Program and are underemployed may still be considered eligible for career and training services.

### **Training services**

No sequence of service requirements has been established for career services and training; One-Stop Center staff may determine appropriate training regardless of whether or not the individual has received basic or individualized career services first. Training services may be provided if the staff determines, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:



- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the selected program of training services.

Training services, when determined appropriate, are provided through an individual training account or via a training contract. Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region, or in a geographical area to which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. Training services selection is conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, is informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and is coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)).

Individual training accounts are the primary method used for procuring training services. However, in certain circumstances, a contract for training services may be developed instead of an individual training account as explained under WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii); the complete list of exceptions is provided below;

- On-the-job training, which may include placing participants in a Registered Apprenticeship program, customized training, incumbent training, or transitional job (WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5));
- If the State Board determines that an insufficient number of eligible providers of training services are available to use individual training accounts;
- If a training service program of demonstrated effectiveness is offered in a local area by a community-based organization or other private organization;
- If the State Board determines that the most appropriate training could be provided by an institution of higher education to train multiple individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations.; and
- If the State Board determines a pay-for-performance contract is the most effective means of providing training services.

### **Work-based training Registered Apprenticeship**

Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers. Apprenticeship is most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. As Registered Apprenticeship programs, they automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:

- Employers who provide related instruction;
- Employers who use an outside educational provider;

- Joint apprenticeship training programs; and
- Intermediaries.

Additional details of the Registered Apprenticeship Program, including the expansion of registered apprenticeships, will be provided later in this plan.

### **On-the-job training**

On-the-job training continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. Wyoming provides up to 50% of the wage rate of the participant to employers for training costs while the participant is in the program. The expectation is the employer will retain the worker upon training completion.

### **Incumbent worker training**

Incumbent worker training is carried out through Wyoming's Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) program. The American Job Centers promote this program and, in coordination with WDTF staff, refer employers to the application portal after they have registered in the online job-matching system. The program offers training to new and incumbent workers that can help the employer remain competitive in the economy. Wyoming also intends to implement Incumbent Worker Training options for Rapid Response efforts to assist with layoff aversion and rapid reemployment services that complement the WDTF program.

### **Transitional jobs**

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100%. These jobs can be in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, and are offered in combination with comprehensive career and supportive services.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers are tasked with using the Transitional Jobs with targeted groups, such as the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and individuals with disabilities (WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5)).

### **Priority populations**

Wyoming focuses on serving individuals with barriers to employment, defined in WIOA Sec. 3(24), and seeks to ensure access to these populations as a priority. The priority populations are discussed below and in other sections of this plan.

One-Stop Center staff must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are English language learners or Basic Skills Deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. Department of Labor-funded job-training programs, which include WIOA programs. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who have basic skills deficiencies receive top priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds;

- To non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult funds;
- To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups; and
- To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

The definition of dislocated workers has been expanded to include military spouses who have lost employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in the duty station of the spouse. Military spouses may also qualify if they are a dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a call or order to active duty, a permanent change of station, or the service-connected death or disability of the service member. Military spouses can also qualify if they are unemployed or underemployed and are experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment (WIOA Sec. 3(15)(E) and 3(16)(A) and (B)).

Wyoming has established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described above. Those populations are served in the WIOA Adult program.

### **Supportive services and needs-related payments**

Wyoming has established written policies and procedures to ensure coordination with other entities to provide the highest quality, most comprehensive service provision possible while preventing duplication of resources and services; this includes established limits on the amount and duration of these services.

Supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

- Transportation;
- Child and dependent care;
- Licensing and fees;
- Tools, uniforms, and clothing;
- Housing; and/or
- Needs-related payments, which are only available to unemployed individuals enrolled in training services.

### **Coordination with Trade Adjustment Assistance**

Co-enrollment of workers certified eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) with the Dislocated Worker Program allows for the timely provision of individualized career services and improves the effectiveness of the TAA program. Barriers to service delivery are eliminated while capitalizing on all of the resources available in the One-Stop Delivery System. As trade-impacted workers formulate their reemployment plans, if additional career services are required, One-Stop Center staff can coordinate services provided by both programs to maximize the benefits available.

### **Other activities**

As permitted by WIOA, some flexibility is possible when providing services with Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds. In addition to the required career and training services, Wyoming will use funds to provide additional job-seeker services and business services and to

facilitate enhanced coordination between partner programs and entities at state and local levels. These activities include:

#### *Jobseeker services*

- Customer support to enable individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities and veterans) to navigate among multiple services and activities;
- Work support activities for low-wage workers, in coordination with One-Stop Center partners, to provide opportunities for those workers to retain or enhance employment;
- Improved linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance programs;
- Improved coordination between employment and training activities and programs for individuals with disabilities. This includes programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, as well as other activities undertaken by the statewide Independent Living Council, and activities carried out by centers for independent living;
- Training programs for displaced homemakers and individuals training for nontraditional occupations, in conjunction with programs operated in the local area;
- Employment and training activities coordinated with child support enforcement activities of State agencies carrying out part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act; and
- Career services availability that includes local labor market information for maximizing job search, resume and cover letter writing assistance, mock interview preparation and skills, career interests for career pathway exploration, and much more.

#### *Employer services*

- Customized recruitment screening and referral of qualified applicants to employers;
- Customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations;
- Activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce development needs of area employers, as determined by the local area, which includes industry-driven partnerships;
- Coordination of activities for employers for assistance with writing job descriptions, pre-screening applicants, labor market research, and interviewing services, which includes resource rooms;
- Employment and training activities in coordination with cooperative extension programs carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture;
- Employment and training activities coordinated with activities that facilitate remote access to services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System, which includes access through the use of technology;
- Improving coordination between workforce development activities and economic development activities;

- Promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;
- Improving services and links between the local Workforce Development System and employers, including small employers, in local areas; and
- Other Federal agencies supported workforce development initiatives under the departments of Transportation, Energy, Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Health and Human Services, and Defense.

### *Rapid Response*

The Rapid Response Program is designed to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities, which includes layoff aversion services. Wyoming's system may include:

- Information and direct reemployment services for workers, including, but not limited to: Information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and support for filing petitions, information on the impacts of layoffs on health coverage or other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment focused workshops and services, and training services, which includes Adult Education Program activities;
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition provided across the business lifecycle, including comprehensive business engagement. Strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize layoffs are also available;
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating connections, networks, and partners to assist dislocated workers and their families, such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial literacy; and
- Strategic planning, data gathering and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

As mandated by WIOA Sec. 134(a)(2)(A), Rapid Response activities are carried out by the Department of Workforce Services, as designated by the State, in conjunction with local areas and other stakeholders. Wyoming has established a Rapid Response unit to carry out statewide Rapid Response activities and oversee such activities undertaken for affected local areas. Business engagement is emphasized in required outreach for early intervention strategies to assist during various stages of the business cycle. A strategy to carry out Rapid Response activities will be expanded in Wyoming with a new mobile Rapid Response unit. This will enhance business engagement and layoff aversion strategies to strengthen Wyoming's economy.

### **Youth Program**

Wyoming's Youth Program supports an integrated service-delivery system that provides a framework through which DWS can leverage other federal, state, and local resources to support both in-school and out-of-school youth. Partnerships are committed to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with employment along a career pathway. Employers are critical partners who provide meaningful growth opportunities for young people through work experiences, internships, and pre-

apprenticeships in real-world settings, and ultimately, jobs young people are ready to fill if given the opportunity.

### **Recruiting out-of-school youth**

The Department of Workforce Services takes a customized approach when delivering youth services throughout Wyoming. A major goal is to establish partnerships that support the Youth Services Program and continue to strengthen relationships to ensure WIOA program services are effectively provided.

Several methods can be used to reach out-of-school youth; however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be effective. The One-Stop Center staff must be visible in the community and meet youth outside of traditional service delivery locations—parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, emergency food programs, and homeless shelters could assist the One-Stop Centers with recruitment efforts.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will work to enhance partnerships with other State agencies, including the Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and with community partners, high schools, and businesses to increase youth opportunities.

Even with the WIOA focus on serving more out-of-school youth, DWS cannot forget the importance of maintaining positive relationships with the local high schools. Many high schools have Dropout Prevention Counselors, and through this relationship, the WIOA program is available to reach out to those students who may drop out.

The One-Stop Centers will continue to foster relationships with the Job Corps Program. All Job Corps students are considered out-of-school youth. The WIOA Youth program and Job Corps partnership provides many benefits by maximizing the levels of services provided to youth in local communities. Such relationships produce efficiencies and impacts that neither program could produce independently. Additional positive potential outcomes from strengthening the partnership with Job Corps are:

- **Coordinating referrals:** Job Corps are strongly encouraged to refer students to One-Stop Centers and the WIOA Youth program to enhance placement and follow-up activities;
- **Opportunities to continue developing and strengthening linkages for recruitment and placement:** Both the WIOA Youth program and Job Corps are required partners, and local area coordination has begun. The benefit of this partnership is to reach youth who may not currently be served and to reduce recruitment and placement costs through improved cooperation and information sharing. Job Corps and WIOA Youth programs shall co-sponsor hiring or outreach events to reduce the cost and increase the scale of their placement and recruitment efforts; and
- **Promoting information-sharing between programs:** WIOA Youth Committees and Job Corps Workforce Councils can work together to determine how to ensure that local labor market data and other valuable information can be regularly exchanged.

By working together, both the Job Corps and WIOA Youth programs can align education and training with the needs of employers to help youth attain relevant certifications, connect successfully to work, and advance to higher levels of education.

## **Transitioning in-school youth**

Wyoming has fewer resources under WIOA that are devoted to in-school-youth; however, Wyoming has elected to continue to serve this population. The most significant change is that One-Stop Centers do not provide targeted outreach efforts to gain program enrollment for in-school youth. WIOA places heightened emphasis on coordination and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure a streamlined and coordinated service delivery system for all job-seekers, including youth. The staff within the One-Stop Centers are trained to deliver Wagner-Peyser basic career services and collaborate with other core partners, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and to make appropriate referrals.

## **Program elements**

Wyoming will continue to make all program elements available to youth participants by focusing on supporting youth and young adults through an integrated service-delivery system. This vision includes high-quality services for in-school and out-of-school youth, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, and opportunities for skills training, culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education.

The program elements will be included in the development of the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The One-Stop staff members will develop the ISS based on the needs of each youth participant and update the plan as needed. The ISS and the 14-program elements within the participant's plan are a result of the objective assessment.

## **The 14-Program Elements are:**

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to the 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 post-secondary credential;
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences;
4. Occupational Skills Training;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership Development Opportunities;
7. Supportive Services as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(59);
8. Adult Mentoring;
9. Follow-up Services;
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling;
11. Financial Literacy Education;
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training;

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

### **Expanded work experience focus**

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers staff members understand the significance of work experience opportunities. Many work experiences serve as a stepping stone to unsubsidized employment and are an important step in developing a career pathway filled with many career exploration opportunities. WIOA includes a significant focus on providing youth with work experience opportunities, to include a requirement that a minimum of 20% of the funds must be spent on work experience activities.

For young people, work experiences provide an opportunity for career exploration and skill development. Employers are critical partners that provide meaningful growth opportunities for young people. These work experiences allow young people to learn and apply skills in real-world settings that may ultimately lead to jobs.

One-Stop staff, including Workforce Specialists and Business Representatives, will work together to leverage established relationships and strengthen outreach efforts to employers and youth.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the program, an individual must be considered an in-school youth or out-of-school youth.

An in-school youth is an individual who is:

- Attending school;
- Not younger than 14 or older than 21;
- Meets the low-income requirement; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - Basic skills deficient;
  - An English language learner;
  - An offender;
  - A homeless youth or runaway;
  - In foster care or “aged out” of the foster care system;
  - Pregnant or parenting;
  - A young person with a disability;
  - An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (State Barriers), which includes:



- Chronic school absenteeism and truancy,
- Youth in a single-parent family,
- Remoteness (Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less, which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000,
- Limited English proficiency,
- Lacks employability skills (only youth 19–24 years old),
- Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

Eligibility criteria are related to Wyoming’s State barriers for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough In-School Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understand a waiver exception would need to be completed before enrollment.

An out-of-school youth is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school;
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at the time of enrollment; and who has
- One or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recently completed school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - A homeless individual;
  - A runaway;
  - An individual who is in foster care or who has aged out of the foster-care system;
  - A child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 677);
  - An individual who is in an out-of-home placement;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - An individual with a disability;

- A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes the following State barriers:
  - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy;
  - Youth in a single-parent family;
  - Remoteness;
  - Limited English proficiency;
  - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19-24 years old); and/or
  - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

Eligibility criteria are related to Wyoming's State barriers for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop Center staff understands that a waiver exception would need to be completed before enrollment.

#### **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational Rehabilitation seeks to co-enroll and partner with the other WIOA programs for all aspects of employment, from exploration to maintaining employment. VR provides employment-related support to eligible individuals with disabilities services through a highly individualized counseling process. VR seeks to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop successful career pathways that include industry-recognized training and credentials. VR supports individuals wishing to enter employment sectors that require apprenticeship training, and encourages individuals to utilize pre-apprenticeship programs and preparation. In partnering with Title II, VR assists with the assessment of individuals who are presumed to have a disability and assists with testing accommodations and career preparation. Additionally, VR is actively working on employer engagement to help with understanding the value that individuals with disabilities bring to the workforce, ADA law and accommodations, as well as local employer needs to help to develop a diverse workforce.

#### **Title II- Adult Education (AE) Workforce Development Activities**

##### ***Bridge Programs***

Increasing numbers of providers are beginning to offer contextualized bridge programs that align with postsecondary career tracks. However, Bridge programming is not fully recognized by some colleges as an allowable AE activity. Providers are currently addressing this with local postsecondary institutions. Wyoming does not have a full alignment of AE courses with readiness to enter college. Programs still need to work with colleges to either establish or expand programs that train individuals in the occupations most needed by businesses.

##### ***Career Navigators/Career Counselors***

Although career counseling has been an integral aspect of the Adult Education provider's recipe for success for a long time now, in recent years this recipe has begun to change. ARPA funding has allowed for several providers to employ dedicated career navigators who are expected to provide a wide variety of services, including career planning, exploration, and counseling;

educational planning; support to navigate systems; learner skill development; and job placements.

### ***Career Services***

Wyoming's Adult Education centers have integrated basic and individual career services into the delivery of all instructional practices. This typically begins at intake through a front-loaded Career Services course that contains basic and individual career services, outlined in Adult Education's State policy,

### ***Career Pathways***

At the program level, the career pathways system for Adult Education begins with the use of a planning document, aligned to the 13 funding considerations for Adult Education that formulates each provider's strategies for the adoption of career pathways. The overarching purposes of this strategic planning document are:

1. To create and implement a comprehensive Career Pathways Service Delivery Model for Adult Education and to promote the development of innovative, effective, and sustainable career pathways instruction and related services, which may include Integrated Education and Training opportunities, for adult learners with low literacy levels and other significant barriers to employment.
2. To encourage local Adult Education programs and other education providers serving similar demographics to form productive partnerships with each other, and with other agencies, organizations, employers, and workforce development stakeholders that are—or might be—meaningfully engaged with providing education, training, support, employment services, and jobs to adults with low literacy levels and other significant barriers to employment.

At the student level, Wyoming's Adult Education centers utilize a career assessment to help students formulate a career track through the use of individual career maps. These maps have been linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area, region, or in the State. The participant career maps are intended to be a visual representation of the career journey an individual must take to achieve specific career goals. The completion of these maps is done in conjunction with local instructors/staff members who work together using information provided through a career assessment as well as an individual's personal preferences to build a plan that supports career goals.

Because the implementation of the State's revised Career Pathways system was launched in FY 23/24, programmatic plans are yet to be completed. These plans are due in March 2024 and are to be used as planning documents for fiscal year 24/25 and for the Adult Education grant competition scheduled for spring 2025.

As with the program's strategic planning document, student career maps were first used in Fall 2023 and have generally been found to be an effective tool to help participants navigate a career pathway. Undoubtedly, participant career maps will have to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that they remain aligned to most in-demand employment opportunities.

### ***Corrections Education***

Corrections education is provided in jails, prisons, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

### ***High School Equivalency Certificate Completion***

Without a doubt, the heaviest enrollments in AE programs across the State is for a high school equivalency certificate. HiSET and GED are offered statewide as a pathway to complete high school equivalency. A choice of tests is given to the student. Instruction is geared toward College and Career Readiness standards and prepares students for either test.

### ***Integrated Education and Training (IET)***

These educational programs of study are relatively new to the Adult Education programs in Wyoming, but are being launched in more intensity in FY 23/24 and are financially supported through funds appropriated under the American Rescue Plan. IET's are an educational model that combines occupational skills training with adult education services to increase the educational and career advancement of participants. At present, AE programs in the State have active IET's in healthcare and manufacturing.

IET's are very new to Wyoming's Adult Education centers and measures of success are still to be determined in subsequent years. However, through federal funding made available from the American Rescue Act (ARPA) and in collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, the launch of IET's has now occurred in many areas of the State and will hopefully be sustained in coming years.

### ***Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education (IELCE)***

Wyoming has one IELCE program that has struggled over the years to enroll qualified students due primarily to students not completing all requirements. However, as the provider has become more experienced in running the IELCE program, they are seeing increasing numbers of students complete both the IET and the IELCE component to this very unique training program.

IELCE's are very difficult to run in frontier states like Wyoming. Program challenges include lower language abilities of some participants, an inability to obtain transcripts from a participant's native country to enroll in the training component, and the participant's work/family commitments.

### ***Rapid Response***

Through a partnership with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming's Adult Education program has become an active member of the State's Rapid Response System. Adult Education now meets with groups of individuals who have been laid off to let them know of the services Adult Education can provide to them during this very difficult period in their life. Through Rapid Response, the AE program articulates enrollments in literacy programs, workplace literacy skills, digital and financial literacy, as well as Integrated Education and Training programs which are all available at no cost to the affected individual.

### ***Sector Partnerships***

Each Adult Education program participates in, as-needed basis, in a Sector Partnership to help guide WIOA activities for workforce development. However, in some areas of the State these partnerships are no longer active or have been slow to engage all WIOA core partners, inclusive of Adult Education.

### ***Transition Programs***

All programs have the ability to offer a transition class to prepare adults to transition to college and or the workplace. Some programs have developed intensive Bridge programs that provide

intensive skill-based training while embedding employability skills into all curricula. However, there remains a need to enhance communication between some of the community colleges and local providers so that effective referrals can be made when needed.

### ***Work Experience (WEX) Enrollments***

Through a partnership with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services and/or with local employers, AE programs are placing qualified participants into work experience programs that include job shadowing, internships, and (pre)apprenticeships.

### ***Workforce Preparation***

Employability skills (social capital skills), digital literacy and financial literacy are embedded in all AE classes using participatory learning strategies. Qualified AE participants and those needing services from Wyoming Workforce Services register in DWS', HireWyo. Cross-training of core partner staff has occurred, which has helped develop a more comprehensive understanding of core program services. However, there is a need to enhance communication between the WIOA core providers and improve reciprocal referrals so that participants receive comprehensive services needed for success.

## **(B) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) directly above.**

Strengths of workforce development activities include:

- Program diversity to meet complex needs;
- Customized training and services to meet the needs of job seekers and employers;
- Momentum in collaborative efforts;
- Leverage resources in very remote parts of the state and collaborative community relationships;
- Provide support and encouragement to staff;
  - Pull together when others need help;
  - Celebrate positive outcomes or staff achievements;
  - Support learning and growth;
  - Create a family-oriented environment; and
  - Develop good relationships with our most vulnerable populations.

Weaknesses of workforce development activities include:

- A negative image is associated with the workforce system;
  - "Unemployment office;"
  - Do it by law or get a fine;
  - Adult Education is not GED;

- Lack of training:
  - Lack of understanding of other program work from a global perspective;
  - Lack of leadership and supervisory training;
  - Succession planning;
  - Peoples' first language;
  - Comfort working with a diverse client base;
- Bandwidth issues within the One-Stop Centers and often high staff turnover;
- Difficulty convincing adults to take advantage of opportunities to pursue skill-up training and certifications;
- Problems overcoming burdens placed by WIOA on the One-Stop System by the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and the application of a one-size-fits-all law;
- Lack of ability to track and address the needs of a locally- and nationally-growing remote workforce;
  - Currently, no available programs address the unique challenges of this growing sector of the workforce;
  - Difficult for R&P to count and classify the metrics pertaining to this segment of Wyoming's workforce; and
  - Lack of training available to One-Stop staff to assist dislocated or otherwise unemployed workers with identifying opportunities in this marketplace.

### **Strengths & Weaknesses of Adult Education Workforce Development Activities**

Strengths of the Adult Education (AE) workforce development activities include:

- Program services are available at multiple locations throughout the State.
- Strong partnership with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has allowed for the expansion of services and has increased the State's co-enrollment rate between the WIOA core partners
- Hybrid/hyflex Adult Education classes and online proctored high school equivalency tests have increased access to participants in the very remote areas of the State.
- Effective and on-going cross trainings between the WIOA core partners has increased local level collaborations and created a more common understanding of the services provided by the core partners.
- Program diversity and expansion meets the needs of more participants.
- Effective use of referral system to provide participants with wrap around services.
- Online intake form allows participants to enroll in AE programs from any location.
- Increasing number of participants are benefiting from placements into work experience programs.

- Increased access to additional grant funded programs has allowed for the expansion of Adult Education activities.

Weaknesses of AE workforce development activities include:

- Bandwidth issues at outreach locations often prevent effective internet access; thereby limiting online access to some curricula/virtual classrooms.
- Integrated Education and Training programs remain difficult to offer in the very rural areas of the State.
- Funding for professional development remains very low; consequently, there are few funds available to train for such things as career navigation or other provider specific needs.
- Adult Education programs are still viewed, often by the local community colleges, as only a high school equivalency program.
- Stakeholder unfamiliarity with the comprehensive and integrated services offered through WIOA core partnerships, often through the one-stop.
- Reciprocal referrals from WIOA core partners is still very limited and referrals made by Adult Education often lack follow through/up; thereby resulting in local providers not knowing if the referral was successful.
- The transition of the HiSET examination to PSI has created and continues to create obstacles to successful high school equivalency completions, particularly for paper-based examinations.
- The core partners do not always share the same terminology. This makes it difficult to write grants, contracts, etc.
- Continued funding for IET's and career counselor/navigator positions may not be available once ARPA grants are depleted.

Wyoming 's Adult Education programs have a very unique intake and orientation process entitled 'Career Services'. This front-loaded course introduces students to postsecondary education requirements for enrollment and successful completion while providing them with the tools they need to be successful on the job. Participants complete a career exploration component with the integration of digital literacy and soft skills training. All providers have integrated basic academic and employability skills into instruction, including critical thinking skills, digital literacy, and self-management. Activities include competencies in using resources, integrating information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

AE centers have been proactive in determining the approach taken to train local staff in educational standards and the implementation of career pathways. Local program staff have been trained on how to implement the College and Career Readiness standards in classrooms as well as how to begin planning for an integrated career pathways system. With the completed training, local providers regularly utilize standards-aligned contextualized instruction, when applicable, and are in the process of developing site-specific career pathways models that will be unique to each area of the State. A Standards in Action checklist is also used in all local programs as an evaluation tool to measure how effectively the standards are implemented.

Local providers are developing integrated education and training models and/or pre-apprenticeships for the most in-demand industries in various regions around the State in conjunction with assistance from the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

All AE providers have completed a recertification process in PowerPath that incorporates a five-step process from engagement to instruction, with steps that work together to build personal insight into the understanding and practice of overcoming personal challenges. This recertification allows AE instructors to easily identify learning challenges that some participants may face and offer tools to help them overcome difficulties that may prevent them from being successful in the workforce. Instructors have also recertified in Participatory Learning, particularly for use in virtual classrooms. This specialized training and recertification process was delivered by a nationally recognized trainer but in subsequent years, this training will be delivered by a State committee that is currently being trained on how to deliver the curricula for this specialized certification process.

Innovations by the core partners have been inspired by cooperative planning processes through Next Generation Sector Partnerships, employers, and other stakeholders. These innovations have directly resulted from significant changes and realignments over the past couple of years. Changes in the economy are causing unemployed adults to need up-skilling, larger numbers of immigrants residing in the State, the significant achievement gap of minority students in reading and math, and the non-completers from high schools. The workforce is changing, and new technologies now require higher skill sets. The State is making substantial strides in attempting to upscale and educate Wyoming residents to address future workforce needs. In-state initiatives demonstrate the State's efforts to upscale educational efforts and train the population.

1. **Next Generation Sector Partnerships:** The Wyoming Workforce Development Council entered into an agreement to incorporate Next Generation Sector Partnership projects around the State in an effort to grow critical economic sectors and to form an alignment among many education, workforce training, economic development, and government partners;
2. **Educational Attainment Initiative:** The EAI aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable postsecondary credential to 67% by 2025; and
3. **Perkins V:** Perkins V represents an important opportunity to expand opportunities for every student to explore, choose, and follow career and technical education programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials of value (federal program).
4. **Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Training Fund:**
  - Business Training Grant connects employers with professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment;
  - Pre-hire grants focus on creating a trained workforce for a specific Wyoming industry;
  - Pre-obligation grants set-aside funds for large relocation or expansion projects for Wyoming businesses;
  - Apprenticeship grants provide funding to develop industry-specific workforce businesses / industries with a shortage of skilled workers; and



- Internship grants provide Wyoming businesses the opportunity to offer structured learning experiences to individuals through internships that enhance an individual's work skills, knowledge and abilities.

WIOA defines 'youth' as a person who is 16–24 years of age. The One-Stop Centers collaborate with the Adult Education Centers to provide opportunities for intensive instruction for the HSEC, career explorations, integrated education and training, English as a Second Language, transitions to college, and job readiness skills. Additional services within the 14-Program Elements may be offered based on the youth participant's needs. Services are offered through established programs in the more densely populated areas of the state and include BOOST, SCOPE, A.S.P.I.R.E, R.Y.S.E., Adulting 101, Leading Youth Forward Everyday (LYFE) programs, and various other 'youth' programs. Youth programs have been expanded and are now available in all areas of the State. Adult Education centers provide academic services (tutoring, soft skills, career services, and classroom instruction) to help WIOA youth participants:

- complete a career services course
- identify possible career tracks through the use of individualized career maps
- develop the skills necessary to successfully enter the workforce and/or transition to postsecondary
- enroll in Integrated Education and Training programs to earn an industry recognized credential and/or participate in a work experience where on the job skills are learned
- obtain a high school equivalency certificate

With WIOA, stipends are an allowable payment for youth participation in classroom activities and other planned activities. A stipend is usually a set amount given for participation in an activity. This compensation can be given out in equal payments over a defined period. The case file must contain documentation of the activity or goal that must be achieved to result in a stipend.

The WIOA program also allows incentive payments to youth participants for recognition and achievement directly tied to the educational activity. For example, if the participant meets a specific benchmark on testing or the participant obtains the HSEC, an incentive can be paid if an agreement is in place.

In recent years, there has been significant progress made in reversing Wyoming's downward trend in high school graduation rates. Statistics released from the Wyoming Department of Education indicate an 81.8% graduation rate for FY 21/22. Although it would seem logical to assume that this increasing graduation rate should correlate to lower enrollments in Adult Education, this is not the case in Wyoming. Several years ago, Wyoming's Adult Education programs were proactive and began diversifying program offerings to include a more robust series of courses, inclusive of training programs, transitions to college, and other bridge type programming needed for individuals to successfully enter the workforce. Consequently, enrollments in Adult Education are experiencing increasing numbers.

Training means 'education,' and many of the participants served by core partners lack the funds to complete a training program and/or postsecondary education. Wyoming has approached this challenge in multiple directions so that the needs of a wide range of students can be met.

1. **Wyoming's Hathaway Scholarships** are designed to provide an incentive for Wyoming students to prepare for and pursue postsecondary education within the state. The

program offers four merit scholarships, each with specific eligibility requirements. A need-based scholarship supplements merit awards for eligible students. This program is a strong state effort to increase educational attainment while investing in long-term economic diversification. The Wyoming Department of Education administers the Hathaway Scholarship Program.

2. In 2019, the Wyoming State legislature passed a bill to allocate \$5 million in grant funds to the **Wyoming Works** program. Grant funds can be used by qualified adult students to pay for training that leads to better jobs and wages in the state. The program makes available individual grants for students enrolling in approved programs at a Wyoming community college. It also provides a mechanism for colleges to apply for resources that could support the creation of high-demand programs.
3. **The Wyoming Community Colleges** have formed strong partnerships with local high schools to offer dual and concurrent enrollment to students who intend to pursue education/training beyond the secondary level. Although enrollments in postsecondary education saw substantial reductions in numbers during COVID, numbers are rebounding as an increasing number of individuals seek employment related credentials. Non-traditional, concurrently enrolled students at some of Wyoming's community colleges are, in some instances, qualifying for federal financial aid under the 'Ability to Benefit' clause.

Qualified students on a career track are able to complete a course of study in Adult Education while concurrently enrolling in CTE programs of study at the community colleges. To fund this type of program, some community colleges have created five or six credit tuition scholarship programs to help ease the financial burden. In other instances, DWS and/or DVR is able to provide financial assistance to fund the initial six-credit Perkins 'Ability to Benefit' clause requirement. The Wyoming Community College Commission has provided clear guidance to both the community colleges as well as to local AE centers on how the 'Ability to Benefit' clause could be utilized in Wyoming to ensure that Adult Education students have the means to apply for federal financial aid to attend postsecondary education while concurrently enrolled in Adult Education.

4. **Veteran Tuition Benefit:** Under Wyoming Statute 19-14-106 this program provides veterans tuition benefits in the form of free tuition and fees for overseas combat veterans, surviving spouses and dependents.
5. **WyIn Investment in Nursing:** One of the most in-demand industries in Wyoming is for qualified individuals trained in healthcare. This program offers scholarship opportunities to individuals along a career pathways track for nursing at any postsecondary institution in Wyoming.
6. **Ellbogen Scholarship Opportunity:** In an effort to train adults aged 24 years of age and older this program provides scholarship funds to help adult learners access the job training and education needed to find or advance their careers, particularly for the most in-demand industries in Wyoming.
7. **Kickstart Wyoming Tomorrow Scholarship:** This newly funded state scholarship program offers adults 24 years of age or older with funding needed to pursue a degree or certificate at any postsecondary institution in Wyoming.

According to the Advance CTE network (January, 2024), there are some 12.3 million students in the country enrolled in CTE programs. In Wyoming, this equates to 16,707 secondary school

enrollments and 3,629 postsecondary graduates. When the State launched the Next Generation Sector Partnerships, a more intense focus on realigning curriculums at both the high school and adult education classroom levels was developed. Adult Education classrooms address needs identified by both employers and by Next Generation Sector Partnerships, as applicable.

Adult Education has also begun to offer Integrated Education and Training models that combine adult education and literacy with workforce preparation and training, “each of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available, especially with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals” that “occur simultaneously,” “use occupationally relevant instructional materials,” and are “organized to function cooperatively” with “a single set of learning outcomes” (34 C.F.R. § 463.37). IET represents a broad spectrum of services to build foundational, employability, and occupational skills. Some adult education providers have discovered the power of IET and, through a variety of partnerships, have implemented this strategy in model programs that include Bridge Programs; Workplace Learning Programs; Pre-Apprenticeship Programs; Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education Programs; Corrections Education Programs; Postsecondary Education Programs; and Out-of-School Youth Programs.

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

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) and its State partners acknowledge the importance of aligning a wide range of publicly and privately funded education, employment, and training programs while providing high-quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses through the One-Stop Delivery System. Strategically bringing key partners to the table is creating a job-driven workforce development and service-delivery system that results in linking Wyoming’s diverse talent pool with specific employer and business needs. The One-Stop Centers continue to be valuable community resources and an important source of assistance for individuals looking for work, including WIOA core partner target populations or incumbent workers looking for opportunities to advance their careers. Key stakeholders and partners are continually working toward aligning workforce, education, and economic development with regional in-demand jobs. This reinforces the partnerships and strategies One-Stop Centers provide to unemployed job seekers and workers who are underemployed with high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services to obtain and retain good jobs. The One-Stop Centers also help businesses find skilled workers and retain workers by providing ongoing education and training opportunities to upgrade worker skills. The Operational Section of this plan addresses more specific activities.

Through increased collaboration and partnership, Wyoming’s WIOA core partners have begun to break down traditional beliefs and are working hand in hand to create increased opportunities to help businesses and workers obtain the education and training needed to fill occupations in the most in-demand industries in the State and in the U.S.A.

## B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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

## 1. VISION

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

## 2. GOALS

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

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

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

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

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

## 3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

## 4. ASSESSMENT

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

### 1. Vision

**Vision:** We envision a Wyoming where every employee and job seeker has an opportunity to secure purposeful and rewarding work and where employers can access a prepared workforce to help grow the state's economy.

**Mission:** To take a lead role in supporting a workforce system that meets the current and future needs of Wyoming.

### 2. Goals

**Goal #1:** Invent an Image

Enhance brand perception and awareness. The goal is not to have the America's Job Centers known practically by members of the community as unemployment offices but as reemployment offices. In addition to changing the perception of the community, the image needs to change the perceptions of business as the first place to receive assistance in finding qualified and skilled workers. The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is working to brand itself as a resource for all businesses.

The WWDC through their work with sector partnerships will continue to receive feedback from employers in their workforce needs.

**Goal #2: Drive Collaboration with Partners**

Each WWDC meeting will showcase both internal DWS/America's Job Centers and external agencies/statewide efforts that will impact our various subpopulations like Wyoming's Tomorrow, Apprenticeships, childcare, housing, and Wyoming Innovation Partnership.

Strengthen the "no wrong door" approach by developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies and the services they provide.

Establish a glossary of terms to have the different programs/agencies speaking the same language. This will drive continuity of services to the clients served by the programs/agencies and increase dual enrollments.

The Department of Workforce Services will work closely with local areas to strengthen existing working relationships and establish new relationships for greater utilization of resources. DWS is looking to strengthen its partnership with local employers to provide better employer service delivery and to foster increased employer participation.

**Goal #3: Enhance Access to Our Services**

Wyoming's new MIS, HireWyo, provides a customized resource for employers and job seekers to meet the needs of job posting, recruitment, skill evaluation, job searching, resume posting, skills training, and a variety of additional services. The HireWyo system replaces the WyomingAtWork system and will provide a more user-friendly interface, mobile device functionality, enhanced resume building, and targeted job matching capabilities. The new MIS, coupled with the Workforce Center staff, provides tailored support to the diverse job seekers and employers within Wyoming. Case managers are experts in available community services and provide outside referrals and recommendations for additional support and services whenever possible. DWS strives to provide customized support for individuals within the Veteran population by ensuring that Veteran staff are up to date on the most relevant training and operating procedures. DWS is also looking to identify further community partnerships for providing Veteran specific services.

**Goal #4: Engage in Community Outreach**

Expand outreach.

The Department of Workforce Services has identified a need to strengthen our public outreach and communication. Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic DWS is also increasing our public outreach by hosting additional job fairs and recruitment events throughout the state. The Department of Workforce Services is continually looking for community partners and organizations to work with by utilizing our Case Managers and Business Representative staff to form working connections. The Department of Workforce Services has begun to strengthen internal communication by building up internal policy and procedure as well as utilizing

technology solutions, such as virtual job fairs, meetings and reporting forms, for bridging communication gaps.

DWS and WWDC are utilizing Gov Delivery to reach the public regarding workforce related information. GovDelivery is a web-based email subscription management system that allows members of the public to subscribe to news and information on [wyo.gov](http://wyo.gov) websites. The GovDelivery user selects specific topics that interest them. Whenever information on that topic is made available by state of Wyoming agencies, the user that has subscribed to that topic receives an email. The user's subscription profile consists of their email address and the topics they wish to receive email updates for.

DWS and WWDC have also launched the Wyoming Talent Transition Project. The Wyoming Talent Transition Project is a targeted marketing outreach campaign aimed at encouraging a larger flow of adults seeking career changes toward growing occupations and industries, to include healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and hospitality and tourism throughout Wyoming. Next Generation Partnerships have worked hard to identify key growing industries, collaborate in the development of new education and training programs, and in building strong connections with Wyoming's workforce and education systems. This project takes that a step further and highlights the ability of Wyoming's state government and local institutions to work together with the private sector to advance economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

There are a total of 18 One-Stop Centers throughout the state of Wyoming. The Center Managers at the One-Stop Centers are assigned to a county(s), in which they are responsible for providing outreach efforts. This approach ensures that all communities in Wyoming receive information about the services provided through the One Stop system.

The One-Stop Centers provide a wide range of statewide outreach activities designed to engage Wyoming job seekers and businesses. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Attend community events (local fairs, participate in parades, attend community gatherings). By participating in these activities DWS is able to utilize multiple locations as a venue for outreach and enrollment events.
- Set up recruitment and informational display tables to distribute information in locations such as, libraries and local businesses. Many local businesses allow DWS staff members to also join their planned events.
- Engage community leaders and partners throughout the state to spread the word about the services provided to job seekers and businesses.
- Participate and host in-person and virtual job/career fairs (Workforce Wednesdays), rapid response events, and informational sessions (town halls).
- Conduct formal presentations within the communities
- Utilize the One-Stop Center Resource Rooms to promote and display services provided.
- Utilize email as an effective medium for disseminating information to participants, businesses, and potential partners.
- Distribute uniformed promotional materials such as brochures, and pamphlets, that are now being utilized within all 18 One-Stop Centers.

- The RESEA Program at DWS is utilizing podcast interviews as a platform to provide interactive content targeted at a specific audience.
- Utilize social media accounts to raise program awareness and strengthen community ties.

With Wyoming being a very rural state the One-Stop Centers have learned the importance of being innovative with our outreach efforts. Here are some examples of how the One-Stop Centers are educating vast locations:

- DWS is meeting individuals and employers where they are and having “office hours” in various locations throughout the state. This approach puts staff members in the community and does not require services to be provided only in the brick and mortar locations.
- DWS is building and maintaining partnerships with other organizations that share similar goals and values. This partnership-based outreach has allowed us to collaborate with other local, regional, or national groups/agencies that can provide support, expertise, or resources to Wyoming communities.
- DWS is utilizing technology to provide virtual services. This includes virtual job/career fairs and informational sessions.
- DWS is using digital outreach methods (social media, email, podcasts)

### **3. Performance Goals**

See Performance Indicator Appendix below.

### **4. Assessment**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council will continue to use the Labor Market Information/ Research & Planning Division data extracted from the MIS, and other data management systems to ensure that the core programs are meeting the goals described in above. Such reports shall be presented to the Council for review and continual assessment for future growth and improvement to program areas. By utilizing assessment results the Department of Workforce Services can target weak areas for additional training to further staff competence and ultimate delivery of program services.

## **C. STATE STRATEGY**

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

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

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

(1) The State and the WWDC the Next Generation Sector Partnerships (NGSP) approach to assist with the implementation and mobilization of community partnerships and targeted industry participation. Next Generation Sector Partnerships is a proven model that brings industry, education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations together to address the needs of a targeted industry. This has been Wyoming's model for 6 years and will continue to be for this plan. In 2023 the WWDC put out an RFP for a sector partnership model and Next Generation Sector Partnerships was selected again. The WWDC contracts with Collaborative Economics to facilitate the model and work with industry to grow partnerships around the state. This industry-driven community-supported approach works on needed solutions and interventions to keep industry strong and build employment opportunities for clients. Wyoming continues to work with community partners and industry and has launch 3 new partnerships in 2023 and first part of 2024. These partnerships are in in-demand industries as identified in the economic analysis. The industries are manufacturing, construction/trades, healthcare, and hospitality/tourism.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services collaborates internally with the Wyoming Workforce Development Training Fund and Apprenticeship Expansion efforts to grow and expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs across the state of Wyoming. By collaborating with these programs additional funding is available for Wyoming-based Registered Apprenticeship Programs for two key components the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) and On The Job Learning (OJL).

Areas of key focus are the preferred industries outlined by the WWDC and those industries include, Constructions, Finance and Insurance, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Technology, and Hospitality, and Tourism. Other areas of focus for the Apprenticeship Expansion and the Workforce Development Training Fund are Energy and Education.

WWDC and DWS have created the In-Demand Occupation list with the assistance of the Research and Planning team. This list is created and updated annually with employment data to address the industry needs for Wyoming and to focus our training efforts towards those in growing occupations. This is a tool for the One-Stop system to focus career counseling for our youth, adults and dislocated workers.

Wyoming has just recently launched a talent transition initiative through the use of ARPA funds to reach out to Wyoming's unemployed and underemployed individuals. The initiative will create a library of career exploration videos featuring businesses and their employees on the occupations available in Wyoming's growing industries. This initiative will also work to create clear career pathways and skills needed for these occupations. Employers in the represented industries of manufacturing, construction/trades, healthcare, and hospitality/tourism will be able to use these videos/library for their recruiting needs. All the core partners and required partners will be able to use the video/library for career counseling and career exploration for youth and job seekers.



In support of these efforts towards career pathways alignments for the most in-demand industries in the State, the Title II programs have launched a two-step comprehensive career pathways effort. At the participant level, participants complete a career map to identify the steps a participant will need to take to complete a career/educational related goal. At the program level, each Title II program is required to maintain a career pathways strategic plan that is to be updated on a yearly basis as the program responds to industry and/or Statewide goals.

To ensure appropriate support for veterans through the JVSG program, Wyoming's JVSG staff are integrated into the one-stop network. JVSG staff receive referrals from other staff when a veteran may qualify for services under the JVSG. Being a part of the overall one-stop team, this allows for warm-handoffs between staff which helps to ensure the SBE veterans get the help they need.

**(2)** The WWDC is provided feedback from each of the core programs by members at each quarterly meeting. In addition, core programs provide policy and monitoring updates to the WWDC as needed. The WWDC is committed to the strategic visions and goals outlined in this plan. Each of the core programs will give an update on the progress of attaining the goals at the WWDC's quarterly meeting.

The state and WWDC continue to work on the "no wrong door" approach for all core and partner programs. The WWDC added to their strategic plan that the program will work together to create a crosswalk of common terms so that all the programs can "speak the same language". This is the first step in creating systems that allow participants to receive referrals and other customer service no matter what door a participant walks through. This is also a need as not having the same terminology makes it difficult to write grants, contracts, etc. In addition to creating this crosswalk the core programs (Title I, Title II, and Title IV) meet monthly to work on their referral process to make sure clients have access to the services they need.

One of the greatest challenges for the core programs is the public's perception that they are the unemployment office or GED office. The State and the WWDC are embarking on efforts to research what is working in our communities and what best practices need to be shared throughout the state to increase outreach and awareness of our services for both employers and job seekers. The new MIS system, HireWYO, will also be integral in changing perception. The new system is designed to be more user-friendly for all users. There are additional career exploration and pathway tools that will be coming too to the new MIS user. Title III makes all these tools available to all the core and partner programs.

Through the One-Stop System, Wyoming continues integrating services for youth and adults with and without barriers to ensure all Wyomingites are provided with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve gainful meaningful employment. Wyoming's partners within workforce development, education, and employment will continue to integrate wrap-around services that include access to basic literacy, post-secondary education, career, technical education, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities.

The partners will continue to request feedback from employers, use data to identify skill gaps for training purposes, recruit and retain Wyoming's talent, and develop strategies detailed in the Next Generation Sector Partnership model to ensure employer needs are met while helping to expand and diversify Wyoming's economy. Next Generation Sector Partnerships have been instrumental in assisting to break down silos. The talent transition initiative concept came from the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and those partnerships will work with the WWDC and DWS to create career exploration videos and career pathways for those occupations. DWS also

sends out annual customer service surveys which include job seekers and employers. Feedback from these surveys has resulted in DWS providing a virtual training series for employers regarding training they requested and programs offered through DWS.

Staff cross-training continues as a priority focus for the WWDC, including Council staff, by coordinating various training modalities to support continuous learning in the workforce system. Examples of internal professional development training include new employee training that is coordinated in conjunction with the DWS HR team, WIOA 101 training, Case Management, and Case Note training. Other external professional development training is offered, including: Leadership training (Dare to Lead), Case Management, Coaching, and Motivational Interviewing for staff development to support the goals of the State. The WWDC also received regular training on core and partner programs as well as board training provided to all of the Governor's boards and commissions.

Title II has also begun working directly with a local employer in Jackson to offer on-site ESL instruction to individuals. This workplace literacy program is the first of its kind in Wyoming and we hope to expand this type of training to other employers when possible.

Adult education providers are required through grant (re)applications to align local programming to many of the aforementioned strategies so that the goals established by the State Board can be successfully implemented and achieved.

As Wyoming's Adult Education programs move forward with the development and/or advancement of Integrated Education and Training programs, partnerships are critical to this endeavor. One primary objective in building/expanding these IET programs is Wyoming is successfully engaging and collaborating with industry so that:

- 1) Industry needs are identified and met, whenever possible
- 2) Curriculum and instruction can be developed around industry needs, and so that
- 3) Participants involved in an IET obtain the training/credentials needed to fill the in-demand employment sectors in the State

Effective partnerships are also critical to the system of referrals currently in place. Upon entry into Adult Education, local instructors, career navigators, or other program staff provide the guidance needed to assist the participant in identification of barriers which may impede participant success, such as lack of childcare, transportation, etc. Once identified, Adult Education staff make a referral to an appropriate agency to ensure that complete wrap-around services are provided to the participant. At present, most referrals are completed through direct linkage, but the State has plans to create a master Google document whereby co-enrolled participant information on referrals made and acted upon can be viewed by Adult Education staff as well as local Workforce case managers. In addition, at some Adult Education sites, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services holds regular onsite office hours so that the needs of enrolled participants can be met. Local community service providers as well as core partners also make presentations to newly enrolled participants so that Title I, III, and IV services can be made known to participants.

Title I, II, and III have successfully implemented co-enrollment strategies which has resulted in a dramatic increase of participants who are receiving joint services from the core partners. This process began and continues with extensive cross training between the Wyoming Dept. of Workforce Services and local Adult Education providers. Quarterly Meet & Greets, held virtually, provide the opportunity to cross train, but more importantly are ways in which successful local strategies can be highlighted and best practices disseminated. Noted challenges brought up in

these meetings are also addressed through local monthly meetings whenever necessary. These three Title programs have also formed collaborative relationships whereby localized contracts for Title I: Youth programs have been developed/strengthened. In addition, recent ARPA grant funds have provided yet another avenue to increase co-enrollments as participants involved in these grants are 'all' co-enrolled with Title III. At present, the WIOA core partners in the one-stop system are planning to extend these co-enrollments activities to include Title IV as well.

Partner programs, inclusive of the core partners, work to avoid the duplication of services whereby co-enrolled participant information is shared at the local level. Aggregate state level data is also shared in the form of a quarterly report to the Wyoming Dept. of Workforce Services. This report details co-enrolled participant progress made in measurable skill gains, employment outcomes, credentials earned, participation in Integrated Education and Training programs/work experience programs, student successes as well as other notable achievements/challenges.

Increased access to Adult Education services was expanded a great deal during the epidemic. Programs began to utilize virtual learning classrooms that utilized hyflex concepts so that participants even in the most remote regions of the State could have access to instruction. These modified classrooms remain the norm at most Adult Education centers throughout the State. However, it should also be noted that at some centers the use of hyflex classes has not been as effective due to a lack of infrastructure and/or technological challenges.

Wyoming's Adult Education programs have launched a multi-tiered career pathways system. At the participant level, Adult Education students are required to complete a career exploration component that requires the completion of a career map. These career maps have been designed and aligned around the most in-demand industries in the State and require that students identify the 'steps' they need to take to reach their ultimate career goal. Once completed, these maps are shared between the core partners for all co-enrolled students. At the program level, each program is required to complete a Career Pathways Strategic Planning document that outlines 14 steps the program is taking (will take) to launch, expand, and sustain a career pathways network for their region of the State.

#### Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation

VR's approach to Career Pathways is in alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), there is an integration of educational instruction, workforce development, and vocational supports that are linked to labor market trends and business needs leading to stackable credentials. WIOA defines Career Pathways as a combination of rigorous and high quality education, training, and other services that:

- Align with the skill needs of industries in the regional economy involved;
- Prepare an individual to be successful in a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options;
- Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving their education and career goals;
- Provide education and training to accelerate the individual's educational and career advancement;
- Includes education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupational cluster;

- Enables an individual to gain at least one recognized postsecondary credential;
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupational cluster.

Career pathways are designed to address the labor markets' supply and demand needs. Many of the skills needed require formal training due to the nature of the work (i.e. licensure for state compliance, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and other credentialing requirements). Some sectors are growing exponentially which can create a deficit in the pool of qualified applicants for jobs requiring very specific skill sets. Career Pathways approaches are targeted strategies based on the labor market and therefore designed specifically to address gaps for skilled workers by promoting and creating training that meet those demands.

Obtaining a job is the first step in financial independence for individuals with disabilities; however, in most cases, those are entry-level jobs at minimum wage with limited or no benefits. With VR, the goal is to support individuals with disabilities to gain self-sufficiency and improve their quality of life. Career Pathways approaches are designed with this goal as the primary objective. With the emphasis on career pathways approaches and partnerships between workforce partners under WIOA, job seekers with disabilities benefit at multiple levels. VR can advocate to make sure people with disabilities have access to certified trainings in industries with quality jobs and high growth potential. VR provides career development guidance and assistance in mapping out career pathways that build on their existing interests and skills and match them to job opportunities that offer the potential for upward mobility with the needed credentials to advance. Additionally, VR can assist workforce training programs career pathways training costs.

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

#### A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### 1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

The Governor has provided the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) duties in Executive Order 2015-5 to include the provisions of WIOA, which includes:

- Enhancing workforce development activities that help sustain and diversify Wyoming's economy as further defined through the Governor's Vision & Goals;
- Establishing and implementing a strategic plan (not less than once every four years);
- Developing and adopting operating rules; and
- Creating and monitoring an annual budget.

The Board has identified one staff member, the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Liaison to the WWDC, to coordinate its activities on a monthly, quarterly, and as-needed basis. The DWS Liaison will collaborate with the Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Program Strategy Team, and the One-Stop operator to ensure the continuity and seamless operations of the One-Stop System.

The Board utilizes several committees to make policy recommendations before those decisions come before the full board:

- Strategic Performance and Finance Committee
- Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee
- Communications and Community Relations Committee

Each committee consists of a Chairperson and Board members appointed by the Board Chairperson. Committees meet in months in which there is not a quarterly meeting of the Board. Quarterly Board meetings and monthly committee meetings are held using Robert's Rules of Order to assist with effective meetings. DWS staff members develop and implement workplans that operationalize the required functions of the state board and regularly bring relevant items to the Liaison to the WWDC in order for them to be presented to the appropriate committee and then the full board. Information is communicated to the public through press releases, social media, and regular updates to the WWDC's website ([wyowdc.wyo.gov](http://wyowdc.wyo.gov)).

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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

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

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

#### **Goal #1: Invent an Image**

##### ***Strategies:***

- Develop key messaging regarding the Workforce Development Council, America's Job Centers, and WIOA.
- Drive more effective relationships in the workforce centers and consider rebranding/positioning workforce centers
- Identify ways to support business/business representatives and build relationships.
- Build council member's training/expectations/orientations processes to help develop effective members.

#### **Goal #2: Drive Collaborations with Partnerships**

**Strategies:**

- Streamline terminology across all partner programs and partner agencies.
- Each WWDC meeting, conduct a showcase of both internal DWS/Workforce Centers and external agencies/statewide efforts that will impact our various subpopulations like Wyoming's Tomorrow, Apprenticeship, or childcare; Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan emphasizing increased communication among One-Stop partners;
- Strengthen the "no wrong door" approach by developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies and the services they provide.
- Promote Integrated Education and Training (IET) initiatives to employers and other relevant stakeholders
- Engage high school representatives, tribal leaders, Job Corps, and other entities with high-risk populations for the completion of high school equivalency programs of study
- Encourage and support collaborations with community service providers, inclusive of Wyoming's Community Colleges to leverage local resources and support integrated service delivery.
- Implement strategies to increase co-enrollments between the WIOA core partners.
- DVR will participate in the building of cross-program knowledge for all Wyoming Workforce Center staff. This will allow all staff for DVR and our partner programs to have a better understanding of programs and services available and help ensure that there is a unified delivery of services for all populations across all Workforce Center locations.
- Central office DVR staff continue to participate in all agency leadership meetings to gather and share information on programs.
- DVR will continue to emphasize co-enrolling eligible participants in an effort to collaborate with partner agencies to provide increased opportunities for training and credentials.
- DVR staff will make contact at least once a quarter with the local ABE agency in their communities to discuss how DVR can assist with training and credentials for eligible participants.

**Goal #3: Enhance Access to Services****Strategies:**

- Ensure the new MIS system will meet user needs
- Research, purchase, and install kiosks (likely tablet form) across the state for better remote access to services.
- Create and implement a plan to improve access to services in remote locations
- Utilize follow-up surveys to measure success of initiatives

- Core partners co-present applicable career services to qualified individuals to reduce duplication of services
- Implement a unified career pathways system that aligns workforce, education and economic development to address the most in-demand jobs in the State.
- Utilize technology and data to enhance the accessibility and outcomes of Wyoming's workforce system

#### **Goal #4: Engage in Community Outreach**

##### ***Strategies:***

- Research best practices/methods for engagement/outreach.
- Seek funding from WWDC for engagement/outreach opportunities, determine measurable outcomes that are best practices in the state..
- Evaluate processes on measurable outcomes, request funding for any additional engagement/outreach opportunities.
- Expand access to core partner services through virtual means so that individuals in the most remote areas of the State have access

The Core Programs will continue to work within the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model and participate in WWDC activities to assist with leveraging resources to increase educational access. In the fall of 2017, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (Wyoming's state workforce investment board) embarked on the implementation of an industry partnership model called Next Generation Sector Partnerships with the support of key state agencies represented on the Workforce Development Council. These agencies include the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Wyoming Business Council (WBC), the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), and the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC). Successes of the Partnerships include increased collaboration between employers, K-12, Community Colleges, community partners, and the WIOA Core Programs.

Under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), state workforce investment boards are charged with convening industry workgroups to bring targeted sectors to the table to work as a group to address industry talent needs. Industry partnerships have been implemented in Wyoming and throughout the country for years with varying degrees of success.

Next Generation Sector Partnerships are partnerships of businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the targeted industry's workforce and other competitiveness needs. This sustainable model enables business leaders to define and champion their own growth and competitiveness agenda, with government partners providing support in response to industry priorities at the regional level.

In 2023 the WWDC put out an RFP for sector partnership models to see if there were other methods in the county that would work better for Wyoming. The WWDC has decided to continue its work with the national Next Generation Sector Partnership team, a group that has helped regions in more than 20 states launch more than 100 partnerships since 2010. Wyoming currently boasts seven partnerships in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and hospitality and tourism, with new partnerships under discussion in the regions.

## B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

### **Wyoming Workforce Development Council**

The WWDC is the State Workforce Investment Board for Wyoming. All DWS programs are coordinated with the WWDC while focusing on target populations.

### **Next Generation Sector Partnerships**

The Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative has brought together industry, registered apprenticeships, education, training, and other partners to establish long-term sustainable relationships between industry and local and regional government partners to address the short- and long-term employment needs of industry. Next Generation Sector Partnerships are industry-led, which means businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region are invited to work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. Wyoming launched the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative in late spring/early summer of 2018. Each regional partnership has reported wins to include new programming at the community colleges, dual enrollment programs, closer collaboration between K-12, community colleges, businesses, and the workforce centers.

### **Talent Transition**

DWS and WWDC have also launched the Wyoming Talent Transition Project. The Wyoming Talent Transition Project is a targeted marketing outreach campaign aimed at encouraging a larger flow of adults seeking career changes toward growing occupations and industries, to include healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and hospitality and tourism throughout Wyoming. Next Generation Partnerships have worked hard to identify key growing industries, collaborate in the development of new education and training programs, and in building strong connections with Wyoming's workforce and education systems. This project takes that a step further and highlights the ability of Wyoming's state government and local institutions to work together with the private sector to advance economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

Progress is being assessed by evaluating the following:

- Increase the number of people in filled positions
- Increase the number of people in new career training
- Decrease the number of unfilled vacancies

### **Other Partners**

In addition to the core and required partners, DWS collaborates and aligns activities with other state partners that include, but are not limited to:



- **Goodwill Wyoming**– serves the Senior Community Service Employment Program to help older workers obtain unsubsidized employment;
- **Educational Attainment Initiative (EAI)**: aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable post-secondary credential to 67% by 2025;
- **Job Corps** – helps individuals who cannot find and/or maintain employment, youth who did not achieve success in high school, or young people who can't afford college. Job Corps serves individuals ages 16—24 by providing education and training opportunities. DWS and Job Corps work together to offer education programs for youth and young adults, with the purpose of obtaining a high school diploma, High School Equivalency Certificate (HSEC), and technical skills, while preparing for employment;
- **Local School District and Secondary Schools** – serve program-eligible youth, including transition services to eligible students with disabilities, and others in need through the 48 school districts that govern secondary schools, including alternative schools for at-risk youth;
- **Northwest Community Action Programs of Wyoming (NOWCAP)** (a private non-profit community action agency) – provides innovative services to people with developmental disabilities and brain injuries throughout Wyoming; and
- **Wyoming Independent Living and Wyoming Services for Independent Living** – helps individuals with disabilities and students with disabilities overcome any to independent living, including employment
- **Perkins V**: represents an important chance to expand opportunities for every student to explore, choose, and follow career and technical education programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials of value.
- **Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS)** – serves families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF);
- **Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)** – serves students who are reading at below grade level and at-risk sub-groups (i.e. students with disabilities). At the middle/junior/senior high levels, the WDE helps students stay in school through engagement and a rigorous academic approach, internships, and appropriate job or work experiences during the school day. WDE also provides leadership opportunities, peer-to-peer mentoring, and career technical education;
- **Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC)** – provides reentry workforce readiness and education services for ex-offenders, both in prison within the pre-release category, as well as those already located within communities;
- **Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Training Fund**;
  - Business Training Grants connect employers with professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment;
  - Pre-hire grants focus on creating a trained workforce for specific Wyoming industries;

- Pre-obligation grants set-aside funds for large relocation or expansion projects for Wyoming businesses;
- Apprenticeship grants provide funding to develop industry-specific workforce business/industries where there is a shortage of skilled workers; and
- Internship grants fund Wyoming businesses, providing opportunities to offer structured learning experiences to individuals through internships that enhance an individual's work skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- **Wyoming Works:** 2019 State legislation to provide grants for;
  - Adult students to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment; and
  - Wyoming Community Colleges to develop stackable credential programs and other in-demand credential programs of study.

**Jobs for Veterans State Grant** – The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) establishes a focus on serving eligible transitioning service members, eligible veterans, and eligible spouses by providing employment services and resources to obtain meaningful careers. The Department of Labor rolled out a Refocus on JVSG to ensure that veterans and eligible spouses receive the best combination of services at American Job Centers and that JVSG staff are performing their roles according to the statutory requirements in Chapter 41, and this resource is used frequently by Wyoming DWS staff. Priority of Service is required for veterans and eligible spouses for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor. Priority of Service examples include receiving priority on referrals to job opportunities, testing, counseling, and other services, including training programs.

JVSG staff provide individualized career and training-related services to eligible veterans and persons with significant barriers to employment and assist employers in filling their workforce development needs with job-ready veterans. In order to receive employment services from a DVOP, the individual must meet the eligibility requirements. DVOPs may serve eligible veterans (as defined in 38 U.S. Code § 4211) and eligible spouses (as defined 38 U.S. Code § 4101) attesting to one (or more) significant barriers to employment, as identified in VPL 03-14 Change 1 and 2. DVOPs may also serve additional populations authorized within VPL 03-19, including eligible Transitioning Service members.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide specialized services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses with Significant Barriers to employment, as well additional populations authorized by the Secretary per VPL 03-19.

DVOPs provide individualized career services, carried out through a case management system, such as comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for employment or training. DVOPs will continue to perform outreach to regional areas and build relationships with required partners to ensure referrals of eligible Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) and other eligible populations to the American Job Centers.

The State of Wyoming has a half-position LVER who works Business Service Teams conduct outreach to employers to promote advocacy and the hiring of all Veterans served by the

American Job Center in coordination with a strong partnership with DVOPs in the American Job Centers and serves as the states JVSG Program Coordinator. The Business Service Teams plan and participate in job/career fairs; conduct job searches and workshops; establish job search groups in conjunction with employers; coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs, business associations, and businesses to promote/secure employment and training programs for Veterans; inform federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; assist with promotion of the Hire Veterans Medallion Program; and coordinate and participate with other business outreach efforts. All efforts by Business Service Teams are communicated on a normal basis through collaboration with DVOPs and Workforce Specialists to assist all Veterans in reaching their individual employment plan goals.

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

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

The Wyoming Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Wyoming's version of the American Job Centers. Reaching and serving our state's most vulnerable populations requires strong, effective working relationships among the programs and agencies that strive to build Wyoming's talented workforce. State staff have worked and will continue to work to foster these partnerships, with the goal of building an effective referral system and collaborative service delivery platforms that allow for quality wrap-around services. These crucial efforts are designed to identify ways to blend and braid resources to reduce duplication of services and to ensure qualified professionals offer appropriate services. Under this plan, Wyoming places a high priority on relationships among core partners.

**Wagner-Peyser (WP)** – The Wagner Peyser Program provides basic career services to all individuals seeking them. This includes individuals who are employed, unemployed, underemployed, who have not completed high school education, who have no education beyond high school (or equivalent), as well as individuals with post-secondary degrees and vocational credentials. The basic career services are tailored to the individual needs of the job seeker and form the backbone of the One-Stop Delivery System.

While some job seekers may only need self-service, others may need other basic career services, including reviewing job postings, labor market information, labor exchange services, or information about other services. Other job seekers may need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive skills assessments, career planning, and the development of an individual employment plan that outlines the needs and goals of successful employment.

The One-Stop Centers continue to provide an array of basic career services to all individuals. The individual needs of the customer and appropriate referrals to WIOA and partner programs are given a high level of attention.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** – The DVR program provides individualized and customized services and support to individuals with disabilities. DVR staff members are subject matter experts regarding disabilities and accommodations; however, the One-Stop Centers will

continue to coordinate services between all programs. As appropriate, the DVR and WIOA plans will complement one another.

Moving forward, DVR and Employment & Training will work more closely to integrate business service activities and collaborate to further integrate services. These collaborative meetings act as a way to educate each other on the services available under all titles, which results in appropriate referrals and enhanced outcomes. State-level training will be offered to all staff. Efforts to integrate service delivery and formalize referral processes will continue on the State level as well as between programs.

**Title II Adult Education Program** – The Adult Education Program is under the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) and has a good working relationship among internal and external partners. To achieve workforce success in Wyoming, partnerships are of paramount importance. These partnerships help streamline operations, leverage funding, and facilitate desired outcomes, thus enabling government at all levels to serve its citizens. Employment in in-demand occupations is the goal for individuals seeking employment.

The AE programs in Wyoming are an integral part of the state’s One-stop system and serve participants in person or through direct linkage, as appropriate. Services can be provided in person or virtually. Adult Education services, referrals and job placements are easily conducted, except in the most rural areas of the State. Moving forward, AE will

- engage stakeholders in collaborative efforts to further integrate services
- develop strategies to reach participants in the most remote areas of the State
- work to increase professional development opportunities so that providers have the ability and knowledge to utilize career navigators

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will continue to strengthen their partnership with the Adult Learning Centers throughout the state. Through these partnerships, the One-Stop Center staff will improve their presence in these locations, offering frequent presentations of workforce programs and rotating office hours to provide the citizens of Wyoming with better access to all programs.

To facilitate effective enrollment processes, the LACES online intake portal form, used by AE providers in Wyoming, is available in both English and Spanish. Multiple AE forms used by local providers are also available in both languages. In order to offer a coordinated and simplified intake process for Adult Education, WIOA core partners and other relevant stakeholders are able to place a link to the AE online intake portal on their own websites.

**Individuals with Limited English Proficiency**-The Wyoming One-Stop Centers make every attempt to ensure the needs of customers with limited English-speaking skills are met. To provide interpretation services in a timely manner, the One-Stop Centers use the language line for interpreting services. Services are provided in coordination with partners with special programs and the Adult Learning Centers. The State’s AE programs also provide English as a Second Language classes. As the State moves forward, planning is underway to expand services to qualified English as a Second Language participants for enrollments into IELCE programs, IETs, and other work-based training models.

**Job Corps** – Wyoming has one Job Corps Center, the Wind River Job Corps Center, located in Riverton, Wyoming. Job Corps is a federally-funded program under WIOA that provides free education and training to young adults (16–24-year-olds). Eligible youth are able to earn a high

school diploma or high school equivalency diploma and receive life-, soft-, and occupational-skills training.

Wyoming continues to strengthen the relationship between the Wyoming One-Stop Centers and Job Corps. Across the State, the One-Stop Centers will meet with the Job Corps representatives on a regular basis and provide outreach that includes program information. The One-Stop Centers closest to the Wind River Job Corps Center will work directly with the Job Corps Admissions Counselors and co-enroll the appropriate non-residential (students who do not live on the Job Corps campus) and residential youth in WIOA youth programs. Co-enrollment will be encouraged in all areas and will be based on individual needs.

**Veterans** – Wyoming will continue its strong tradition of promoting training, hiring, and retention of veterans while ensuring that veterans receive priority of service in all required funded programs. Continuing to develop close working relationships with workforce system partners will help to ensure veterans are represented to potential employers and business owners as qualified and professional employees who bring a unique set of skills to the workplace. Workforce Specialists will continue to provide veterans with employment services, including job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, workshops on resume preparation, and on conducting effective job searches. One-Stop Center staff also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA-funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the State.

**Jobs for Veterans State Grant** – The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) establishes a focus on serving eligible transitioning service members, eligible veterans, and eligible spouses by providing employment services and resources to obtain meaningful careers. The Department of Labor rolled out a Refocus on JVSG to ensure that veterans and eligible spouses receive the best combination of services at American Job Centers and that JVSG staff are performing their roles according to the statutory requirements in Chapter 41, and this resource is used frequently by Wyoming DWS staff. Priority of Service is required for veterans and eligible spouses for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor. Priority of Service examples include receiving priority on referrals to job opportunities, testing, counseling, and other services, including training programs.

JVSG staff provide individualized career and training-related services to eligible veterans and persons with significant barriers to employment and assist employers in filling their workforce development needs with job-ready veterans. In order to receive employment services from a DVOP, the individual must meet the eligibility requirements. DVOPs may serve eligible veterans (as defined in 38 U.S. Code § 4211) and eligible spouses (as defined 38 U.S. Code § 4101) attesting to one (or more) significant barriers to employment, as identified in VPL 03-14 Change 1 and 2. DVOPs may also serve additional populations authorized within VPL 03-19, including eligible Transitioning Service members.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide specialized services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses with Significant Barriers to employment, as well additional populations authorized by the Secretary per VPL 03-19.

DVOPs provide individualized career services, carried out through a case management system, such as comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance

skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for employment or training. DVOPs will continue to perform outreach to regional areas and build relationships with required partners to ensure referrals of eligible Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) and other eligible populations to the American Job Centers.

The State of Wyoming has a half-position LVER that works with Business Service Teams to conduct outreach to employers to promote advocacy and the hiring of all Veterans served by the American Job Center in coordination with a strong partnership with DVOPs in the American Job Centers and serves as the states JVSG Program Coordinator. The Business Service Teams plan and participate in job/career fairs; conduct job searches and workshops; establish job search groups in conjunction with employers; coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs, business associations, and businesses to promote/secure employment and training programs for Veterans; inform federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; assist with promotion of the Hire Veterans Medallion Program; and coordinate and participate with other business outreach efforts. All efforts by Business Service Teams are communicated on a normal basis through collaboration with DVOPs and Workforce Specialists to assist all Veterans in reaching their individual employment plan goals.

**Ex-Offenders** – The Wyoming One-Stop Centers continue to strengthen partnerships with the Wyoming Department of Corrections. Through partnerships, the One-Stop Centers work closely with adult correctional institutions to provide educational, career, and technical training to incarcerated adults, ensuring a smooth transition for returning citizens and a reduction in the State’s recidivism rate.

The Wyoming Department of Corrections and Department of Workforce Services are working in collaboration to serve more justice-involved individuals with the recently awarded DOL Pathway Home 3 grant. This grant has allowed both state agencies to strengthen the service delivery model to include a stronger wrap around approach.

The One-Stop Centers are also tasked with working with all of Wyoming’s juvenile correctional institutions and local youth out-of-home placement locations, as well as those on probation and parole. Because many young people are sent to out-of-home placement for misdemeanors and non-violent offenses, including violating curfew, skipping school, or running away from home, during a period of confinement or incarceration, youth are disconnected from school, their community, and extracurricular activities. The One-Stop Centers will remain involved with these young people and help the youth identify strengths, assets, and aspirations, just as the Centers serve their non-justice-involved peers.

**Older Individuals (SCSEP)** – The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors.

Wyoming will continue to collaborate with SCSEP staff and work with SCSEP participants to ensure familiarity with One-Stop Center locations and share information on other workforce programs. The One-Stop Centers will continue to strengthen partnerships with SCSEP to maximize participant referrals and optimize participant training.

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Wyoming SCSEP program, Wyoming applied for and received the SCSEP IT grant from the DOL to develop a system that will implement a data intake system for the purposes of GPMS data capture in accordance with 20 CFR 641. As of submission of this report, Wyoming SCSEP is awaiting approval of the contract with its vendor, Wyoming ETS. Wyoming ETS has indicated successful completion of the project should be achievable within the time frame of the grant.

**Native American Programs** – Tribal relationships have been established near the Wind River Reservation and will continue to be strengthened to increase Native American participation in WIOA. Wyoming One-Stop Centers will explore ways to access the untapped labor pool and assist with outlining creative ways to collaborate with Native Americans.

In recognition of the cultural diversity of Wyoming’s Native American populations, the Title II program located near the Wind River Indian Reservation has signed an MOU with this indigenous population to provide on-site Adult Education Services. This has included the employment of a qualified Native American instructor.

**Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)** – The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services provides these services through the statewide network of workforce centers to ensure that MSFWs receive the full range of employment, training, and educational services on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs.

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants, Long-term Unemployed** – The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services and the Unemployment Insurance Division have a long-standing partnership that is focused on coordinating reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long-term unemployed. The two programs work closely to strategically plan and support the implementation of initiatives designed to benefit their shared customers.

UI claimants visiting One-Stop Centers receive skill assessments, career counseling, and labor market information. The Workforce Specialists recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short-term industry training, or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the required registration on the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with online registration and help them create a resume and virtual recruiter. The virtual recruiter feature notifies a UI claimant of new job openings that meet their search criteria. Additional services to UI claimants include assistance to create resumes tailored to each type of employment that a UI claimant is seeking and techniques for improving interviewing skills. Online/electronic applications are prevalent with many employers; this application process is often problematic for UI claimants who lack computer literacy. The One-Stop Center staff are familiar with the local employer requirements and assist with this online application process. UI claimants receive referrals to the Dislocated Worker program for upgrade training for in-demand occupations.

Out-of-area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed. Referrals are provided to core program partners to help participants increase academic and employability skills, for a High School Equivalency Assessment, or for vocational rehabilitation services to support the claimant’s job search activities.

Wyoming did receive the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant. This is the first time in the history of Wyoming UI to receive the RESEA grant. This grant is focused on reducing the average duration of UI benefits, promoting reemployment knowledge and a seamless customer experience for UI claimants.

The long-term unemployed (LTU—individuals out of work for 26+ weeks) face a unique combination of social, emotional, and skill deficiencies caused by the duration of their unemployment and exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These deficiencies require intensive “wrap-around” services to address these issues effectively while rapidly moving individuals to paid work experiences, transitional jobs, and reemployment.

**WIOA Adult Priority of Service** – The State and all One-Stop Centers have adopted an adult priority of service policy that targets English Language Learners, Basic Skills Deficient, Public Assistance recipients, and those who meet other low-income criteria. Meeting these WIOA requirements ensures the majority of Wyoming’s WIOA Adult participants come from these priority populations.

One-Stop Centers are designed to integrate other community partners, with the full integration of these two systems intended as the norm for service delivery. In other areas, particularly in metropolitan communities, while the workforce may sit outside of the human service governance structure, MOUs or contracts have been established for the provision of services. However, some towns in Wyoming do not have a physical One-Stop location; the ability to conveniently access services is critical, particularly for customers who may lack transportation resources. In these areas, connection with the One-Stop Centers may take the form of participation on the local workforce board or informal referrals and relationships. While not every town in Wyoming has a physical One-Stop Center, partnership innovation methods must be found to provide resources and meet the needs of low-income job seekers. In addition to a physical presence in most counties throughout Wyoming, Wyoming DWS has added virtual options for clients who have difficulty physically traveling to One-Stop Centers. Both job seekers and businesses have the ability to meet virtually with workforce specialists or business representatives and can complete most services remotely.

The One-Stop Center staff will develop comprehensive Individual Employment Plans to address participants’ needs. The plans may target Specialized Assessments, Career Planning, OJTs, Internships, Short-Term Pre-Vocational Services (soft skills such as communication, punctuality, and personal maintenance skills), Workforce Preparation Activities (resume writing, interviewing skills, dress for success), Support Services, and Financial Literacy. Wyoming has elected to concentrate on the need for financial literacy programming for all individuals.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – The TANF program provides benefits for families in need with children under age 18. The TANF program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency through employment and training activities provided by the TANF Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER). TANF supportive services, including assistance with childcare and transportation expenses, are available to help adults in the family prepare for employment and to promote self-sufficiency.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program, a Strategic Partner program, was created to provide access to the necessary skills, training, or experience to increase an eligible recipient’s ability to obtain gainful employment. The services provided by the SNAP E&T program include a career assessment by a career and technical advisor, assistance with grant and scholarship applications, enrollment in career education and training programs, assistance with eligible tuition expenses not covered by federal or state grants or scholarships, and other education, training, work, and employment services.

The One-Stop Centers will increase collaboration with TANF/POWER and SNAP to provide cohesive customer service, as well as to determine appropriate referrals.

The Employment and Training Program is a required component of SNAP. The primary goal of the SNAP E&T program is to provide SNAP participants with opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience that will improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. The E&T program offers a way to allow SNAP recipients to meet work requirements. These services are carried out in Wyoming’s Dads Making a Difference program.



**Youth** – WIOA has increased its focus on serving eligible out-of-school youth, as well as those young people identified as most in need. The program focus includes career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and ending services with employment in a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. The youth program aims to reposition this population of young people as an asset to employers with a need for skilled workers.

Several methods to reach this population are being used; however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be extremely effective. Being visible in the community and meeting youth outside traditional service delivery locations—parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, emergency food programs, and homeless shelters—could assist the One-Stop Centers with recruitment efforts.

Because the out-of-school age ceiling is 24, many Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants may also be eligible for the WIOA youth program. The One-Stop Centers are working to strengthen partnerships with local POWER/TANF staff to reach this population. Community organizations can be another strong partner in reaching out-of-school youth; using multiple methods to connect with out-of-school youth ensures that as many out-of-school youths as possible are reached, which may include disconnected youth.

Workforce Specialists work with youth participants to identify a career pathway that includes appropriate education and employment goals, address career planning, review results of the objective assessment, and prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant. Identification of career pathways allows participants to see a clear path toward sustainable employment while obtaining stackable credentials. Work experiences or work-based learning activities are considered the most important program element. Work experience activities available to youth participants include Work Experience (WEX), Career Exploration, Career Planning, Career Readiness, Pre-Apprenticeship, Internships, Job Shadowing, and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These activities are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the world of work and its requirements by helping them acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. These opportunities provide youth participants with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and must include academic and occupational education.

Participants and Workforce Specialists work together to determine which elements are provided based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants in obtaining a focus to begin to develop competencies for their future. This includes the identification of needed skills, work readiness, post-secondary training, and career pathways. Goal setting and progression toward meeting those goals are another important component for participants. Identification of appropriate career pathways goals, career/employment goals, and education/academic goals assists participants to formulate an action plan and make gains towards their career goals.

During the upcoming years, Wyoming will continue to concentrate on the need for financial literacy for Wyoming's young people. Financial literacy is one of the 14-Program Elements that the One-Stop Centers are providing to most youth participants. This will continue to be an area that the State focuses on, and DWS will further develop methods, tools, and activities designed to educate and assist youth with making informed financial decisions (including budgeting and accessing checking and savings accounts); learning to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt; and learning the significance of credit reports and scores. All Title II providers in the State have fully integrated financial literacy into programs of study.

Many young people need supportive services to ensure they can participate or continue to participate in a WIOA activity or partner activity. Workforce Specialists will assess the need and availability of funds when offering support services. Program participation concludes when a participant has met their goals and achievement objectives, has been determined to be self-sufficient, and no longer needs additional services. Continued contact by the Workforce Specialists shall be in place for 12 months, and participants are encouraged to use One-Stop and partner services for future needs.

To ensure the One-Stop Centers remain committed to Wyoming's mission and vision, the One-Stop Deputy Administrator or designee shall submit an annual outreach and goal achievement plan. The plan shall set forth numerical goals of the projected number of WIOA and WP participants to be recruited and shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- Each office shall be included in the submission of the outreach plan;
- The plan must identify how participants will be contacted and how those who qualify for services will be registered and recruited into the One-Stop System;
- The recruitment numbers must be aligned with the priority of populations and the local demographics;
- The plan must include a report on the goals that were met or not met from the previous year's plan. If the goals were not met, the plan must address the reasons the numbers were not met and identify new approaches to achieve the new goals; and

#### D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

One-Stop Center staff members:

- Provide direct outreach services to businesses to develop job opportunities for all customers;
- Collaborate with the Chambers of Commerce in their communities to connect with employers in their communities;
- Collaborate and provide resources and training to employers concerning hiring people with disabilities through VR Program Consultants;
- Assist in coordinating local job fairs and hiring events for employers, and to compliment DWS Employer Seminars provided in local communities on a rotating basis; and
- Use social media and HireWyo to promote open jobs to job seekers.

To ensure the One-Stop Centers remain committed to Wyoming's mission and vision, the One-Stop Deputy Administrator or designee shall submit an annual outreach and goal achievement plan. The plan shall set forth numerical goals of the projected number of Business Engagement efforts to support the Effectiveness in Serving Employers' goals: Employer Penetration and

Employer Retention. The Business Engagement and Outreach plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- Each office shall be included in the submission of the outreach plan;
- The plan must identify how business outreach efforts will be planned and delivered to the local area with an emphasis on building relationships. The plan shall also include how the One-Stop Center shall provide education on services available, workforce development, and recruitment efforts to assist with business needs;
- The plan must set a goal for the actual number of contacts/events to support Business Engagement outreach efforts for the upcoming program year. The plan must be designed to fit the needs of the local area and customized to the respective Workforce Center coverage area; and
- The plan must develop a synopsis of the goals that were met or not met from the previous year's plan. If the goals were not met, the plan must address the reasons the goals were not met and identify new approaches to achieve new goals.

One-Stop Center staff members maintain memberships with human resource organizations to determine industry trends and work closely with groups tasked to bring in new businesses. They also provide labor market information and collaborate with required programs to meet business needs. The Wyoming Workforce Development Council directs and drives DWS' focus on sector strategy development and partnerships through Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

Members of the local and/or regional Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams include Workforce Center Managers, Vocational Rehabilitation Area Managers, Adult Education Directors, and other representatives from DWS.

Staff conduct candidate screenings as needed for specific job orders posted on HireWyo for job seekers currently registered and looking for work. Through the WIOA training program, staff members work closely with employers before or after training to place qualified individuals into a worksite matching their skills and abilities.

One-Stop Centers hold on-site hiring events to provide employers with a known location where they can connect job seekers with their business. Customized meetings are conducted with businesses to address industry needs, and Vocational Rehabilitation offers customized employer services related to disabilities based on employer and client needs.

One-Stop Center staff members:

- Write and review job descriptions for job orders;
- Provide mock interviews for clients to improve interviewing skills;
- Explain basic labor laws to employers, disseminate labor law posters and make referrals to Labor Standards when appropriate;
- Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) at the request of employers that includes wages, available workforce, and current market trends, using HireWyo and Research & Planning;
- Determine whether an apprenticeship program could be applicable for the employer's needs during staff employer visits or discussions with community partners and college staff;

- Refer employers to the Department of Labor’s apprentice representative and work with employers in developing an apprenticeship program by connecting training entities, DOLs representative, and DWS staff, including the registered apprenticeship expansion grant;
- Work with employers to develop job descriptions in HireWyo and/or train employers on how to post job orders in HireWyo;
- Refer qualified job applicants to employers to help facilitate the labor exchange process;
- Conduct outreach to employers to determine current and future workforce needs;
- Provide referrals to economic development entities and community partners for assistance as appropriate;
- Provide both large and small meeting rooms for employers to use to conduct on-site interviews, hiring events, and meetings during regular business hours;
- Work in partnership with partner programs and industry on focus panels to develop strategies through individualized/ group meetings and Next Generation Sector Partnerships Regional Teams to improve local workforce skills deficiencies or other industry needs;
- Refer employers to the Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) for skills improvement/credentialing for incumbent worker training and to the available appropriate basic (Wagner-Peyser) individualized training and training services;
- Outline available services, including screening services, job postings, hiring events, referrals to other community resources such as Wyoming Small Business Centers and Wyoming Business Council;
- Perform outreach and/or respond to employer’s requests to provide information about the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program and connect them with a WOTC representative for assistance with the application process if necessary;
- Have knowledge of and can refer to the Federal Bonding Program Manager for additional assistance for the Federal Bonding Program; and
- Refer employers to community resources for additional needs.

Customer Service is a priority focus of the One-Stop Center's front-line staff regardless of the entry point—whether via telephone, in person, or email. Intake assessment forms are integral to ensuring that a job seeker receives all needed services. Job seekers and employers are provided the option to complete forms on their own or are assisted by a Workforce Specialist.

If the customer is identified as an employer, they will be connected with a business representative at the One-Stop Center. The business representative will familiarize the employer with services provided at the One-Stop Center and other applicable DWS and community programs. For example, if an employer is interested in hiring individuals with disabilities, these opportunities will be shared with Vocational Rehabilitation staff. Customized meetings may be scheduled if determined to be the best course of action for the employer.

If the employer chooses to post and/or recruit for a job opening, the business representative will assist the employer in creating an employer registration on HireWyo (HireWyo.com). The business representative may complete this registration on behalf of the employer.

One-Stop Center staff must verify all employers are in good standing with Wyoming Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance before creating or approving an account on HireWyo. If the employer has not registered as a business with the State of Wyoming, they will be directed to the joint business registration form.

The employer has the option to use self-service features or staff-assisted business services. With self-service, the employer may post jobs in HireWyo and review the resumes of registered job seekers. At any time, an employer may opt to use a combination of self-service and staff-assisted service.

All job postings are reviewed by One-Stop Center staff for accuracy and clarity. If One-Stop Center staff create a job posting on behalf of an employer, the job-posting process can occur in person, by phone, or by email before posting the job. In the case of an employer-posted job, the One-Stop Center staff will use the Job Order Creation/Proxy Email Review Checklist and will contact the employer to address any inconsistencies or corrections.

For every job posting on HireWyo, the One-Stop Center staff will complete notifications to all veterans who qualify for the job. Notifications may also be completed for qualified non-veterans, a requirement for all job postings that fall under the Wyoming Preference Act of 1971.

The employer has several options at every step of this process, and a variety of additional services may be provided to the employer based on request. These options and services include having One-Stop Center staff pre-screen and/or collect application materials, One-Stop Center staff assisting in the early interview process as a part of pre-screening, and using conference rooms and other in-house resources, including fax machines, copiers, and printers.

#### E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

### **Title II-Adult Education**

#### **Strategic Alignments with Partners**

Partnerships are key to the success of Wyoming's Adult Education program as they provide much needed services that are not within the realm of activities that AE centers can offer. Adult Education focuses primarily on academically preparing students to successfully enter postsecondary training and/or the workforce. By agencies partnering together AE can better address challenges an enrolled participant may have, such as childcare, transportation and other barriers to employment. Partnering agencies include, but are not limited to, the WIOA core partners, the Department of Family Services, Youth Alternatives, Native American tribes, employers, Job Corps, United Way, Climb Wyoming, Dads Making a Difference, local high schools, community colleges, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), probation and parole, Southwest Counseling and Rehabilitation, local senior centers which provide public transportation, as well as other local

service providers. Without the support of Wyoming's partnering programs, AE participants would struggle to complete a program of study.

Wyoming's Adult Education centers also work closely with the Wyoming Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV) to ensure that AE participants with a disability receive the support needed to complete a program of study/training so that they are well prepared to enter the job market. Through a referral system and/or on-site face to face discussions/presentations, qualified AE participants receive information for such things as diagnosing a disability, rehabilitation programs, counseling and guidance, job placement, and other support services needed to support job retention.

The Wyoming Department of Education's target populations includes students who are reading below grade level and at-risk sub-groups (students with disabilities on Individual Education Programs). At the middle/junior/senior high levels, the Department helps students stay in school through engagement and a rigorous academic approach, internships, and job or work experiences during the school day as coursework allows. The Department also provides leadership opportunities, peer-to-peer mentoring, and career technical education to the targeted youth population. DWS can assist the Wyoming Department of Education in helping students understand the importance of career pathways. For instance, the AJCs help students learn about professional opportunities. Referrals to the WIOA program for clients who need additional training and education to find sustainable work would be directed to DWS to begin to receive training, application assistance, and education opportunities. Several District Superintendents from across Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams to ensure the connection from K-12 to postsecondary and employer's workforce needs.

The Wyoming Department of Education Superintendent provides one representative to advise the Wyoming Workforce Development Council; staff works closely with this individual. The Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission is a Wyoming Workforce Development Council member and provides two staff to assist with furthering Next Generation Sector Partnerships in Wyoming.

Representatives from the University of Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams to ensure the connection from K-12 to postsecondary and employer's workforce needs.

Wyoming's AE centers work closely with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to enable adults and out-of-school youth to achieve basic educational goals for those who are lacking in education. Through the partnership with DWS, co-enrolled participants are afforded opportunities to job shadow, partake in internships, (pre)apprenticeship and other work experience programs. Community colleges throughout the state are valuable partners in serving clients. The target populations are adults, dislocated workers, and youth who are 16 years of age or older. Referrals to AE programs are conducted when a client at an American Job Center needs to earn at least a high school equivalency certificate or for any of the services offered by the local AE provider. Several Adult Education Directors from across Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to be encouraged to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams, when applicable, to ensure the connection from K-12 to postsecondary and employer's workforce needs are met.

### **Investing in Wyoming's Youth**

Wyoming recognizes the value in investing in 'youth'. Collaborative efforts between the WIOA Title programs have given rise to an increase in co-enrolled 'youth' for high school equivalency completions, integrated education and training and work experience enrollments.

Across the United States there are 43 million adults who cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level. Wyoming literacy facts indicate that 14% of all Wyomingites lack sufficient basic literacy skills to effectively function in today's job markets and in society. In order to address these deficiencies, particularly for individuals between the ages of 16-24, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services and the Adult Education programs created programs of study for co-enrolled Title I: Youth. These programs, created several years ago, have grown to include six AE providers. This expansion of providers has been responsible for a gradual increase of co-enrolled participants across the past three years which has resulted in nearly a 300% increase since 2021 in the number of co-enrolled youth.

Wyoming's efforts to co-enroll qualified 'youth' is a sustainable model that is supported at the federal level, by both the Departments of Labor and Education. In fact, the Department of Labor, in its July 2023 Newsletter highlights the 'YouthBuild' program which gives at-risk youth ages 16-24 the opportunity to "transform their lives by earning a high school diploma or equivalency degree, learning to be community leaders, and preparing for college and other postsecondary training opportunities." The efforts made by the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services and the Adult Education programs resemble the 'YouthBuild' program with one major difference; we do not currently include pre-apprenticeships in the programs of study we deliver to qualified participants. Instead, we have focused and plan to continue to focus on enrolling qualified participants into 'Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs of study so that participants will have the credentials needed to obtain employment in the most in-demand occupations in the State and or in the country. Additionally, in alignment with the U.S. Department of Labor's 'Youth Employment Works' Initiative, Wyoming's WIOA core partners are placing increasing numbers of students into work experience programs.

### **Wyoming Community College Commission Strategy**

A State strategy employed by the Wyoming Community College Commission is to provide stakeholders around the State with data needed to link education and workforce so that policymakers, public programs, and the public can make informed decisions and affect change. At present, this is being accomplished through the Wyoming Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System. (SLEDS). The Wyoming SLEDS is a statewide collaboration between the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Wyoming's community colleges, the University of Wyoming (UW), the Department of Family Services, and the Wyoming Community College Commission. Although our Title II programs are not currently included in this collaboration, there are plans to begin including Adult Education data in this longitudinal project in future years.

### **Statewide Opportunities**

At present the State of Wyoming, through the Community College Commission and/or local community colleges offers multiple opportunities to students to help advance careers in support of economic development and to advance the workforce needs of the State. These opportunities are open to all qualified participants, inclusive of Adult Education participants. These include:

1. The Hathaway Scholarship Program: This program provides scholarships to Wyoming's graduating youth to attend postsecondary education in Wyoming; inclusive of Adult Education students who complete a high school equivalency program.

2. **Wyoming Works Program:** The strategies and objectives of this program are aligned to developing Wyoming's economy by developing a skilled workforce. Wyoming Works grants provide the funding adults need to learn skills that lead to higher paying jobs so that businesses have better trained employees.
3. **Veteran Tuition Benefit:** Under Wyoming Statute 19-14-106 this program provides veterans tuition benefits in the form of free tuition and fees for overseas combat veterans, surviving spouses and dependents.
4. **WyIn Investment in Nursing:** One of the most in-demand industries in Wyoming is for qualified individuals trained in healthcare. This program offers scholarship opportunities to individuals along a career pathways track for nursing at any postsecondary institution in Wyoming.
5. **Ellbogen Scholarship Opportunity:** In an effort to train adults aged 24 years of age and older, this program provides scholarship funds to help adult learners access the job training and education needed to find or advance their careers, particularly for the most in-demand industries in Wyoming.
6. **Kickstart Wyoming Tomorrow Scholarship:** This newly funded state scholarship program offers adults 24 years of age or older with funding needed to pursue a degree or certificate at any postsecondary institution in Wyoming.

### **National Opportunities**

Recent federal legislation also affords new opportunities for Wyoming's core partners to leverage funding through future partnerships to transform the lives of American workers and create an abundance of new, high-quality jobs.

1. **American Rescue Plan: (ARPA):** This economic stimulus bill provided funding to support relevant and impactful resources to communities affected by the COVID pandemic. Wyoming utilized these funds in numerous ways to help offset impacts created by the pandemic. In FY 22/23, Wyoming's Adult Education program in collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services were awarded ARPA funds to create new Integrated Education and Training programs and an adult high school equivalency program that mirrors the DWS Title I: Youth program. ARPA funding will continue to support these initiatives until June 2026.
2. **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL):** Section 13007-Training and Education: These grant opportunities through the Federal Highway Administration can be used to develop, test, and review new curricula and education programs to train individuals at all levels of the transportation workforce; or to implement the new curricula and education programs to provide for hands-on career opportunities to meet current and future needs. Reporting requirements for this grant mirror those required for the WIOA core partners as follows:
  - the percentage or number of program participants that are employed during the second quarter after exiting the program
  - the percentage or number of program participants that are employed during the fourth quarter after exiting the program;
  - the median earnings of program participants that are employed during the second quarter after exiting the program;



- the percentage or number of program participants that obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma (or a recognized equivalent) during participation in the program or by not later than 1 year after exiting the program; and
- the percentage or number of program participants that, during a program year-
  - are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment; and
  - are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment. [§ 13007; 23 U.S.C. 504(f)(3)]

3) Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD): Through the Digital Equity Act provision of BEAD, grant programs are to be established that promote digital equity and inclusion. These grants aim to ensure that communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of the digital economy.

The State office of Adult Education is working with the Wyoming Business Council on the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. One of the aims of this project is to develop a federal proposal and a sub-grantee process which could offer opportunities for Wyoming's AE programs to have increased access to federal funds which could be used for infrastructure costs, work readiness skill development and digital literacy.

4) Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Act: Leverages funding, through the U.S. Department of Commerce, to kick start the development of the domestic semiconductor workforce, which faces severe labor shortages. Although this Act is aimed at boosting domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the United States, and for the development of specialized training programs, it is important for Adult Education centers to understand this legislation as it has a direct impact upon career pathways planning for both programs as well as for participants.

The CHIPS Act establishes a Workforce and Education Fund, through the National Science Foundation, that aims to invest in workforce development activities for the semiconductor industry. Applicants for these funds are expected to develop a workforce plan, in collaboration with education and training entities who support and drive long-term growth in the domestic semiconductor industry. CHIPS also reinforce the strength of providing workers with equitable opportunities and tools to future jobs within their organization and/or outside them by utilizing WIOA's concept of career pathways.

5) Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): This act aims to reduce the impact of climate change by offering funding to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. Traditionally, Wyoming's largest industries have been energy: mining and oil. However, this is now complemented by solar, wind and nuclear energy, which align well to IRA. Wyoming's Adult Education programs have recognized this changing need and have launched new career pathways tools for enrolled participants that clearly delineate the steps needed to become successful in this career.

## F. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes

credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Improving access to post-secondary education is addressed more specifically in *Section VI Program-Specific Requirements for Core Program* of this plan, and also by the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative. Wyoming will continue efforts to increase the number of providers on the ETPL list by contacting providers not currently on the approved Eligible Training Provider List.

In 2019, The Department of Workforce Services was awarded the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant through the Department of Labor (DOL) for \$641,075.32 for a three-year performance period. This federal grant focused on expanding the number of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in Wyoming. It provided a one-time reimbursement to employers to offset costs related to on-the-job learning for each registered apprentice who started after July 1, 2019.

In the three-year performance period that ended June 30, 2022, the ASE team served 131 apprentices and supported 19 registered apprenticeship programs within three industries across the state of Wyoming.

DWS applied for and received a \$283,754.00 State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding (SAEF) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor in late Summer of 2023. The grant is being used in DWS' Business Training and Support Unit (BTSU) to expand and build capacity for registered apprenticeship program opportunities throughout Wyoming. DWS continues to provide technical and financial support to businesses seeking to develop an apprenticeship program. Coupled with Wyoming's existing apprenticeship training funds, these funds allow workers to earn progressive pay while also learning valuable skills through supplemental education.

#### G. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council and DWS have continued to foster relationships with economic development entities across Wyoming. The WWDC encourages participation by regional or local economic development entities in the sector strategy initiative implemented by the WWDC and DWS in 2018. The Governor has appointed the CEO of the Wyoming Business Council, Wyoming's Economic Development Entity, to the WWDC. The Wyoming Business Council is an economic development entity that boasts seven regional offices covering all of Wyoming. The Wyoming Business Council employs individuals who promote economic development in industries important to Wyoming.

The WWDC and DWS implemented the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model in 2018. That initiative has focused on employer/business/sector needs based on current labor market information to prioritize regional efforts. In addition to business leading the effort, the partnerships include, but are not limited to, educational institutions to include K-12 and post-secondary education, other education and training providers, economic development entities, and local workforce development. The community/governmental partners coordinate and align services to employer needs and will leverage Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs.

## B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

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

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

The Research & Planning section will continue to develop and disseminate information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workforce investment grants, state funded labor market information and where possible National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health supported workplace safety research, evaluation, and surveillance.

Across the WIOA core programs and the Research & Planning section within the Wyoming DWS, there are several disparate case management and data systems. The State of Wyoming uses Google Apps for email, calendar, and collaborative communications. Google Apps is available to all State of Wyoming employees. The Research & Planning section has multiple MOUs that allow for data sharing between core programs, partner programs, surrounding states' programs, and the LMI Division.

Following is a description of each case management system used by the core programs.

### **Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Workers & Youth - HireWyo**

DWS has recently begun using a new vendor, Career Edge, for labor exchange services and case management. The state's electronic labor management system, HireWyo, is part of the virtual One-Stop system designed and operated by Career Edge of North Haven, Connecticut. The Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and Trade Adjustment Assistance system applications have been in place in Wyoming at Work, which was a system designed and operated by Geographic Solutions, Inc., of Palm Harbor, Florida. This data now has been migrated to the Career Edge platform. HireWyo is still in the rollout phase at the time of this writing, but it will include detailed labor market information and Wyoming's list of eligible training providers. As the system is integrated, DWS has a Change Control Board in place and is working directly with Career Edge to improve and streamline the services available to Wyoming's job seekers, employers, and DWS staff. The HireWyo case management system will allow DWS to focus on its state strategies which include streamlining services to improve outcomes.

DWS uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies, and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure, and possible misuse or abuse. DWS uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client Social Security numbers (SSNs) submitted through Web applications are obfuscated during receipt in the database. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS program staff can view applicant/trainee information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by their management or designated representative.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation - InFormed**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) currently utilizes the InFormed system for case management. The system is operated by Libera, Inc. of Jamestown, New York. The General

Rehabilitation Program, Supported Employment, Small Business Program, and Youth Transition Program are managed with this system. Regular updates will occur to the system to maintain compliance with State and federal requirements. DVR installed this system on October 1, 2022. Newer modules and system upgrades have continually been added to improve and streamline the services available to DVR staff as they work to assist the eligible population with disabilities in Wyoming.

DVR uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DVR uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are “single-purpose restricted” to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS staff can view all client information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized DWS staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by the DVR management team.

## **Title II- Adult Education**

Adult Education and Family Literacy use the National Reporting System student information management system Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) by LiteracyPro. LACES collect demographic, assessment, instructional contact hours, and programmatic assignment information. It is able to disaggregate data as needed. Performance measures for postsecondary entry and completion of high school equivalency are also collected. Employment status is collected upon entry and data matching of employment to Adult Education (AE) clients is completed with the Research & Planning section at this time. Only aggregated data is reported into the National Reporting System portal for federal reporting.

Security levels are assigned based on the employee’s staffing position, with access being established by administrative personnel at the local or state level. The State AE Office may access all student information databases (LACES) at the provider level. Local providers only see their own data. Unique client identification numbers are assigned within the system. Student SSN information is used only in the data match process for employment and by the National Student Clearinghouse for students entering college or postsecondary skills training.

### **2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (FOR EXAMPLE, CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ONE-STOP PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS.**

The DWS Liaison to the Board reviews, updates, and creates policy guidance on an ongoing basis and at the recommendation of DWS WIOA program staff to support the implementation of activities throughout the state.

In February 2022, the Board adopted Policy Number 5 - One-Stop Certification, which communicates Wyoming's process and procedures for evaluating and certifying one-stop sites under the WIOA. Attachment A of Policy 5 establishes the certification criteria, which includes a Required Program/Partner checklist for on-site, off-site electronic connection, and off-site basic career services made available in another manner. The checklist includes:

- WIOA Title I Adult Services
- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Services
- WIOA Title I Youth Services
- Wagner-Peyser
- Adult Education
- Family Literacy (Other)
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Senior Community Services Employment Program
- TANF (§ 678.405)
- Career and Technical Education Programs (Carl D. Perkins Act)
- Trade Adjustment Act
- Veterans Employment Services
- Community Services Block Grant
- Housing & Urban Development Employment & Training
- Unemployment Compensation
- Job Corps
- Native American programs (where applicable)

A checklist for additional partners (not mandated), such as small business administration, is also included. All Board policies and bylaws are available on the board website at [wyowdc.wyo.gov/reports/?report\\_type=bylaws](http://wyowdc.wyo.gov/reports/?report_type=bylaws).

Ease of access will be provided to a catalog of resources, individual service summaries, and employment and post-secondary records.

One-Stop costs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the One-Stop Centers, including, but not limited to: Rental of facilities; Utilities & Maintenance; Equipment, including assessment-related products and assistive technology for individuals with disabilities; and Technology to facilitate access to the One-Stop Center, including technology used for the center's planning and outreach activities.

Attachment B of the One-Stop Operating Budget and Infrastructure Funding Agreement establishes a financial plan to fund the services provided by One-Stop Centers. The goal of the operating budget is to develop a funding mechanism that:

- Establishes and maintains the One-Stop delivery system at a level that meets the needs of the job seekers and businesses in the state;
- reduces duplication and maximizes program impact through the sharing of services, resources, and technologies among Partner Agencies and Partners (thereby improving each program's effectiveness);

- reduces overhead costs for any one partner by streamlining and sharing financial, procurement, and facility costs; and
- ensures costs are appropriately shared by all Partner Agencies and Partners by determining contributions based on the proportionate use of the One-Stop Centers and relative benefits received, and requiring that all funds are spent solely for allowable purposes in a manner consistent with the applicable authorizing statutes and all other applicable legal requirements, including the Uniform Guidance.

Per the One-Stop Operating Budget and Infrastructure Agreement, Partner Agencies and Partners are linked through a referral process from the Partner Agencies and Partners to the One-Stop Centers to ensure co-enrollment. These Partner Agencies and Partners have access to resource rooms, training rooms, conference rooms, and other common areas at the One-Stop Centers should they need it. Partner Agencies and Partners provide referrals and information as a means to contribute to the infrastructure and career services costs for the One-Stop Centers. All participants of all Partner Agencies and Partners have access to the following services:

- Access to resource rooms to file Unemployment Insurance claims, conduct work searches, and communicate with off-site program staff;
- Access to resource room staff assistance for the above services and for general information;
- Access to other resource room equipment such as copiers, scanners, fax machines, or assistive technology for individuals with disabilities;
- Obtaining labor market information;
- Attending reemployment workshops; and
- File grievances or appeals, etc.

Each Partner's contributions to costs may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the Partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations and the Uniform Guidance.

Partner Agencies and Partners will provide DWS with the following information no later than fifteen (15) days after the end of each quarter, as applicable:

- Actual customer participation numbers (as of the last day of the first month of each quarter);
- Actual customer participation numbers (as of the last day of the last month of each quarter);
- Actual referral data to the One-Stop, (as of the last day of the first month of each quarter); and
- Actual referral data to the One-Stop, (as of the last day of the last month of each quarter).

Upon the receipt of the above information, DWS will:

- Update the allocation bases, and

- Apply the updated allocation bases, as described in the Cost Allocation Methodology section above, to determine the actual costs allocable to each partner via an updated referral requirement.
- Submit invoices to the Partner Agencies and Partners with the actual costs allocable to each Partner Agency and Partner for the quarter that are contributing a reimbursement of costs (not via a referral process).
- Update the budget to all parties no later than forty-five (45) days after the end of each quarter.

Upon receipt of the invoice and the adjusted budget, the applicable Partner Agency and Partner will review both documents and will submit payment to DWS no later than fifteen (15) days following receipt. Payment of the invoice signifies agreement with the costs in the adjusted budget. For Partner Agencies and Partners that meet the infrastructure funding requirement through a referral, an invoice reconciling the data provided by the Partner Agency or Partner and the data captured by the One-Stop Center will be provided to the Partner Agency or Partner. When discrepancies are identified, Partner Agencies and Partners agree to work with the local One-Stop Center to resolve disagreements in data.

Partner Agencies and Partners will communicate any disputes with costs in the invoice or the adjusted budget to the Board and DWS in writing. DWS will review the disputed cost items and respond accordingly to the Partner Agency or Partner and the Board within ten (10) days of receipt of notice of the disputed costs. DWS will revise the invoice and the adjusted budget upon resolution of the dispute.

The full MOU, including Attachments A, B, and C are available at [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6\\_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic?usp=sharing).

The Board will conduct further reviews of Policy 5 to ensure it properly includes the application of the State Funding Mechanism and statutory caps in order to provide guidance to one-stop partners in the event an agreement is not reached at the local level regarding partners' contributions.

### 3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

#### A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

The WIOA programs and agencies are displayed in this organizational chart. The six core programs are housed within two different state agencies. Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs are housed in DWS. Adult Education and Family Literacy is housed in the WCCC.

Both agencies work closely with the WWDC. The WWDC advises the Governor on workforce priorities and initiatives while also overseeing workforce activities across the state. The WWDC works with DWS and the WCCC to continually redevelop and implement the federally mandated State Plan under WIOA. Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state; therefore, the WWDC serves as both the local and State boards.

The WIOA Program Compliance Team administers DWS’s portion of WIOA programs within the Policy, Research & Communications team in DWS. The One-Stops are overseen by a separate and distinct unit within Workforce Programs also housed in DWS.

### B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members’ organizational affiliations and position titles.

The Governor’s Executive Order 2015-5 revised the duties of the WWDC to include the provisions of WIOA and includes enhancing workforce development activities to help diversify Wyoming’s economy, creating a strategic plan not less than once every four years, developing and adopting operating rules for itself, and developing a yearly budget for itself. To provide clarification of who uniquely represents the core programs, the Director of the Department of Workforce Services represents Title I and Title III, the Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission provides unique representation for Title II and does not represent the community colleges, and the State Director for Vocational Rehabilitation represents Title IV.

The WWDC has continued to work from the Vision, Goals, and Strategies to meet Wyoming's education, training, and employment needs. Each committee of the WWDC will be assigned applicable goals and strategies to continue work to ensure Wyoming’s workforce system fosters a vibrant Wyoming economy through collaborative, industry-led partnerships that provide diverse and comprehensive services to job seekers and employers. Efforts to meet the Vision began under the previous plan with the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Initiative, an effective way to begin meeting the workforce needs of Wyoming.

Governor and State Legislature		
Mark	Gordon	Governor
Fred	Baldwin	Legislature – Senate
Ryan	Berger	Legislature – House
<b>Business</b>		
Ron	Wild	Regional Business Manager, Rocky Mountain Power
Jim	Engel	Owner, Engel & Associates
Larry	Fodor	COO, Mechanical Systems, Inc.
Tony	Cross	Human Resources Director, Jackson Hole Airport
Dick	Smith	Human Resources Officer, Cody Regional Health



Governor and State Legislature		
Daniel	Burau	Owner, Firewater Public House
Katie	Hogarty	CEO, Climb Wyoming
Michael	Kercher	Assistant Operations Manager, UCAR - NCAR/Wyoming Supercomputing Center
Bria	Hammock	Owner/Principle Painter, Hammock Fine Art
Fabian	Lobera	CFO, Language I/O, Board Chair
Vacant		
Eric	Trowbridge	Director of Development & Enterprise Applications, Blue Federal Credit Union, Board Vice Chair
Vacant		
Travis	Lawrence	Market President, First Northern Bank of Wyoming
Nathan	Williams	VP of Engineering, Kennon Products
<b>Workforce</b>		
Tamsin	Johnson	Executive Secretary, Wyoming AFL-CIO (nominated by State Labor Federation)
Phillip	Cornella	Apprenticeship/Training Director, Wyoming Operating Engineers (Apprenticeship/Training Director, nominated by State Labor Federation)
Brenda	Morgan	Training Director, WEJATC
Charlie	Wilson	Co-Founder, The Soldier's House of Fremont County - CBO Veterans
Tina	Conley	Executive Director, IReach 2 - CBO PWD
Vacant		
<b>Government</b>		
Elizabeth	Gagen	Director, Department of Workforce Services (Titles I & III)

Governor and State Legislature		
Nicky	Harper	State Director, Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)
Robert	Short	County Commissioner
Matt	Hall	City Mayor
Ben	Moritz	Executive Director, Wyoming Community College Commission (Title II )
<b>Ex-Officio</b>		
Megan	Degenfelder	Superintendent of Public Instruction
Josh	Dorrell	CEO, Wyoming Business Council
Korin	Schmidt	Director, Department of Family Services

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

##### A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS.

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

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) evaluates each One-Stop Center's outcomes using the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(b) by updating its HireWyo online reporting system.

DWS uses a variety of assessment tools to evaluate and track program effectiveness and to promote a culture of continuous improvement, including:

- **HireWyo Data/Reporting System** – HireWyo enables One-Stop Centers and their partners to track WIOA Title I-B, TAA, Veteran, Wagner-Peyser, state and local programs, and discretionary grants in a single database. Reports generated from this system are “up to the minute,” which allows better management of daily activities and performance. In addition to federally-mandated reports, HireWyo has a variety of reports that allow staff to track caseloads, correct data entry errors, and analyze performance at the state level.
- **Program Monitoring** – Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Program staff conduct quarterly reviews to determine progress to date on program goals and objectives related to the Wyoming State Plan and referenced in the proposals or applications for grant funds. DWS Program staff provide technical assistance both on a universal and customized level for individual programmatic needs, as deemed necessary

based on quarterly reviews. Each Workforce Center is required to self-monitor on a quarterly basis a statistical sampling of files in each program to include completing official file monitoring documentation. File monitoring documentation is required and is provided to Program Staff to ensure complete and timely self-monitoring activities.

Core programs are monitored annually and assessed in accordance with WIOA, including performance indicators that measure employment, median earnings, credential attainment rate, measurable skill gains, and WWDC-selected employer measures that are employer retention (retention of an employee with the same employer) and repeat employer customer (percentage of employers who are using the core program services out of all employers represented in an area). Each program is responsible for maintaining an effective monitoring policy and procedures to ensure WIOA requirements are met.

DWS and WWDC also launched the Wyoming Talent Transition Project. The Wyoming Talent Transition Project is a targeted marketing outreach campaign aimed at encouraging a larger flow of adults seeking career changes toward growing occupations and industries, to include healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and hospitality and tourism throughout Wyoming. Next Generation Partnerships have worked hard to identify key growing industries, collaborate in the development of new education and training programs, and in building strong connections with Wyoming's workforce and education systems. This project takes that a step further and highlights the ability of Wyoming's state government and local institutions to work together with the private sector to advance economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

Progress is being assessed by evaluating the following:

- Increase the number of people in filled positions
- Increase the number of people in new career training
- Decrease the number of unfilled vacancies

Wyoming is a single area state and, as such, does not have local and regional planning goals. Through Next Generation Sector Partnerships, local and regional planning is encouraged, and the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee will establish monitoring (assessment) requirements. Each program partner is responsible for maintaining an effective monitoring policy and procedures to ensure WIOA requirements are being met.

Wyoming plans to assess outcomes from specific initiatives, progress in supporting targeted populations, progress in alignment, and development of sector-based partnerships through its annual WIOA narrative report. The state will evaluate the usefulness of creating a system to evaluate how well Wyoming is meeting its workforce needs.

## **Title II-Adult Education**

### **Performance Accountability**

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. Under section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA there are six primary indicators of performance which are identified for Adult Education as follows:

#### **1. Educational Functioning Levels**

1. Measurable Skill Gains

## 2. Outcome Measures

- a. employment rate-2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
- b. employment rate-4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
- c. median earnings-2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
- d. credential attainment
- e. measurable skill gains
- f. effectiveness in serving employers

Wyoming's Adult Education centers measure performance of all the aforementioned, except 'effectiveness in serving employers.'

OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2 establishes the guidelines under which all AE programs in the United States capture data to measure performance. In Wyoming, performance for all employment related data is captured on a quarterly basis through data matching with the State UI system and through the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) system or through local program surveying, when applicable. Performance data for credential attainment is also gathered through data matches conducted under agreements with DiplomaSender, the National Student Clearinghouse and/or the Wyoming Community College's own database (DMARS) on postsecondary enrollments/completions.

Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) is a key indicator in the National Reporting System (NRS) and provides a measure of a participant's interim progress towards a credential or employment. The State of Wyoming's Adult Education policy on Measurable Skill gains mirrors NRS requirements and provides information on how the State captures and measures MSG in all approved AE centers. In accordance with OCTAE Program Memorandum 20-2, the State AE program engages in negotiations with its federal partner to negotiate two year targets for each Adult Education Functioning Level (EFL). As outlined in this Memorandum, these negotiations utilize the statistical adjustment model for the purpose of assessing state performance and the establishment of performance targets for each EFL level and for outcome measures.

### **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation**

#### **Performance Accountability**

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. Under section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA there are six primary indicators of performance which are identified for Vocational Rehabilitation:

- **Educational Functioning Level**
  - Measurable Skill Gains
- **Outcome Measures**
  - Credential attainment
  - Measurable skill gains

- Employment rate-2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
- Employment rate-4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
- Median earnings-2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
- Effectiveness in serving employers

Vocational Rehabilitation is monitored by the Rehabilitation Services Administration(RSA) through quarterly case service reporting (RSA-911) and Annual Performance Reports (ETA-9169).

The RSA-911 collects data required to describe the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in the Annual Report to the Congress and the President as required by Sections 13 and 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA. RSA also uses these data to assess the performance of the VR program through the calculation of evaluation standards and performance indicators as required by Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act, which must be consistent with the common performance accountability measures established in Section 116 of Title I of WIOA for the core programs of the workforce development system. In addition, RSA uses data reported through this data collection to support its other responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act. RSA uses data captured through the RSA-911 during the conduct of the annual reviews and periodic onsite monitoring of VR agencies required by Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act to examine the effectiveness of program performance.

Vocational Rehabilitation is currently following the guidance RSA reissued in TAC 17-01: Performance Accountability Guidance for WIOA Core Programs. This joint policy guidance elaborates on the performance accountability requirements in section 116 of WIOA, the Joint WIOA Final Rule, and performance reporting requirements.

### **Program Monitoring**

Wyoming uses monitoring tools to assess the quality of Wyoming’s Adult Education and Literacy providers including program reviews; risk assessments; monthly desk reviews, quarterly and end of year reports as well as other monitoring tools outlined below.

- monthly data monitoring reports that evaluates progress towards achieving EFL targets, financial data and a per person calculation of cost of career services course. Monthly desk monitoring allows the local program to see the ‘state’ of their data, in progress toward meeting targets and the condition of the data. Desk monitoring complements the preparation of the end of year report.
- quarterly reports which evaluate successes and challenges, identify technical assistance needs, how the program collects post-exit data, new initiatives, and student success stories. A progress towards goals report is also submitted as part of the second quarterly report which depicts progress made towards achieving goals established at the beginning of the (re)application period.
- End of year reports provide for an evaluation of:
  - how the program implemented and used strategies identified in WIOA §231
  - program successes/challenges,
  - Program improvements

- Performance data analysis
- Integration with One-stop Partners
- AE Standards and Effective Educational Practices
- Program Alignments to the Unified State Plan
- Serving Participants Most in Need Through Technology
- Professional Development
- Corrections Education
- IELCE

*End of Year reports* also address the 13 funding considerations for AEFLA providers, program performance, referrals and co-enrollments. This report is supported by various documents that include, but are not limited to:

- NRS Tables
- Instructor Information and Professional Development Hours
- Financial Status Reports
- Data Quality Checklist (identified above)
- In-kind and Match Funds
- Sample Lesson Plans Showing the Integration of one or more of the following:
  - Academic Standards
  - Teaching Skills That Matter
  - Contextualized Learning
  - Digital and/or Financial Literacy
  - Essential Components of Reading
- Adata quality checklist identifies the policies, processes and materials that local programs should have in place to collect valid data.
- At the beginning of each year, prior to contractual awards being released, the State office for Adult Education conducts aRisk Assessment to evaluate local providers' level of risk for managing a federal grant The risk assessment is one tool used each year to determine the amount and type of intervention needed for the prover. Information from this risk assessment is used to assess an organization's structure and capacity-building needs and identify appropriate technical assistance and/or resources to strengthen operations if funded.
- A combination of monitoring methods is utilized to assess effectiveness of Professional Development (PD) and the dissemination of promising practices and models including classroom observations, student educational gains by teacher, focus groups (when applicable), and self-reporting tools. AE programs in the State are required to utilize a

three-tier planning document that outlines local PD strategies at the local, state/regional, and national levels. Classroom observations must also utilize the Standards in Action Checklist to validate that the College and Career Readiness Standards are being used in the AE classroom.

- Approved AE providers are subject to up to two comprehensive monitoring processes in each five year grant cycle. This process requires the completion of an AE site visit and compliance checklist. This checklist is used to virtually monitor providers and contains a 16-chapter checklist of items that local providers are required to submit documentation for as evidence of compliance to federal and state regulations. The goals of this monitoring review process are:
  - Ensure the programs meet Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and state requirements;
  - Continuously improve the quality of federally and state funded activities;
  - Provide technical assistance in identifying and resolving compliance/accountability issues;
  - Ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data collection and reporting as well as currency of policies and procedures;
  - Interact with program administration, staff, students and stakeholders to get other perspectives of the program; and
  - For local programs, an opportunity for professional growth and continuous improvement.

## B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Median earnings for adults and dislocated workers has fluctuated in recent years, looking at the assessment data for these metrics. For WIOA Adults, Wyoming achieved 77.6% of the goal in the first year and 158.6% in the second year. In an effort to help strengthen and stabilize this metric, Wyoming is looking at the Talent Transition Project to help showcase growing occupations and industries where participants will likely be able to find higher wages.

The Wyoming Talent Transition Project did not launch until 2024 so there is no data for the previous two years. This is an outreach campaign to create a larger flow of adults seeking career changes to growing occupations and industries and to increase the ability of the workforce and education systems not only reach new populations, but also work together to help people receive the skills they need to transition to new jobs and careers in growing industries, especially those with Next Gen Partnerships. The project's main component is a library of career exploration videos that businesses can use for recruiting and the core partners can use for career counseling.

The assessment from the preceding two years shows that measurable skill gains for WIOA Youth participants are not as high as they could be. This rate has increased from 92.4% of the

goal to 94% of the goal over the two year period. Part of the way Wyoming is working to improve this metric is by implementing the Youth Collaborative Group.

The Youth Collaborative Group was established and is still contributing to Wyoming's success in increasing the service delivery to youth throughout the state. Wyoming is building from this successful base and benefiting from previous years of very strong growth in Youth enrollment. Resources have been deployed to nearly every corner of the state and the focus now shifts to systemic improvements making certain that quality case management continues to improve deliverable assistance to Wyoming's at-risk youth. Endeavoring to strengthen existing partnerships and build on successes through the application of new staff training and the standardization of processes for consistent and repeatable success. WIOA youth programs Partners, especially Community Colleges and Adult Education, have been instrumental in the Wyoming Educational Attainment Taskforce to design strategies to assist with reaching a higher credential and certificate attainment rate by 2025.

Wyoming's commitment to leveraging partnerships with renowned training programs and securing certifications for its workforce center staff through entities like Workforce180, along with the adoption of leadership and professional development courses informed by experts such as Brene Brown, reflects a strategic alignment with WIOA's goals. This alignment not only enhances individual and organizational competencies but also strategically positions Wyoming to address the evolving needs of both its workforce and the broader labor market. By embedding these initiatives, Wyoming articulates a clear vision for a skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce, poised to meet the current and future challenges of the economic landscape.

Training consists of the following:

- **Brene Brown's Leadership Training:** Leadership training by Brene Brown indicates a focus on cultivating courage, vulnerability, empathy, and other critical leadership qualities that foster effective team and organizational dynamics. Brene Brown is renowned for her research on these topics, suggesting that the leadership in this context values these principles.
- **Professional Development Courses:** The inclusion of courses on Managing Emotions, Unconscious Bias, and Communication and Teamwork highlights an awareness of both the interpersonal and practical skills necessary for a productive workplace. These courses are essential for developing a supportive, inclusive, and collaborative work environment.
- **Certifications through Workforce180:** The requirement for all workforce center staff to obtain certification in Case Management, ReEntry Services, and Business Services Certification indicates a structured approach to professional development. Workforce180 is known for its focus on workforce development professionals, suggesting that these certifications are relevant and valuable for staff working in employment and training services.
- **New Hire Introduction to Wagner-Peyser and WIOA** – This short introduction for case managers working with the WP and WIOA programs provides a basic overview of these programs and required partners. WIOA eligibility and participant services are discussed, and resources and tools shared. Confidentiality and the importance of people-first communication are emphasized. Performance measures and relevant data will also be discussed.



- **Wagner Peyser** – Individuals learn how to use HireWyo to assist job seekers on how to register, add skills, complete the interest profiler, build resumes and virtual recruiters, view labor market information, and complete a thorough job search. The HireWyo.com online job-matching system will be reviewed, highlighting the available resources (Allison, ETPL). Additional job searching tools are provided and discussed.
- **WIOA 101** – Individuals learn the eligibility requirements for WIOA participants, including dates of application, eligibility, and participation. Much time is spent on the step-by-step process of WIOA. This training covers the Wagner-Peyser (WP) application and services for WP and WIOA. Information is provided on how to set up alerts and pull WIOA case management reports. A WIOA file review is completed to emphasize WIOA monitoring and data validation.
- **WIOA Case Management** – Individuals will learn the core elements and process of case management, how to appropriately document/case note contact versus service delivery, and understand activities and services in relation to case management.

## **Title II- Adult Education**

The State Office for Adult Education conducts monthly reviews of local program performance and captures this data for each month in a longitudinal spreadsheet of monthly performance across multiple years. This allows the State to closely monitor current year performance as well as provide a comparison of to-date performance as related to a previous point in time. The data collected from these monthly reviews across the past two years has shown that the State's AE programs are:

- experiencing increased enrollments, including co-enrollments between the core partners
- diversifying program offerings
- meeting or exceeding federally negotiated performance targets and state post testing targets
- capturing more 'out of school' youth for completion of high school equivalency certificates
- providing increased opportunities for participants to enroll in work experience programs, inclusive of integrated and education training programs

This same data is used to review local provider's performance and to measure whether providers are meeting both federally negotiated performance targets as well as state assessment post-test rates to ensure that all measures are taken at the local level to capture allowable educational functioning level gains.

State level quarterly data matches on employment and postsecondary enrollment outcomes are another evaluative tool used by the Title II programs in Wyoming. These state level data matches are supplemented at the program level by a local survey tool to capture employment and postsecondary enrollments on students who have not provided a social security number and/or for those participants occupations are not reported to the State UI system.

Along with the federal NRS tables found at: <https://nrs.ed.gov/>, Charts 1-4 below provide a graphic representation of Title II program evaluative results for measurable skill gains and outcome measures across the past three-year period.

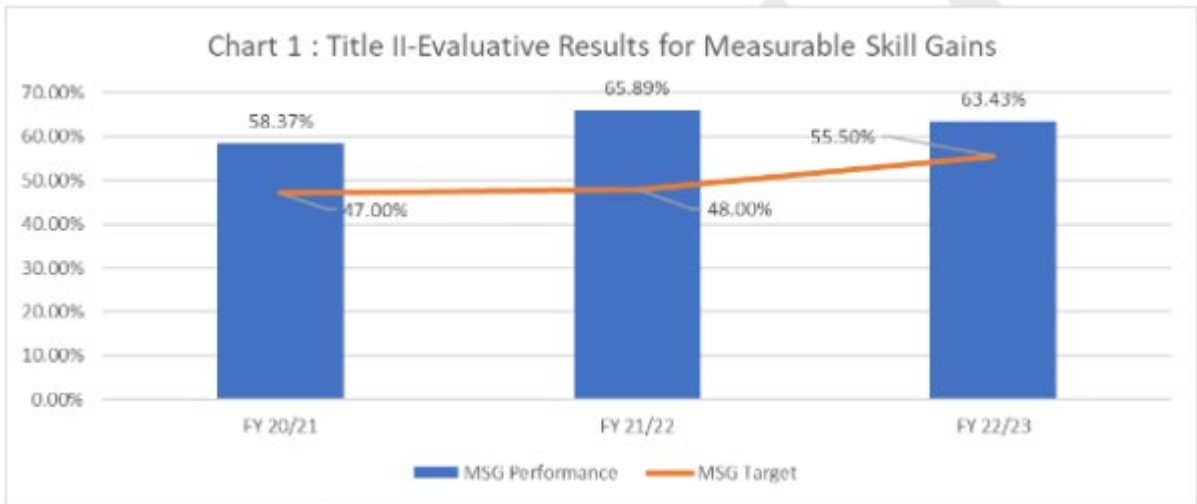
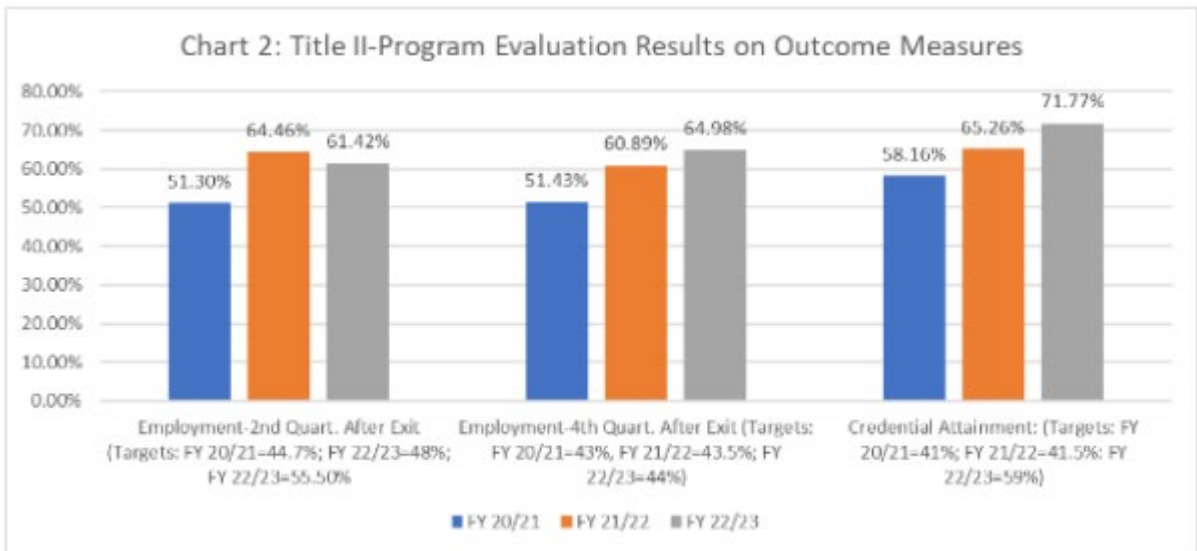


Chart I clearly depicts that for each year, the Title II programs in Wyoming have consistently met and surpassed all federal negotiated targets for measurable skill gains. The primary reason for these successes is due to increased local evaluative and state level processes which captured participant progress at early levels. In addition, the State Title II programs did not begin to adopt the additional measurable skill gain strategies as outlined in OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2, such as ‘milestones and completion of a technical exam’ until FY 21/22. With a new State policy regarding how to use these two measures for educational functioning level completions, there has been a gradual increase in MSG completions over FY 20/21.

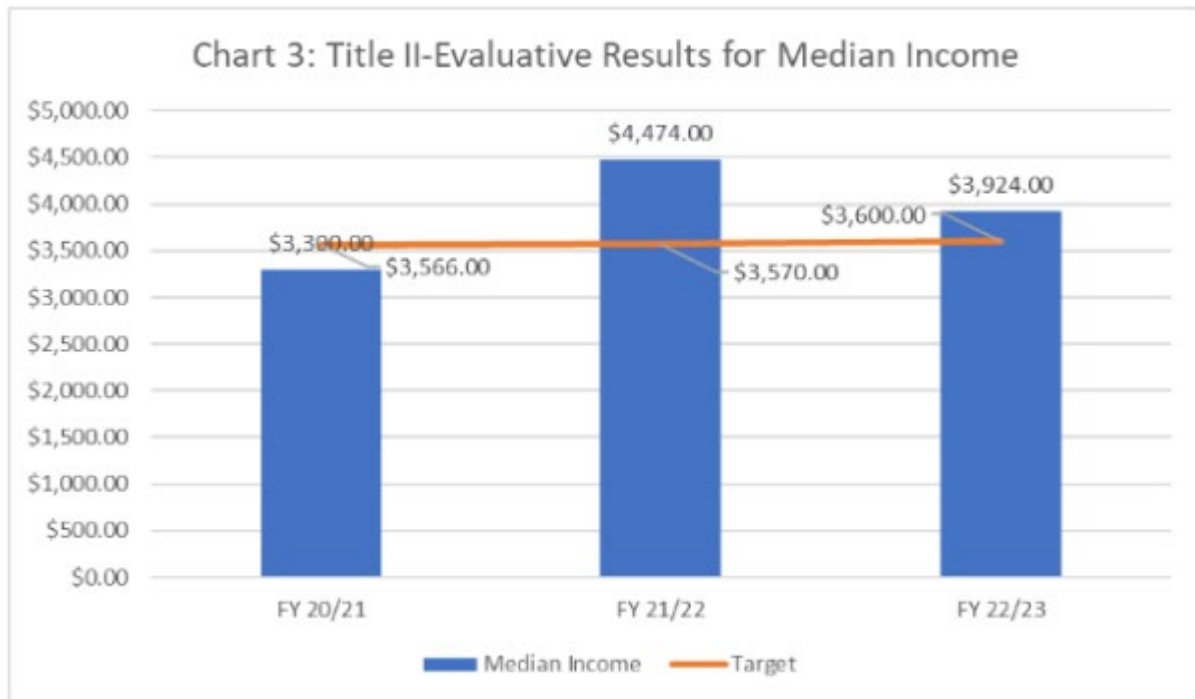


Across the three year period depicted in Chart 2, Title II programs have shown continuous program improvement across all measures, except in FY 22/23 for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit. Although the percentage of students employed in the second quarter after exit dipped a bit in this fiscal year, the overall percentage surpassed federally negotiated targets for that year. The primary justification for the general increase in the number of students entering employment after exiting a Title II program stems from several strategies implemented across the past several years.

Strategy One: Title II partnered with Titles I & III to place an increasing number of students into work experience programs, such as internships, job shadows, and other on-the-job training programs.

**Strategy Two:** Title II began partnering with at least one employer to offer AEFLA activities on-site at the employers' place of business. This partnership, although still relatively new, promises to consider participants for salary increases and/or promotions within the company once the participant completes a program of study.

The State's Title II programs have experienced a dramatic increase in credential attainment rates. This has stemmed primarily from increased monitoring and evaluation of various reporting and data entry protocols at both the local and state levels. This was also complimented by advanced trainings conducted by LiteracyPro LACES on how NRS Table 5 outcome measures are populated.



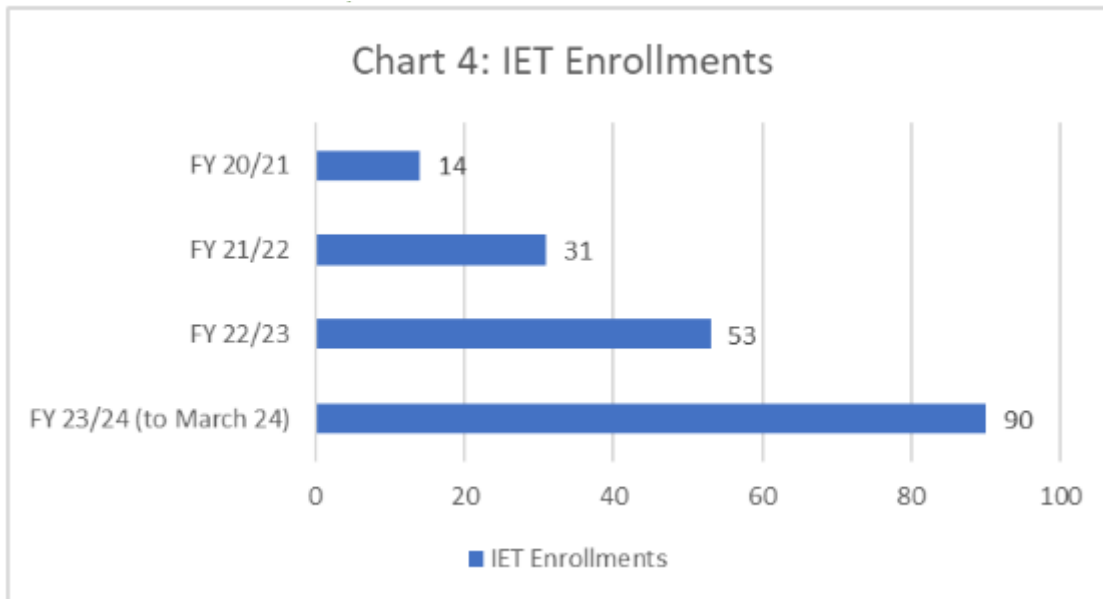
Median Income is an area in which Title II programs in Wyoming struggle a great deal to meet federally negotiated targets. Wyoming's frontier status has regions of the State where employment possibilities are extremely limited. Because these areas often lack a single major employer and have minimal career opportunities beyond ranching and farming, Title II completers often leave the area in search of employment opportunities.

Second, the State has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country and Title II students who complete a program of study in Adult Education often struggle to find employment where they can earn a family sustaining wage.

In addition, across the past three years, Title II had very few IET programs or other credentialed programs beyond a high school equivalency where students could earn a 'living' wage upon completion of Adult Education. Because of this, multiple new strategies and trainings were completed throughout the past three years to try and increase employment related data on Title II participants. This included:

- 1) All Title II programs in the State completed at least one OCTAE sponsored IET Design Camp. The State is attempting to expand IET enrollments so that participants have increased opportunities to find employment and earn a sustaining income.
- 2) Extensive training and professional development was completed with multiple stakeholders (inclusive of the local community colleges, core partners, and Adult Education Staff)

3) Obtaining joint ARPA funding to develop and advance IET's in the State. This ARPA funded project was a joint proposal between Titles I, II, and III and was approved by the Governor in early Spring 2023. The program launched in July 2023 and at present there are approximately 90 students enrolled in IET's across the State. Although this may seem like a small number, it is a 41% increase over the previous year and an 84% increase in IET enrollments since FY 20/21



At the end of each year, the State Office for Adult Education conducts a comprehensive review of State performance and compiles this data into multiple documents for dissemination to relevant stakeholders. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- General publications, such as 'Aligning and Redesigning an Adult Education Foundational System'
- State Adult Education Profile
- The Wyoming Community College Commission's Dashboard Metrics and Analytics for Adult Education

Comprehensive monitoring tools conducted by the State across the past three years has seen all programs in compliance with federal and state protocols for Title II. In fact, these bi-annual monitoring protocols have been so successful that the State will begin a new monitoring strategy beginning in fiscal year 2024/2025 whereby local providers will be subject to at least one comprehensive monitoring within the first two years of a grant contract. Based upon the evaluative results of this initial monitoring, local providers will be subject to a 'Focused Monitoring' that may only have the need to review four (or more) programmatic areas for compliance. (See State policy at: <https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/ae-policies>)

The evaluative protocols utilized by the State have consistently shown that local Title II providers are successfully implementing strategies to not only meet and surpass federally negotiated targets, but also to expand program offerings so that participants are offered the tools needed to successfully obtain employment at more than a basic minimum wage.

Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation is monitored by the Rehabilitation Services Administration(RSA) through quarterly case service reporting (RSA-911) and Annual Performance Reports (ETA-9169).

The RSA-911 collects data required to describe the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in the Annual Report to the Congress and the President as required by Sections 13 and 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by Title IV of WIOA. RSA also uses these data to assess the performance of the VR program through the calculation of evaluation standards and performance indicators as required by Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act, which must be consistent with the common performance accountability measures established in Section 116 of Title I of WIOA for the core programs of the workforce development system.

In Program Year 2021 (PY21), Vocational Rehabilitation reported the following negotiated and actual performance data measures (WY PY2021 data):

Indicator	PY 2021 Negotiated Rate	PY 2021 Actual Rate
Employment (2nd Qtr after exit)	N/A	52.6%
Employment (4th Qtr after exit)	N/A	48.7%
Median Earnings (2nd Qtr after exit)	N/A	\$4,677
Credential Attainment rate	N/A	26.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	40%	48.9%

For PY21, RSA only negotiated performance data goals with VR programs on the Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs). PY21 performance measures were noted to be impacted by the Covid pandemic as many individuals with disabilities had reduced employment hours or became unemployed across the state.

In Program Year 2022 (PY22) Vocational Rehabilitation reported the following negotiated and actual performance data measures (WY PY22 data):

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Rate	PY 2022 Actual Rate
Employment (2nd Qtr after exit)	42.6%	50.5%
Employment (4th Qtr after exit)	34.6%	46.8%
Median Earnings (2nd Qtr after exit)	\$4,100	\$5,950
Credential Attainment rate	26.8%	27.2%
Measurable Skill Gains*	57.6%	29.6%

*\* RSA determined that the available baseline data are not sufficient to produce reliable estimates using the required statistical adjustment model for the remaining performance indicators. Therefore, the Departments have determined it is necessary to use their transition authority, pursuant to section 503(a) of WIOA, to delay assessment of: • Measurable Skill Gains Rate for the WIOA titles I and IV core programs;*

Vocational Rehabilitation met or exceeded all of the performance data measures in PY22. This increase in actual rates is attributed to increased training of agency staff on proper entering of necessary data and improved client services leading towards successful employment outcomes.

Performance trends for both measurable skill gains and outcome measures across the past several years reflects the State's efforts to monitor and evaluate program performance. These trends have consistently shown that the AE programs in Wyoming are meeting and/or surpassing federally negotiated targets; thereby reflecting the State's effectiveness in assessing its Title II programs.

### C. EVALUATION

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services Program and Performance Team conducts annual programmatic compliance monitoring of the WIOA programs at the American Job Centers (AJC). WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth files will be sampled during a case file review that includes interactive technical assistance to ensure compliance with federal WIOA regulations and DWS WIOA policy and procedures. Results and recommendations of the monitoring are reviewed with the AJC managers, Workforce Specialists, and One-Stop Operator. A report identifying deficiencies and recommendations for improvement is disseminated. Corrective action may be recommended. This monitoring enables AJC Managers to readily see how well the American Job Centers are performing.

Desk reviews by AJC Managers include regular monitoring of participant WIOA expenditures. The process of monitoring expenditures includes allocations from all the monthly payments made on behalf of WIOA participants to ensure Wyoming is on track with expending funds within the program year. The results of the review are documented on the monitoring form, and a copy is maintained in the WIOA case file. As necessary, AJC Managers will perform regular follow-up to ensure any areas of concern are corrected for resolution.

WIOA data element validation verifies the accuracy of WIOA participant data used to generate the WIOA performance reports. A report on the results of the WIOA data element validation review will be issued each year. The Performance Team shares performance measures and annual outcomes with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

Data for program evaluation is collected using various methods, including surveys (telephone), public forums, site reviews, grant reports, customer satisfaction surveys, and performance indicators. This information is analyzed by management; if appropriate, it is shared with American Job Center staff, service providers, grantees, federal funding agencies, legislature, clients, and others. The analysis is used to assess unmet client needs, improve services, and to

guide the Division in planning its future focus and direction. The information is also used to assess and forecast the training needs of the Division's staff through various offerings such as conference calls, in-person training, and video google hangout training. Lastly, the core partners share performance measures and annual outcomes with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

The DWS Research and Planning division previously performed evaluations and research projects under the Core WIOA programs, however, they are no longer able to perform these functions. WWDC contracted with Northern Illinois University to provide these. WWDC is undertaking an equity-focused evaluation of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program outcomes. This evaluation will utilize an analytical tool to identify potential disproportionate impacts based on sex/race/ethnicity. The disproportionate impact analysis will be followed by qualitative analysis that will collect program delivery information from state and local area front-line staff and other stakeholders to identify best practices and areas for potential improvement.

## 5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

### A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

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

Wyoming follows WIOA Sec. 128(b)(2)(A)(i) to allocate funding for Youth Program activities.

The State applies the 90% "hold harmless" provision contained in WIOA, Section 128(b)(2)(A)(ii).

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

Wyoming follows WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2)(A)(i) to allocate formula funding for Adult Program activities.

The State applies the 90% "hold harmless" provision contained in WIOA, Section 128(b)(2)(A)(ii).

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

Wyoming is a Single Area State that is not required to follow standard data factors. However, Dislocated Worker funds are distributed to American Job Centers based on a formula allocation. The formula was developed in partnership with the state agency, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), local elected officials, and approved by the WWDC. The determining factors used in the calculation are Labor Force Data, Unemployment Data,

Population, and Poverty Data within the counties to determine a percentage for funding allocation to each of the American Job Centers.

## B. FOR TITLE II

### I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

The WCCC is the eligible agency that administers the Adult Education and Family Literacy grant funding and provides oversight and technical assistance to local programs while monitoring performance.

Adult Education and literacy providers approved under the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014 that were funded in the 2020/21 grant year will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2025. A competition will be held in Spring 2025 to identify AEFLA providers for a subsequent five-year period. Providers are expected to follow State and federal guidance and expectations as measured through the annual applications, financial reports, and their program performance in meeting the state negotiated targets approved by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE).

In January 2020, the WCCC implemented a new grant competition for 2020-25, with 2020-21 being the first grant year of a five-year grant cycle. WCCC advertised the request-for-proposals (RFP) as a five-year renewable grant to all eligible providers in Wyoming for the purpose of developing, implementing, and providing adult education across the State. The same RFP was posted electronically on the WCCC website and advertised in newspapers across the State.

Identical protocols will be used for all future competitions for Adult Education. In the 2025 grant competition the State office for Adult Education will release two distinct grant RFPs for:

1. AEFLA providers to include services identified in Section 2A of this Unified State Plan for Adult Education, Corrections education and Integrated and Training Education
2. IELCE providers for the delivery of federal and state approved IELCE services to qualified non-native speakers of English

These Requests for Proposals will be a competitive multi-year grant process that does not establish a dollar amount or the number of grants accepted per region in the State.

The thirteen considerations in awarding grants (WIOA Sec. 231(e)) will be included in the proposal, in the readers' rubrics, and will be used in awarding the grants. The evaluation of submitted applications will follow the State's policy for 'Scoring Adult Education Competitive Grants'. This policy delineates scoring responsibilities to three reader categories: Demonstrated Effectiveness Team, Alignment Team and a Compliance Team. Each team will evaluate applications utilizing different criteria.

Submitted applications must also show alignment to Statewide economic and educational initiatives to upscale educational efforts to train Wyoming residents. Presently, these initiatives include:

1. Strategic Planning document from the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, the State WIB for WIOA core partners. This planning document identifies four overarching goals with multiple strategies outlined under each goal. Local providers are required to



establish multiple programmatic goals that depict how they will meet the goals outlined by the State WIB.

2. Next Generation Sector Partnerships: the Wyoming Workforce Development Council entered into a partnership to launch Next Generation Sector Partnership projects around the State in an effort to grow critical economic sectors and to form an alignment with many education, workforce training, economic development, and government partners. Because Next Generation Sector Partnerships are not available in all areas of the State, providers from these areas will not be required to show Sector partnership alignment. Narrative discussions throughout the application will discuss this.
3. Postsecondary Educational Attainment Initiative which aims to achieve educational attainment goals of 67% by 2025 and 82% by 2040 as outlined in State Executive Orders. The Initiative outlines multiple focus areas which local Adult Education programs will be required to begin or continue alignment to, when applicable. Narrative responses in the application will discuss this.

Adult Education programs in Wyoming will also be required to establish programmatic goals, when applicable, that:

- Include opportunities for participants to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment
- Identify career pathways tracks that demonstrate the use of stackable credentials, when applicable, so that the needs of employers in, in-demand industries can be met
- Allow for the incorporation of services outlined in the State's Digital Equity Planning Grant. At present, the State Office of Adult Education is working with the Wyoming Business Council to submit federal grant applications for the Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant and the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. If approved, local Adult Education providers will have increased access to funding in support of infrastructure and digital literacy costs.
- Address local programmatic goals for program improvement, learner needs, and professional development

Organizations eligible to apply for AEFLA funding must have *demonstrated effectiveness* in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals. These organizations may include a local education agency, a community-or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition of agencies organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

The State will review *demonstrated effectiveness* by reviewing two-year trends in performance data in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language. Applications that meet the '*Demonstrated Effectiveness*' requirement will be further screened for review, scoring, and consideration of funding. Applications that do not result in a determination that the application was from an organization of *demonstrated effectiveness* will not be further considered for funding and will be notified within five days of being deemed ineligible.

Previously funded applicants under WIOA are required to provide performance data under section 116 to demonstrate effectiveness in the aforementioned skill areas. An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving Basic Skills Deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in § 463.24.

The WCCC uses a performance-based funding allocation model in the distribution of federal and state grant funds. The allocation model considers the following elements: enrollment, high-school dropout rate, poverty level, rural/isolated areas, performance, and target populations.

To ensure that potential new programs have the background and experience to include services tailored for Wyoming's main AE population, programs are required to submit:

- Four years of history on the organization's management of grants;
- An organizational chart depicting Adult Education;
- The name of a qualified candidate to hold the position of Director for Adult Education for the applicant's institution; and
- The names and qualifications of instructors

Applicants submitting requests for proposals are also required to submit a description of the overall project management, which will help to ensure successful outcomes.

Each prospective provider is requested to submit data demonstrating their capacity to serve eligible AE program students and the providers' previous effectiveness in helping students make educational gains and meet outcome measures.

Intensity and duration of instruction are considered as program applications are reviewed. Quality instruction, including the use of standards-based education, the Essential Components of Reading, digital and financial literacy and Teaching Skills that Matter should be provided by high-quality instructors to ensure programs meet negotiated performance targets.

## II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.

Requests for proposals will be issued once every five years, and an announcement will be used to advertise the request for proposals, both electronically and in print. All applicants for Adult Education funds will use the same form for a response.

Direct and equitable access will be ensured by requesting that all applicants, prior recipients, and new applicants provide data demonstrating their ability to help students make a measurable learning gain. Prior recipients will use data from LACES to show how they met state-negotiated performance measures for all student levels. New organizations will be provided with forms to show demonstrated student learning gain, including low-literacy levels and English language learners. Applicants will also be required to explain how they will demonstrate that students have the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to postsecondary education, skill training, or employment.

## C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

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

Vocational Rehabilitation General (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (Older Blind) are one combined Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Designated State Unit) that operates under the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (Designated State Agency).

## 6. PROGRAM DATA

### A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

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

Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

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

The core programs, the State, and WWDC continue to work together to find solutions to share data and referrals among the programs. At some levels, this is completed through shared Google Sheets. These efforts will continue as well as researching other technology that may help make the programs more interoperable. At this time vendor and cost constraints continue to be a significant barrier.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council's Policy 6, Monitoring Validation, describes the data collection and reporting processes. The policy can be seen below or is able to be viewed here: <https://wyowdc.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Policy-6-Monitoring-Validation-09.2021.pdf>

As previously referenced, the Research & Planning section will continue to develop and disseminate information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workforce investment grants, state-funded labor market information, and where possible, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health supported workplace safety research, evaluation, and surveillance.

Several disparate case management and data systems are in use across the WIOA core programs and the Research & Planning section within the Wyoming DWS. The State of Wyoming uses Google Apps for email, calendar, and collaborative communications. Google Apps is available to all State of Wyoming employees. The Research & Planning section has multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that allow for data sharing between core programs, partner programs, surrounding states' programs, and the LMI Division.

Following is a description of each case management system used by the core programs.

### **Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Workers & Youth - HireWyo**

DWS currently uses Career Edge's Virtual Operating System for labor exchange services and case management. The state's electronic labor management system, HireWyo, is part of the virtual One-Stop System designed and operated by Career Edge of North Haven, Connecticut. The Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and Trade Adjustment Assistance system applications have been in place in Wyoming at Work, which was a system designed and operated by Geographic Solutions, Inc., of Palm Harbor, Florida for years, and have been migrated to the Career Edge platform with regular updates. HireWyo is still in the rollout phase at the time of this writing, but it will also include detailed labor market information and Wyoming's list of eligible training providers. As the system is integrated, DWS has a Change Control Board in place and working directly with Career Edge. Newer modules and version upgrades are continually added to improve and streamline the services available to Wyoming's job seekers, employers, and DWS staff. The HireWyo case management system will allow DWS to focus on its state strategies, which include streamlining services to improve outcomes.

DWS uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DWS uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client Social Security numbers (SSNs) submitted through Web applications are obfuscated during receipt in the database. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS program staff can view applicant/trainee information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by their management or designated representative.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation - InFormed**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) currently utilizes the InFormed system for case management. The system is operated by Libera, Inc. of Jamestown, New York. The General Rehabilitation Program, Supported Employment, Small Business Program, and Youth Transition Program are managed with this system. Regular updates will occur to the system to maintain compliance with State and federal requirements. DVR installed this system on October 1, 2022. Newer modules and system upgrades have continually been added to improve and streamline the services available to DVR staff as they work to assist the eligible population with disabilities in Wyoming.

DVR uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DVR uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS staff can view all client information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized DWS staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by the DVR management team.

### **Title II-Adult Education**

The Adult Education programs in Wyoming utilize the National Reporting System student information management system entitled LiteracyPro LACES. LACES collects demographic,

assessment, instructional contact hours, and programmatic level information. It is able to disaggregate data as needed. Performance measures for postsecondary entry, integrated education and training, integrated English literacy and civics education, corrections education, family literacy, and completion of high school equivalency are also collected. Employment status is collected upon entry, and data matching of employment to Adult Education clients is completed through the State's UI system and through the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS). Only aggregated data is available to local providers and is what is submitted to the National Reporting System portal for federal reporting.

The collection of relevant and mandated data for Wyoming's AE programs begins at intake and continues throughout the instructional process and for up to one year after exit. Private Personal Information (PPI), barriers to employment, educational and employment information, disabilities, and other relevant information is gathered on an electronic intake form and is automatically uploaded into LACES once a participant completes the online form. Local programs then invite the student to participate in a career service course where additional data, such as assessments, career explorations, referrals, FAFSA completions and other pertinent data is collected and subsequently entered into LACES. Enrollments and attendance hours are captured on a weekly basis and are entered into the database. As a student progresses through a program of study, data related to training, credentials earned and involvement in other local AE activities is captured and entered into LACES. Post-exit data is captured through data matches and/or surveys for up to one year after exit.

Data related to enrollments in postsecondary and/or training programs is primarily captured through local provider and State data matches to the National Student Clearinghouse, local college institutional research databases and the State DMARS database.

Local programs are also required to utilize paper-based, federally approved survey forms, to capture post exit participant data on unique populations which may not report to UI or for individuals who the program has not been able to obtain a social security number for.

Co-enrollment numbers are also captured on a quarterly basis through shared excel spreadsheets among the WIOA core partners. Although the WIOA core partners do not utilize a shared database to capture participant information, co-enrollment information is shared amongst the relevant partners as long as FERPA regulations are in place.

LACES users in the State are provided with annual LACES supported training to effectively use the software, including diagnosis of data, report productions, performance reviews, data validation, and online technical assistance. Many features are built into the next version of the software. Three training sessions are held per year, with one offering specific assistance to individual programs with a strong emphasis on data quality.

The National Reporting System Guidelines are part of the training all local directors receive. Definitions, charts of educational functioning levels, assessments, and recommended procedures needed in data recording and reporting are included in this guidance. Aggregated data is reported through the National Reporting System portal to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career Technical and Adult Education.

AE includes students registered with HireWyo as part of the induction/intake process for unemployed persons.

### **State Reporting Protocols**

Reporting protocols for Wyoming's AE providers consist of monthly data reviews, quarterly reports and a comprehensive end of year report.

## **Labor market information**

Wyoming intends to extend, continue, and where relevant, revise the historical and current provision of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and Adult, Dislocated worker, and youth program participation data collected through the one-stop system provided to Research and Planning for longitudinal and descriptive analysis in support of planning and evaluation using UI administrative records, occupational licensing, and educational outcomes. LMI is a crucial link between all the core partner programs.

### **Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth - HireWyo**

Wyoming currently uses an information management system called HireWyo, operated by a third-party vendor, Career Edge. HireWyo facilitates common data collection for Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Veterans Employment and Training Services, and Trade Adjustment Assistance. Reporting of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser data and performance outcomes, including Veterans Program data and outcomes, is accomplished through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

The management information system collects and stores the data for required Federal reports, including:

- Wagner Peyser Act 7B Reports for the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program (MIC);
- 9048 Profiling Report.

HireWyo contains a component library system that collects and stores elements required for Federal reports, captures the appropriate elements from data forms, then generates the Federal and State mandated Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment and Training Services, and Trade Adjustment Act reports. Reports include both quarterly and annual reports required under these acts.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation - Case Management System**

DVR installed a new case management system in October 2022, hosted by a third-party vendor, Libera, Inc. The system is designed to keep the DVR in compliance with data collecting and reporting requirements of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and WIOA. The system collects, stores, and processes information into formats necessary to meet the needs of the following reports:

- RSA 911 Annual Report;
- RSA 17 Annual Report.

DVR will work closely with other DWS divisions to ensure that appropriate system integration and data-sharing occurs to align resources, improve reporting processes and outcomes, and enhance the consumer's experience. The ultimate goal is to have the WIOA core programs working seamlessly together.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation

Wyoming continues to work toward data alignment and integration across the six core programs and the state's education systems. Several core programs and future combined plan programs are already integrated from an intake, case management, and reporting perspective.

The integrated programs are Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Trade Adjustment Assistance, MSFWs, and Veterans. Presently, management information systems are not fully interoperable. However, for research purposes, including evaluation, Research & Planning's data either is or will be integrated across Social Security numbers and student identifiers for descriptive analysis and predictive and explanatory purposes. Research & Planning obtains student records, including personally identifiable information, from all of the public education institutions for research and evaluation, including WIOA purposes. Employer information is collected quarterly from UI and Workers' Compensation records. Administrative records for research purposes are collected on a weekly, quarterly, semester, and annual basis. WIOA participant records are acquired quarterly, while Vocational Rehabilitation and AE are collected annually. AE and Vocational Rehabilitation records will be collected on a quarterly basis.

Research & Planning's established data collection and management system will be sustained by DWS to evaluate performance, provide user-friendly information, and enhance knowledge about the workforce system. Research & Planning data collection and management systems will also be used under WIOA to meet longitudinal tracking and evaluation research requirements.

WWDC will work in conjunction with DWS and the Community College Commission to provide research and recommendations to the Governor regarding technology alignment across the mandatory One-Stop partner programs. This will be an extension of Wyoming's "no wrong door" philosophy, which enables customers across all of the core programs and mandatory partners to experience a streamlined and more seamless service delivery model.

The core programs' management information systems operate with vendor-managed solutions. Each vendor is contractually responsible to develop and provide the required data outputs for federal performance accountability reporting under WIOA.

As stated before, the core programs, the State, and the WWDC continue to work together to find solutions to share data and referrals among the programs. At some levels, this is completed through shared Google Sheets. These efforts will continue as well as researching other technology that may help make the programs more interoperable. At this time vendor and cost constraints continue to be a significant barrier.

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

The State currently does not have any ongoing projects designed to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan. However, the state will continue to look at ways to integrate data systems and service delivery to help track participation across all programs included in this plan. With the state's current technology solutions, this has not been practical due to potential costs and vendor constraints.

Although there are no plans to develop a system whereby participant data between the core partners is integrated into one unique system, the core partners are sharing aggregate and disaggregated data in a variety of ways.

Titles I & III currently share the same Management Information System (MIS), so all individuals enrolled in these titles have a streamlined registration for enrollment into these programs. Additionally, the TANF, SNAP, National Dislocated Worker Grant, TAA, Child Support, RESEA,

and Pathways programs all utilize the same system. Additionally, SCSEP case management will be coordinated through the system in the near future. This same MIS will soon also have a referral page to help formal and informal partners easily refer individuals to the one-stop system.

Title I, II, & III currently have an integrated 'youth' project where participant data on benchmarks such as educational functioning levels gains, placement into work experience, completion of a high school equivalency, entry into post secondary education/training, employment, etc. is shared through a 'Google' document. Student timesheets for participation in adult education classrooms/activities are signed off by the local Adult Education director and submitted to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. This Google document is updated weekly and is used to track and evaluate participant progress. The sharing of this disaggregated data is complemented by a Quarterly Report, produced by the State's Title II program to share general information, aggregate data on outcome measures and measurable skill gains for this group of co-enrolled 'youth'.

Second, the same Title programs also have two other joint projects whereby data is shared between the core partners. These ARPA projects co-enroll all participants into Title III upon enrollment into Title II. Title II staff track participants' progress in adult education and share this information with Title III on a quarterly basis through a State-level tracking system using an Excel spreadsheet. Title III is also responsible for identifying whether enrolled participants qualify for Title I services.

Through a quarterly data match system, conducted at the State level, the core partners are able to track and identify participants who are co-enrolled, attained a credential, entered postsecondary, and for employment purposes.

Title II has also developed an online intake form that automatically feeds data into the LACES database. The link to this intake form can be placed on all core partner websites (and the websites of other community service providers) to provide ease of access in registering for Title II services in this State.

The RESEA program coordinates directly with the UI team to ensure the flow of information between the two programs. Currently, this is being done via a spreadsheet. The team hopes that if funding is sufficient, they may be able to explore some sort of connection between the state's MIS and the UI system.

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

WWDC will continue to work in conjunction with DWS and the Community College Commission to provide research and recommendations to the Governor regarding technology alignment across the mandatory One-Stop partner programs. Currently we have not identified any ways for the separate information management systems to align. The WWDC has started a project to create a crosswalk of terms across all core and most required partner programs. This is the first step to organizing the different data systems so that they can be analyzed. The WWDC is taking steps to create the "no wrong door" philosophy, which enables customers across all of the core programs and mandatory partners to experience a streamlined and more seamless service



delivery model. Currently, the DWS RESEA program works with UI directly to ensure the flow of information and participants between these two programs. UI staff also have access to the MIS system, to ensure that they can verify information as needed to ensure that benefits can be paid to UI Claimants as efficiently as possible. Major steps will require additional funding that the state simply doesn't have. Wyoming is a minimally funded state with rural challenges and creating a platform that aligns all partner programs is not feasible at this time.

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

Workforce Services, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation will submit reports required under section 116, performance accountability separately. Workforce Services will submit reports for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser. Wages are obtained from the State Unemployment data and the Statewide Wage Interchange System (SWIS) and entered into the management information system (MIS). The MIS will create the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) which will be submitted through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

##### Title II

Wyoming's Title II programs utilize LiteracyPro LACES as its participant database. Local program data is entered weekly into the system to track participant data, classroom data, and staff data. Providers are also required to conduct quarterly data matches with the local community college and the National Student Clearinghouse to identify enrollments in postsecondary/training. At the local level, employment & postsecondary data is also often captured through surveys or through data shared by a partnering agency. In addition, quarterly data matches, conducted at the State level, to UI, SWIS, the National Student Clearinghouse and the Wyoming Community College's DMARS program, capture participant data as related to employment and post-secondary education/training. Once data is collected, it is entered into LACES and is used to assess the effectiveness of the local program(s) and of the State's Title II program in achieving positive outcomes for participants. The LACES database then produces all required NRS reports, as identified in WIOA Sec. 116.

##### Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation

Wyoming Vocational Rehabilitation utilizes the InFormed case management system for collecting and tracking client information. The InFormed case management system (CMS) collects data entered by VR staff members as they pertain to case progress and performance data. All elements required by the RSA-911 reporting criteria are captured in the CMS and quarterly reports are submitted to RSA per Federal guidelines. This quarterly reporting allows for VR administration to identify anomalies in data reporting and provide correction in a timely manner. Additionally, VR utilizes quarterly data matches with Wyoming Unemployment Insurance (UI) records and the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to verify performance data measures pertaining to median earnings 2nd quarter after exit, employment rate 2nd quarter after exit and employment rate 4th quarter after exit. VR currently verifies measurable skill gains and credential attainment through direct contact with clients and manual entry of the information.

#### B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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

In addition to the required federal reports, the core programs plan to work with the Research & Planning section to further assess participants' post-program success. All datasets in the Research & Planning's system of administrative records are either linked longitudinally or are consistently linked for longitudinal analysis on a project-by-project basis. Quarterly and weekly UI administrative records are maintained from 1992 and are updated weekly and quarterly.

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

## **Title II: Adult Education**

Title II programs in Wyoming assess post-program success by capturing data through data-matching and/or surveying on;

1. percentage of participants employed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
2. percentage of participants employed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
3. median income of participants in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
4. percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND enrolled in postsecondary education/training within one year of exit
5. percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND employed within one year of exit
6. percentage of participants who have attained a postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exit
7. percentage of participants who have attained any credential (unduplicated)

Additionally, once Adult Education data becomes part of the SLDS project, longitudinal AE data will also be available to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment.

### **C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA**

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

DWS continues to obtain and use quarterly Unemployment Insurance wage records for performance accountability and as a source for workforce and labor market information. Additionally, DWS used the WRIS system and is now connected and actively using the SWIS wage data system to supplement available Wyoming Unemployment Insurance wage records.

#### D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

DWS implements multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DWS uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client Social Security numbers submitted through Web applications are obfuscated during receipt in the database. Servers housing the databases containing Social Security Numbers are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS program staff can view applicant/trainee information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by their management or designated representative.

DWS is working closely with the WCCC to obtain direction from the Office of Career Technical and AE. When clarification is issued by that office, the WCCC will share the guidance with DWS so those requirements may be implemented to comply with all applicable Federal laws. The staff of the WCCC is in frequent contact with DWS's Office of Workforce Programs.

UI will safeguard wage and other data by following applicable State and Federal Laws and Regulations. The most detailed and determinative of these regulations is 20 C.F.R. § 603. UI will follow the safeguards and security requirements for disclosed information. In addition, UI will require all entities who successfully obtain a data-sharing agreement with UI to enter into a memorandum of understanding or another equally binding instrument to ensure that the regulatory and statutory safeguards are maintained. This will include, but not be limited to, requiring the recipient to safeguard the information disclosed, allow UI to audit the recipient to ensure compliance with the agreement, and limit or prohibit disclosure of confidential information.

DVR adheres to 34 C.F.R. Part 361.38 with regard to the disclosure of client data. All clients, applicants, or client representatives shall be informed of DVR's need to collect certain personal information and policies governing its use and confidentiality. All client or applicant information acquired as a part of the rehabilitation process shall remain the property of DVR and is strictly confidential. Client information shall only be used for purposes directly related to the administration of the individual's vocational rehabilitation program. This information cannot be shared with anyone except DVR staff without the client's informed written consent.

All Research & Planning Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (see web link located here: [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/education\\_we\\_connect.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/education_we_connect.htm)) involving personally identifiable information or employer records meet all requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Privacy Act, 20 C.F.R. Part 603, and all domain-specific (e.g., medical board or board of nursing) state and federal statutes, rules, and data donor standards regarding confidentiality. Confidentiality is further ensured by limiting staff access to confidential

information, federal and State confidentiality and security standards training, exposure to strategies to maximize richly detailed publication while employing standard screening techniques, and by a culture of confidentiality and security within the Research & Planning section. Security must meet the National Institute of Standards and Technology requirements, including a program of external audits.

## **Title II-Adult Education**

Security levels are assigned based on the employee's staffing position, with all access being established by administrative personnel at the state or local level. The State AE Office may access all student information databases (LACES) at the provider level. Local providers only see their own data. However, individual participant's post-exit employment data is only made available to the State. Local providers are only able to see comprehensive employment related percentages outlined on NRS Table 5. Unique client identification numbers are assigned within the system. Student SSN information is used only in the data-match process for employment and by the National Student Clearinghouse for students entering college or postsecondary skills training.

The AE program follows FERPA for all student records. FERPA, a federal law that guards the privacy of student education records, is applied to all schools that receive funds under any applicable programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA also affords certain rights to parents with respect to their child's education records. These rights are offered to the student when the student reaches the age of 18 or enters schooling beyond the high school level. Any student who receives these rights is deemed an "eligible student" under FERPA.

AE staff requires written permission from the eligible student or guardian on a release-of-information form before any student's records can be shared. Certain exceptions under FERPA permit an academic institution to disclose certain types of "directory" information. However, a student or guardian has the right to request this information not be disclosed. The AE staff is trained on the privacy rights of their students.

### **7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS.**

**A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR COVERED PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.**

**B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS.**

**C. DESCRIBE THE TRIAGE AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND OTHER POPULATIONS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST/CONSOLIDATED POSITION.**

Each One-Stop has posted information visible through signage and posters to all clients describing Priority of Service to notify all that Priority of Service is in place. All staff have been trained in Priority of Service and act to identify qualified covered persons during intake,

including an intake form to capture covered persons. Staff members are trained to ask if the client is a covered person and, if so, to provide labor exchange services that include employment, training, and placement services to qualified veterans. Reminders of Priority of Service are distributed to all staff through conference calls, staff meetings through capacity building, emails, in person, and when JVSG program staff meets with One-Stop staff during outreach. The State Veterans Coordinator provides training on Priority of Service to the states Workforce Centers. HireWyo has an emphasis on Veterans' Priority of Service, thereby providing opportunities so that veterans and their spouses know this priority exists.

Priority of Service to covered persons is implemented in several ways:

- Veteran Priority of Service describes the right of eligible covered individuals to take precedence over eligible non-covered individuals in obtaining services. The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person. If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before an equally qualified non-covered person;
- Covered individuals include a veteran or eligible spouse;
- A Veteran, for purposes of Priority of Service, is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active service includes full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full-time duty for training purposes;
- An eligible spouse is defined as the spouse of any of the following:
  - Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
  - Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the Priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days;
    - Missing in action;
    - Captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
    - Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
    - Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and
    - Any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.
- Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:
  - To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income

individuals, or individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA Adult formula funds.

- To non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Adult formula funds.
- To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.
- Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities, and older workers.

Individuals initially assessed by Wagner-Peyser staff through a checklist meeting the criteria of eligibility for DVOP services (per VETS policies) can also be offered a referral to a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist for comprehensive assessment and the provision of Individualized Career Services.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

To ensure Priority of Service compliance, the State Veterans Coordinator will review requirements of Priority of Service with all SWA/AJC staff concerning Priority of Service on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring the implementation of priority of service will be completed by the State Veterans Coordinator to ensure covered persons are made aware of and afforded priority of service. The State Veterans Coordinator is responsible for training all staff on priority of service and will assist in coordinating review activities within the state as well as provide reports and access records on priority of service. The State Veterans Coordinator will conduct on-site technical assistance visits to monitor priority of service. The State Veterans Coordinator will review reports on a quarterly basis for each One-Stop to ensure priority of service is implemented and to identify if any issues exist.

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

Individuals initially assessed by Wagner-Peyser staff through a checklist meeting the criteria of eligibility for DVOP services (per VETS policies) can also be offered a referral to a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist for comprehensive assessment and the provision of Individualized Career Services.

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)

regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Wyoming's One-Step centers have evaluated their delivery system to ensure it is available and accessible for all abilities of individuals. Through its certification process, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council has the evaluation team use an Americans with Disabilities Act checklist (available at [www.adachecklist.org](http://www.adachecklist.org)) to evaluate the centers to ensure they are accessible.

Additionally, the One-Stop center staff continues to evaluate new and improved ways to ensure that services are offered in an accessible manner, including ensuring the resource computers and other technology are easily accessible for any ability level. Disability awareness/etiquette training is being explored and will be shared with One-Stop staff when a viable resource is found.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council Policy Number 5, One-Stop Certification is below for reference:

### **1. Purpose**

To communicate Wyoming's process and procedures for evaluating and certifying one-stop sites under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA requires the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), in consultation with the Governor, to establish objective criteria and procedures to:

be used to evaluate and certify one-stop sites for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement.

### **2. Policy**

One-Stop Center Evaluation and Certification Criteria:

2.1 The WWDC, in consultation with the Governor, must review and update the one-stop center certification criteria established in Attachment A to this policy every two years as part of the review and modification of the WIOA State Plan. The certification process will include the Americans with Disabilities Act checklist ([www.adachecklist.org](http://www.adachecklist.org)) and Equal Opportunity Review. (P.L. 113-128 § 188)

2.2 One-Stop centers will be evaluated and certified no less than once every three years. The WWDC may conduct a 'for cause' site evaluation and certification as determined appropriate and warranted.

2.3 WDC Certification Team(s) will be established by the WWDC and are responsible for conducting independent and objective evaluations of one-stop centers and making certification recommendations to the WWDC. WWDC Certification Team(s) may comprise WWDC member(s) and WWDC staff and individuals who represent local partners with specific expertise serving populations with barriers. Certification team members should be free of conflicts of interest. WWDC Certification Team(s) may utilize experts from the state or outside of the geographic area to ensure evaluations are objective. They may also use local experts who represent targeted populations

but have no financial ties with the one-stop center. Local experts shall agree to comply with WIOA Law, Rules & Regulations, and Guidance provided by the Department of Labor.

2.4 Certification determinations shall be made by the WWDC Strategic Performance and Finance Committee, which will render written determinations. There are three possible determinations: (1) certification; (2) provisional certification with a requirement that one-stop operator provides action plans and timelines for meeting certification standards; and (3) not certified or de-certified. Provisional certifications must be accompanied by a detailed description of the issues/concerns identified, so that the one-stop operator has sufficient information around which to develop required action plans and timelines. A determination not to certify a one-stop center must be accompanied by a detailed description of the deficiencies, including an explanation as to why the certification team believed the deficiencies could not be addressed or resolved provisionally.

2.5 The one-

stop operator may choose to appeal a decision not to certify or decertify. Such appeals shall be provided to the WWDC, WIOA Compliance, and Finance Committee in writing.

2.6 If a one-stop center is not certified, the one-stop operator must plan to ensure continuity of service between the time a site is not certified and a new site is certified.

2.7 The comprehensive center in Casper shall be reviewed onsite in accordance with this policy. Affiliate sites located in Cheyenne, Cody, Douglas, Gillette, Jackson, Lander, Laramie, Rawlins, Rock Springs, Sheridan, Torrington, Wheatland, Worland, Evanston, Kemmerer, Powell, and Riverton will complete Attachment A and the ADA Compliance Checklist and submit to the WWDC based on a timeline established by WWDC staff and the One-Stop Operator.

### **3. Compliance with Federal and State Law/Regulation/Policy**

3.1 This policy complies with any and all federal and state laws, regulations and policies. P.L. 113-128 § 121(d), and § 188 20 C.F.R. §§ 678.300 – 678.320, § 678.800 TEGL 16-16, 36-11

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

Within the AJCs, the staff ensures all English Language Learners receive, free of charge, the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to the programs, services, and information offered to all customers. Language assistance is achieved through the skills of bilingual staff as well as the availability of interpretive language phone lines that are available free of charge to any individual who needs or requests such services.

On-site Wagner-Peyser services are readily available to individuals with limited English proficiency. Employment and Training personnel regularly meet, discuss programmatic needs, and network on work opportunities and job readiness. Good relationships exist between the Employment and Training and the other program staff, based on efforts at the State and



particularly the local level. Many organizations are continuously working to improve information sharing.

DWS also coordinates with outside partners to serve the needs of individuals with limited English. Emphasizing growing partnerships with Adult Education and Family Literacy will continue, with a focus on serving those individuals who may be functioning at a lower educational level while providing concurrent services intended to increase their work readiness skills.

Individuals with limited English proficiency are encouraged to participate in the other programs described in this plan. As a targeted population, such people will be served whenever and wherever opportunities are available,

In the AJCs, when an individual who is a ELL seeks assistance with accessing any of the programs or services, the staff understands that they should receive free language assistance to enable them to access the services effectively. Currently, Wyoming uses the skills of bilingual staff and interpretive language phone lines to offer free language assistance. This approach has been mainly through a soft handoff from the unemployment division or walk-in traffic to the staff who then offer individualized assistance to the English language learner. Wyoming understands that more can be done to increase meaningful access to ELLs. Therefore, it plans to develop translated program brochures and relevant documents in Spanish and will continue to work with local area staff and Adult Education to determine if any additional language resources need to be made available. Furthermore, Wyoming will conduct training for AJC staff to ensure that all understand what meaningful access entails and that all staff are aware of the available resources.

## **Title II-Adult Education**

The State's approved Adult Education providers have a long history at supporting the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and this will continue to the foreseeable future. To facilitate the enrollment process for non-native speakers of English, the State's online intake form is available in both English and Spanish. Translators/Interpreters are also often made available to help facilitate this process so that this population can be effectively served. Local programs have also translated multiple required documents into Spanish as well.

English language learners enrolled in AE centers are provided with the tools needed to develop skills in the four critical areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As language skills become more proficient, these learners are also indoctrinated with Civics education so that they can be integrated into society and develop the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Qualified learners are also encouraged to enroll in postsecondary education and/or integrated training and education programs, whenever possible; especially those students enrolled in an IELCE program of study.

Although Wyoming's frontier status has seemed to limit the number of non-native speakers enrolling in these programs of study, the State is experiencing increasing numbers of these learners in the more populated areas of the State. In addition, AE providers are beginning to work more closely with local industries who employ these English language learners to implement workplace literacy programs to increase on the job productivity levels. Learners involved in a workplace literacy program are informed of these opportunities through the employer.

Adult Education programs actively recruit these ELL learners through brochures, social media campaigns, website & movie theater advertisements, through community service providers and through other means of information dissemination.

#### IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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

Wyoming programs teams work together through routinely scheduled meetings to review core programs and through ad-hoc meetings when a need arises. Core committee meetings take place weekly. Currently, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services programs team is starting a review process of our internal policies on state plan programs and once completed will move forward with making any necessary updates in addition to any rewrites to ensure clarity. Routine meetings with various one-stop partner programs take place to maintain proper execution of the state plan. DWS works and meets regularly with the Workforce Development Council to coordinate efforts across all programs and monitor continual development. Maintaining specific methods of referrals assists in a coordinated service effort between programs and teams.

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

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
<p>and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;</p>	
<p>5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;</p>	Yes
<p>6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);</p>	Yes
<p>7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;</p>	Yes
<p>8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;</p>	Yes
<p>9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;</p>	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

**VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

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

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

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

**A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

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

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

Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to establishing regions.

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

Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to designating local areas.

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

Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to designating local areas.

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

Any affected party may appeal the determination of the portion of funds to be provided for infrastructure costs, to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

1. An appeal must be in writing and filed with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council within fourteen (14) days after notification of the decision. Submit the appeal to the Chairperson of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) and to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council Liaison.
2. The appeal must contain a specific statement of the grounds upon which the appeal is sought.
3. The State board will have 60 days to review the appeal and make a recommendation to the Governor. The review will take into account information provided in the appeal on the basis that such determination is inconsistent with the requirements of state policy and/or WIOA Section 121(h).
4. The final decision rests with the Governor.
5. If the final decision of any appeal reverses the prior decision, it will become effective as of July 1st of the program year.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Applicable state laws and policies will guide decision-making related to the Workforce Development System. Wyoming will use the Governor's Vision and Goals as guidance for the statewide Workforce Development System. The Governor's vision is:

**Vision:** We envision a Wyoming where every employee and job seeker has an opportunity to secure purposeful and rewarding work and where employers can access a prepared workforce to help grow the state's economy.

**Mission:** To take a lead role in supporting a workforce system that meets the current and future needs of Wyoming.

**Goal #1: Invent an Image**

**Strategies:**

- Develop key messaging regarding the Workforce Development Council, America's Job Centers, and WIOA.
- Drive more effective relationships in the workforce centers and consider rebranding/positioning workforce centers
- Identify ways to support business/business representatives and build relationships.
- Build council member's training/expectations/orientations processes to help develop effective members.

**Goal #2: Drive Collaborations with Partnerships**

**Strategies:**

- Streamline terminology across all partner programs and partner agencies.
- Each WWDC meeting, conduct a showcase of both internal DWS/Workforce Centers and external agencies/statewide efforts that will impact our various subpopulations like Wyoming's Tomorrow, Apprenticeship, or childcare; Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan emphasizing increased communication among One-Stop partners;
- Strengthen the "no wrong door" approach by developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies and the services they provide.
- Promote Integrated Education and Training (IET) initiatives to employers and other relevant stakeholders
- Engage high school representatives, tribal leaders, Job Corps, and other entities with high-risk populations for the completion of high school equivalency programs of study
- Encourage and support collaborations with community service providers, inclusive of Wyoming's Community Colleges to leverage local resources and support integrated service delivery.
- Implement strategies to increase co-enrollments between the WIOA core partners.
- DVR will participate in the building of cross-program knowledge for all Wyoming Workforce Center staff. This will allow all staff for DVR and our partner programs to have a better understanding of programs and services available and help ensure that there is a unified delivery of services for all populations across all Workforce Center locations.
- Central office DVR staff continue to participate in all agency leadership meetings to gather and share information on programs.
- DVR will continue to emphasize co-enrolling eligible participants in an effort to collaborate with partner agencies to provide increased opportunities for training and credentials.
- DVR staff will make contact at least once a quarter with the local ABE agency in their communities to discuss how DVR can assist with training and credentials for eligible participants.

**Goal #3: Enhance Access to Services****Strategies:**

- Ensure the new MIS system will meet user needs
- Research, purchase, and install kiosks (likely tablet form) across the state for better remote access to services.
- Create and implement a plan to improve access to services in remote locations
- Utilize follow-up surveys to measure success of initiatives

- Core partners co-present applicable career services to qualified individuals to reduce duplication of services
- Implement a unified career pathways system that aligns workforce, education and economic development to address the most in-demand jobs in the State.
- Utilize technology and data to enhance the accessibility and outcomes of Wyoming's workforce system

**Goal #4: Engage in Community Outreach**

**Strategies:**

- Research best practices/methods for engagement/outreach.
- Seek funding from WWDC for engagement/outreach opportunities, determine measurable outcomes that are best practices in the state..
- Evaluate processes on measurable outcomes, request funding for any additional engagement/outreach opportunities.
- Expand access to core partner services through virtual means so that individuals in the most remote areas of the State have access

Guidance for the use of some state funds for state-funded workforce investment activities are provided by the Wyoming Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) as a state-funded workforce development tool. All state funding shall be used in line with and per the guidance provided by the WWDC.

**B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING FOR MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS OF TITLE I ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES.**

Governor's set-aside funding is provided to the WWDC and is used to carry out the required activities and allowable projects that are identified on an ongoing basis by the WWDC.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council also plans to use the Governor's set-aside funding primarily on the continuation of the WWDC's state-wide sector partnership effort and logistical costs for Workforce Development Council meetings.

WWDC is undertaking an equity-focused evaluation of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program outcomes. This evaluation will utilize an analytical tool to identify potential disproportionate impacts based on sex/race/ethnicity. The disproportionate impact analysis will be followed by qualitative analysis that will collect program delivery information from state and local area front-line staff and other stakeholders to identify best practices and areas for potential improvement. WWDC has contracted with Northern Illinois University to provide these.

**C. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS.**

In Wyoming, Rapid Response teams are organized by the local AJCs for each community and situation. The teams consist of agency and community members as applicable. Should aversion efforts be unsuccessful, the Rapid Response Program serves employers and employees where announced business closures and layoffs occur. Rapid Response is conducted by the local AJCs, in coordination with the UI and community services, to assist affected employees as requested by employers. Response team services may include:

- Information and direct reemployment services available for workers include, but are not limited to: Information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and support for filing petitions, information on the impacts of layoffs on health coverage or other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment focused workshops and services, and training, including Adult Education Program activities.
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition are provided across the business lifecycle and include comprehensive business engagement. Strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize layoffs are also available.
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating connections, networks, and partners are used to help dislocated workers and their families locate assistance that includes home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice.

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

Rapid Response services also are offered to employers during natural disasters. Initial coordination is accomplished with the State-level Office of Homeland Security to consolidate services. Local Rapid Response teams are available to assist dislocated workers. DWS plans to enhance disaster response efforts with the addition of a mobile Rapid Response unit that will be centrally located in the State.

Assessments for possible national dislocated worker grants are accomplished after coordination with the State-level Office of Homeland Security to eliminate duplication of effort.

**E. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) AND ENSURES THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A) AND TAA SECTION 221(A)(2)(A) .) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION AND HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICE TO WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PETITION (TAA SEC. 221(A)(2)(A)).NOTE: UNTIL THE TAA PROGRAM IS REAUTHORIZED, THE REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSE AND APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A PETITION HAS BEEN FILED IS NOT APPLICABLE.**



Rapid Response activities are designed to help trade-affected workers find new jobs as quickly as possible after layoffs. Wyoming's Rapid Response teams provide all trade-affected workers with comprehensive information regarding the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and benefits, including training opportunities and trade readjustment allowance benefits. This information is provided to workers at the business location, or to individuals at an AJC. The information may be provided in brochures, presentations, or during interviews.

Once initial TAA petition information is received, UI provides verification of eligibility, and TAA program services may begin. DWS staff provide an initial program overview and appropriate career and training services to the affected TAA participant. Co-enrollment with Wagner-Peyser and WIOA is required to ensure additional support services for maximum participant outcomes.

## B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### 1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) remains a training strategy for applicants who lack experience but have education or training related to the job or whose limited experience does not qualify them for the job. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite with a possible chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist in completing a training plan and are the employer of record. These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Increased promotion and outreach efforts have resulted in additional OJT experiences for job seekers and businesses. With the DOL State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding (SAEF), the focus was placed on establishing a workforce strategy to identify workforce needs and skills within the health care, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, and information technology industries. Using a sector strategy model, increased awareness for and development of Registered Apprenticeships with OJT components has occurred in the State.

Customized training provides training that is specific to an employers' (or group of employers') specific requirements so that the employer will hire individuals after successful completion of training. Customized training is designed to provide local areas with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of job seekers and employers or groups of employers. These types of activities are effective training models for both youth and adult populations. Hands-on training in a work environment allows individuals to gain not only the transferable skills needed in employment but also the additional soft skills that employers require.

Transitional jobs provide a time-limited work experience that is combined with comprehensive employment and supportive services. This work-based learning activity is for individuals with barriers to employment, who are chronically unemployed, or who have an inconsistent work history. The purpose is to support individuals with services to establish a work history,

demonstrate success in a work environment, and develop skills to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

## 2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers and are most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. Registered Apprenticeship programs automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:• Employers who provide related instruction;• Employers who use an outside educational provider;• Joint apprenticeship training programs; and• Intermediaries.

Workforce Specialists work to strengthen partnerships and provide orientations before a new program with Registered Apprenticeship programs. These relationships continue to grow with the momentum of the NextGeneration Sector Partnership initiative.

In 2019, The Department of Workforce Services was awarded the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant through the Department of Labor (DOL) for \$641,075.32 for a three-year performance period. This federal grant focused on expanding the number of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in Wyoming. It provided a one-time reimbursement to employers to offset costs related to on-the-job learning for each registered apprentice who started after July 1, 2019.

In the three-year performance period that ended June 30, 2022, the ASE team served 131 apprentices and supported 19 registered apprenticeship programs within three industries across the state of Wyoming.

DWS applied for and received a \$283,754.00 State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding (SAEF) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor in late Summer of 2023. The grant is being used in DWS' Business Training and Support Unit (BTSU) to expand and build capacity for registered apprenticeship program opportunities throughout Wyoming. DWS continues to provide technical and financial support to businesses seeking to develop an apprenticeship program. Coupled with Wyoming's existing apprenticeship training funds, these funds allow workers to earn progressive pay while also learning valuable skills through supplemental education.

In addition, BTSU received pre-apprenticeship program funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act. The purpose of this grant is to develop a pre-apprenticeship program focusing on career pathways for in-school youth (16-24 years old) whose household is below the 300% federal poverty guideline, or who have experienced unemployment/underemployment as a result of the pandemic. This funding will support youth with the completion of a pre-apprenticeship program and provide necessary supportive services. This program will roll out an extensive marketing campaign including a Hub that will serve as an apprenticeship website for the state of Wyoming.

Wyoming seeks career pathways that connect youth in more innovative ways by integrating the technologies that youth are more apt to use in the Career Pathways System, thereby strengthening their ability to be career and college-ready. The Title II programs in Wyoming have addressed this by developing and utilizing student career maps which are aligned to the most in-demand industries in the State. In addition, multiple Integrated and Education Training programs, available through the Adult Education centers, now offer advanced training opportunities to qualified individuals. Wyoming is also developing more apprenticeship opportunities by launching apprenticeships in non-traditional occupations, and in at least one of Wyoming's correctional facilities.

### 3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

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

A training services provider who wants to be added to Wyoming's list of eligible training providers must apply for initial eligibility to DWS. DWS reviews applications for completeness and compliance with Section 122 of the WIOA. DWS then presents recommendations to the WWDC for final approval or denial of the provider's application. If approved by the WWDC, the provider will remain eligible and reviewed after one year for new providers and biannually for existing providers listed for only one year for a particular program.

#### **Purpose**

The Workforce Development System established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes informed customer choice, job-driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement. The quality and selection of providers and programs of training services are vital to achieving these core principles. WIOA requires that each State maintain a list of eligible training providers and their eligible training programs, including relevant performance and cost information. To maximize informed customer choice and serve all significant population groups, this list must be made widely available, including in electronic formats, and presented in a way that is easily understood. DWS strives to have access to ETPs available through any means necessary, including technology when possible, to ensure greater customer choice and access in rural areas of the state.

The State of Wyoming's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and related eligibility procedures ensure the accountability, quality, and labor market relevance of programs for training services that receive funds through WIOA Title I, subtitle B. Individuals seeking relevant information regarding training providers and programs can access Wyoming's ETPL through Wyoming's labor exchange system. This list can serve as an important tool for participants and case managers in identifying training in high-demand industries that result in positive outcomes and recognized credentials.

This policy provides instruction, guidance and establishes criteria and procedures for training organizations wishing to provide training services under WIOA.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS), on behalf of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) and the Governor, is responsible for:

- Informed customer choice, performance accountability, and continuous improvement;
- The development, maintenance, and dissemination of the State list of eligible providers and programs;
- Ensuring programs meet the eligibility criteria and performance levels established by the State;
- Verifying the accuracy of the submitted information;
- Ensuring performance and cost information relating to each provider is available to the public;
- Ensuring reporting outcomes on provider programs of study and student success in those programs;
- Finalizing approval for providers and programs approved by the WWDC;
- Reviewing initial and continued training provider applications to ensure that accurate eligibility criteria and performance information has been provided before submission to the WWDC for final approval;
- Recommending the termination of providers due to the provider's submission of inaccurate eligibility and/or performance information;
- Removing programs that do not meet established program criteria or performance levels;
- Ensuring that a sufficient number of providers of training services have expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and that training providers are available to assist adults in need of adult education and literacy activities;
- Making recommendations for approval or denial of providers and programs to the WWDC; and
- Entering and maintaining provider information and WIOA approval status within the labor exchange system, hirewyo.gov.

### **Identification of Eligible Providers**

Eligible training provider programs may be delivered in-person, online, or in a blended approach. To be eligible to receive WIOA funds for the provision of training services, a provider must be:

- An institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;
- A provider that reports data of performance for all individuals, which includes both WIOA and non-WIOA students, in the approved program of study for both WIOA and non-WIOA students;
- An entity that carries out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50, *et seq.*); and

- Public or private providers of training services, including community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, and eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities, under WIOA title II, if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training.

A provider described in either category 1 or 2 above must comply with the criteria, performance information requirements, and procedures established under the WIOA Section 122. This policy is to be included on the list of eligible providers of training services. Providers described in Category 3 above, Registered Apprenticeship programs, are exempt from these requirements and shall be included and maintained on the list of eligible providers for as long as the corresponding program of the provider remains registered as a Registered Apprenticeship program.

### **Training Provider Eligibility**

The requirements to become a WIOA eligible training provider apply to all organizations with the exception of Registered Apprenticeship programs. Eligibility requirements include the following:

1. A training provider must operate in a competitive environment;
2. An established catalog or market price must be established for each offered program;
3. Training programs must be provided within normal business operations or the day-to-day functions of the business;
4. Training programs must have published/stated duration, hours, and schedules;
5. The training provider must be current on Unemployment Insurance payments and Workers Compensation coverage.
6. The training provider is subject to the Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination requirements found in Section 188 of WIOA, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title-I financially assisted program or activity. WWDC must ensure that a training provider is complying before approving the training provider to be added to the ETPL;
7. The training provider must be on the active ETPL for their home state if located outside of Wyoming; and
8. The training provider must collect performance data by the program of study for WIOA and non-WIOA participants.

### **ETPL Eligibility Requirements**

Any training provider that wishes to be granted approval to receive WIOA funds for serving Wyoming's Adult and Dislocated Worker and Out of School Youth participants must request an application for eligibility from DWS. The WWDC will grant final approval or denial of all training provider applications.

No WWDC approval is necessary if the training provider is an entity that carries out programs under The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act” (50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.). Providers meeting this condition must complete and submit the Registered Apprenticeship Information packet to DWS. This packet can be requested from DWS or the State Director of the Wyoming Office of Apprenticeship.

Out-of-state training providers must complete and submit Wyoming’s Out of State ETPL Application and all additional required documents to DWS. No out-of-state training providers will be approved that are not listed on the ETPL of their home State.

Training providers, other than those providers that qualify as a Registered Apprenticeship, must complete Wyoming ETPL Application along with all additional required documents..

With the exception of Registered Apprenticeship programs, training providers submitting applications must provide the following information for each training program seeking approval:

- Demonstrate that programs prepare individuals for in-demand occupations. In the instance a program does not relate to an in-demand occupation, DWS will consider the program if the training provider can demonstrate an employer need for trainees;
- Program completion rates for all individuals enrolled in the specific training program;
- Percentage of all program graduates who have entered unsubsidized employment in an occupation related to the training program conducted;
- Average wage at post-program job placement for all individuals who have completed the training program and entered unsubsidized employment;
- Type of certification, license, or accreditation that students completing the program obtain;
- Program costs, including tuition, fees, books, and tools, if applicable;
- The school’s refund policy and grievance procedures;
- If applicable, a current letter of accreditation; and
- If applicable, documentation that the appropriate Professional Licensing Board or other licensing agency reviewed and approved the provider’s curriculum and that the appropriate Professional Licensing Board licenses the instructors to practice the occupation or profession that is taught.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for approval.

### **Initial ETPL Eligibility Criteria**

Initial eligibility for all new training providers under WIOA began July 1, 2015. New providers may seek initial eligibility by contacting DWS and requesting an application packet. If approved by the WWDC, the provider will remain eligible and listed on the ETPL for one calendar year for a particular program. After the first year, if the provider/program meets subsequent approval requirements, the WWDC may provide approval for continued eligibility. A provider will then be reviewed every two years to remain on the ETPL. The criteria and information requirements established by the WWDC for initial eligibility include:

- A description of each program of training service to be offered, including costs associated with the training program;
- The training program must be for occupations in in-demand industry sectors identified by the state, region, or WWDC. In-demand or priority industry sector information must be verified with the WWDC. \*Registered Apprenticeship programs are automatically considered “in-demand” occupations;
- The training program must result in the awarding of an industry-recognized credential, national or state certificate, or degree, including all industry appropriate competencies, licensing, and/or certification requirements;
- A description concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with a business; and
- Program-specific performance information as outlined in the ETPL Initial Eligibility Application.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are also not subject to program initial eligibility criteria and approval.

### **Continued ETPL Eligibility Criteria**

All training providers and programs on the ETPL will be evaluated biennially by the WWDC and DWS to ensure they continue to meet the eligibility to be retained on the ETPL beyond the period of initial eligibility. To determine continued eligibility, DWS must verify that the training provider meets the requirements outlined in the Initial Eligibility Criteria section. To be approved for continued inclusion on the ETPL, providers and programs must meet the following minimum criteria:

- The training program(s) must be related to an in-demand occupation;
  - Exception: In instances where the training programs do not relate to an in-demand occupation, the training provider must demonstrate an employer's need for trainees by providing a list of job openings or explanations of future job growth;
- The training provider must submit to DWS specified performance-based information relating to student outcomes (see reporting section) in each training program offered by the training provider for both WIOA and non-WIOA students.
- A description of each program of training service to be offered, including costs associated with the training program;
- Access to training services throughout the state (including rural areas using technology);
- Information reported to state agencies on federal and state training programs other than Title 1 -B programs;
- State licensure requirements of training providers, and licensing status of providers of training services, if applicable;
- Quality of the program of training services, including a program that leads to recognized postsecondary credential;

- ETP's ability to provide trainings that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities;
- Timeliness and accuracy of ETP's performance reports;
- The training program must be for occupations in in-demand industry sectors identified by the state, region, or WWDC. In-demand or priority industry sector information must be verified with the WWDC. \*Registered Apprenticeship programs are automatically considered "in-demand" occupations;
- The training program must result in the awarding of an industry-recognized credential, national or state certificate, or degree, including all industry appropriate competencies, licensing, and/or certification requirements; and
- A description concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with a business;

### **Adding Programs**

A school or provider on the ETPL must seek approval from the WWDC to add a new "program of training services," defined as "one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen that leads to specified outcomes, including recognized post-secondary credentials, secondary school diplomas or their equivalent, employment, or measurable skill gains toward such credentials or employment."

- DWS presents recommendations to the WWDC, which then approves or denies the new program for inclusion on the ETPL. Providers submit the same program information as to when submitting a program for initial eligibility.
- New training programs must award some type of associate's degree, baccalaureate degree, or industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license.
- If at the completion of the training program, an industry-recognized certification is required, the training provider must provide the means for the completion of the certification, and if additional costs are involved, they must be included in the initial program costs provided to the DWS.
- Providers located outside of the state of Wyoming must have the proposed new program listed on the ETPL list for their home state before application for Wyoming.
- Distance Learning, E-Learning, or Online Training providers must meet all application requirements, and students must have access to instructors by phone, email, or directly online.
- DWS and the WWDC reserve the right to review an application at any time. A review may include a request for current performance data, good-standing certificates, or other pertinent information.

### **Removing Programs**

The WWDC must approve the removal of a training provider or program from the ETPL. A training provider and/or program(s) can be removed from the ETPL for any of the following:

- A WIOA participant has not enrolled in the training program during the previous two program years (July 1 through June 30);



- The training provider has lost its accreditation;
- The training program has not achieved the minimum performance criteria for continued eligibility; and
- The training provider has not demonstrated a good faith effort in providing data to DWS.

### **Payment**

DWS can make payments to a training provider or school that requires full payment upfront only if the training provider has a prorated refund policy stating they will provide a refund if the customer drops out.

### **Reporting**

The WIOA requires the state to submit an ETP Report with the federal WIOA Annual Performance report. This report includes all WIOA and non-WIOA participants served by each training program, excluding Apprenticeship programs listed on the ETPL. The ETP Report gathers critical information, including the employment, earnings, and credentials obtained by participants in the training program. This information will be widely disseminated to assist participants and members of the general public in identifying effective training providers and programs. All training providers are required to electronically submit the program participant data outlined below.

The state recognizes the reporting burden this requirement causes and understands the data limitations, so the state will work with training providers based on the available data that is provided.

To ease the reporting burden, the State will also conduct employment and wage-matching for training providers that provide a valid social security number for their program participants.

Training providers that demonstrate a good faith effort in providing data will not be subject to removal from the ETPL; however, failure to provide any data may result in removal from the ETPL. An ETP that does not provide the data or communicate issues with providing the data could be found to be in substantial violation of their submission responsibilities. Performance data from the ETP Report will be used for subsequent eligibility review of all training programs, excluding DOL Registered Apprenticeships.

The reporting requirements established in 20 CFR 677.230(a) apply to all programs of study on the state ETP list, including programs of study that did not serve any WIOA participants during the reporting period. These performance measures will be included in the list of Eligible Training Provider programs made available to the public. The training provider must provide the following performance information after the first year of Initial Eligibility and annually thereafter, for each program, for all individuals participating:

For WIOA Title I Core Program Participants receiving training from an ETP:

- The total number of participants who received training services through a WIOA Title I core program,
- separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent year and the three preceding program years;

- The total number of participants who exited from training services, separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent year and the three preceding program years;
- The average cost per participant for participants who received training services, separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent program year and the three years preceding program years; and,
- The number of participants with barriers to employment served by the WIOA Title I core programs, separated by each subpopulation of such individuals, and by race, ethnicity, sex, and age.

For All Individuals Receiving Training Provided by an ETP:

1. The levels of performance achieved for all individuals engaging in the program of study, specifically
  - a. The percentage of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program;
  - b. The percentage of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after exit from the program;
  - c. The median earnings of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program;
  - d. The percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; during participation in or within one year after exiting from the program; and
  - e. The total number of individuals exiting from the program of study.
2. For purposes of this agreement, all individuals participating will include both WIOA funded students and non-WIOA funded students who were enrolled in the approved training program. Unsubsidized employment refers to employment not supported by state or federal funds.
3. Placement in employment is defined as the participants' employment immediately after completion of training.

Reporting by Program of Study

Providers are responsible for reporting these data elements to the state:

- The name of the provider;
- The description of the training provided;
- The address of the provider;
- The type of entity;
- The name;
- Description of the training program;
- The URL of the training program;

- The program of study by the potential outcome;
- The name of the associated credential;
- The program of study's classification of instructional programs (CIP) code;
- Costs-related information for non-WIOA participants;
- Program length;
- Program prerequisites; and
- Program format.

### **Reporting on Non-WIOA Program Participants**

WIOA section 116(d)(4) requires that ETPs provide the necessary information to the state on all individuals being served in the approved program of study so that the state may submit the required information for annual reporting purposes.

#### **The reporting elements include:**

- The number of individuals served;
- The number exited (includes students who completed, withdrew, or transferred out of the program);
- The number who completed the program;
- The number of exits employed in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- The number of exits employed in the 4th quarter after exit;
- Median earnings of exited participants in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- Number of exits who attained a credential during participation or within one year after exit;
- Average earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit; and
- Average earnings in the 4th quarter after exit.

### **Personally-identifiable information and Confidentiality (PII)**

WIOA requires States, Local Areas, and ETPs to report on indicators of performance pertaining to employment outcomes. The need to rely on quarterly wage records to prepare those reports raises complex privacy and confidentiality issues. Under WIOA, eligible training providers may include institutions of higher education, entities that carry out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq., or other public or private providers of a program of training services. For an institution of higher education to be an eligible training provider, it must provide a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential. Public and private eligible training providers may include community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, or eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA if such activities are provided in combination with certain training services. The

federally required evaluations of WIOA-funded training programs require that DWS match wage records to records maintained by training providers that contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) (e.g., Social Security Numbers) on WIOA and non-WIOA program participants.

PII and other sensitive information must be protected. DWS Workforce Centers and training providers must take the steps necessary to ensure the privacy of all PII obtained from participants and/or other individuals in the ITA invoicing process and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure. All PII data must be processed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records/documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized persons from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal, or any other means.

In response to privacy concerns for the dissemination of the ETPL, the Department of Labor set forth in § 680.500 of the WIOA Final Rules that in developing the information to accompany the ETPL, disclosure of PII from an education record must be carried out in accordance with Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), including the circumstances relating to prior written consent. Therefore, DWS requires all providers that are subject to FERPA to adhere to all of those requirements to maintain ETPL eligibility.

### **Registered Apprenticeships**

Under WIOA title I-B, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors who request to be on the ETPL are automatically included and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies DWS that it no longer wishes to be included on the list. DWS will coordinate with the OA to contact sponsors to allow them the opportunity to opt-in.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial procedures as other providers because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. In accordance with 20 CFR 680.470(e), ETA encourages voluntary reporting of performance information for Registered Apprenticeship programs. As required by 20 CFR 677.230(b), states must include performance information voluntarily submitted by Registered Apprenticeship programs in the ETP report.

A Registered Apprenticeship program shall be added to the ETPL upon receipt of the Registered Apprenticeship Information Packet (Attachment A) from the Office of Apprenticeship State Director, or by contacting the Department of Workforce Services and completing the information packet, which provides the following information:

- Occupations and descriptions included in the Registered Apprenticeship program;
  - Name and address of the program sponsor;
  - Name and address of the related Technical Instruction provider;
  - The method and length of the instruction;
  - The number of active apprentices; and
  - The original Registered Apprenticeship registration date.

The WWDC will not impose additional requirements on Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The status of all Registered Apprenticeship programs will be verified every two years through a partnership with the Office of Apprenticeship State Director. Any Registered Apprenticeship programs that have been either voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered will be removed from the Wyoming ETPL.

## Provider and Programs Approval Process

The WIOA Program Manager will email the appropriate ETPL application packet to a training service provider upon request. The application packet includes:

- A new provider Welcome and Instruction Letter;
- The appropriate ETPL Application;
- The ETPL General Provisions and Provider Agreement Signature Sheet;
- The W-9 form;

Creating the Provider ETPL File:

- Copies of all correspondence will be placed in the provider electronic file;
- For out-of-state providers, verification of ETPL approval in their home state will be confirmed and documentation will be saved in the electronic file. Verification can be obtained at <https://www.trainingproviderresults.gov/#/> Upon receipt of the completed application, all documents will be scanned and saved to an electronic file. The ETPL review memo and program information spreadsheet will be completed in preparation for presentation to the WWDC Strategic Performance and Finance (the Committee).

Submitting the ETPL Application to the Committee for Review:

- Email the following documents to the WWDC Staff:
  - ETPL Review Memo with WIOA Program Teams recommendations
  - ETPL Program Spreadsheet with program information. Any other documents deemed helpful to the approval process, including the Out of State ETPL verification, program overview, cost summary, labor market information, etc.
- Application documents will be forwarded to the Committee;
  - The ETPL Application will be presented at the next scheduled Committee meeting and will either be approved or denied; and
  - If approved, the Committee Chair will sign the Provider Agreement Signature Sheet.

Following Approval:

- A copy of the signed Provider Agreement Signature Sheet and a personal letter of approval will be sent to the provider;
- The signed Provider Agreement Signature Sheet will be maintained in the electronic file; and
- Hire Wyo will be updated to reflect the approval status of the provider and the WIOA eligibility of each approved program.

For Denied ETPL applications:

- Correspondence will be sent to the provider indicating the results of the Committee's decision; and
- Copies of the correspondence will be maintained in the electronic files.

If a provider chooses to appeal the Committee's decision, they will be reminded of the appeal process listed in the ETPL General Provisions and previously provided to them with the initial application documents.

### **Appeals Process**

Any training provider who is not satisfied with the decisions made by the WWDC or the Division has the right to appeal. An appeal may be lodged by:

- Submission of a written appeal to the Division's Program Manager who may:
  - Attempt an informal resolution within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written appeal; or
  - Review the written appeal with the WWDC Strategic Performance and Finance Committee, where a final decision will be determined within 45 days of receipt of a written appeal.
- And finally, if a decision is not agreed upon, the training provider may request a formal hearing consisting of the WIOA Program Manager, a representative from the DWS Office of the Director, and a representative from the WWDC Executive Committee, which may include the Chairman, Vice Chairman, or Committee Chair. Said hearing shall be within 45 days of receipt of the written hearing request. This impartial hearing committee's decision will be final.

#### **4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN WIOA SECTION 134 (C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).**

With respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities under WIOA Sec. 133(b)(a) or (3), priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient for receipt of career services described in paragraph (2)(A)(xii) and training services. The WWDC, on behalf of the Governor, shall direct the One-Stop operator with regard to making determinations related to such priority.

Priority will be provided to adult individuals who are recipients of public assistance, are determined low-income, or are Basic Skills Deficient over other individuals for receipt of individualized career services and training services. Veterans within these groups receive priority over non-veterans. Adult priority will be determined for these targeted groups during the eligibility and enrollment process through interviews with the adult applicants, use of various assessment tools, and verification of earned income and public assistance benefits when applicable.

To determine priority, a low-income individual includes any individual who is receiving public assistance through Wyoming's Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program (SNAP) program benefits, is homeless, or has a total family income for a six-month period that does not exceed the higher level of the poverty line or 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level. Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient include those who have English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th-grade level, are unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society, lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education, is enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL)), or has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation). English Language Learners meet the definition for Basic Skills Deficient and will be included in this priority population.

Wyoming's current WIOA Policy ensures adults who are public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient will meet the eligibility requirements for the Adult program. This will be monitored through the MIS system, local WIOA eligibility review committees, and regular program monitoring.

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

WWDC established a policy that allows DWS the flexibility to transfer up to 100% of funds between WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations, consistent with WIOA provisions.

Transferred funds must stay within the original year of allocation and time period and will depend upon each One-Stop's needs. Criteria used to determine the appropriateness of transferring funds include changes in planned services to eligible participants, unexpected layoffs requiring additional funds, changes in the goals for serving eligible participants, changes in labor market conditions, and increased costs of funded training programs.

All transfers of funds must be approved by the WWDC or designee and are subject to the WIOA adult program priority of service requirement and each program's performance requirements.

#### 6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(I).

Wyoming policy requires co-enrollment for TAA customers with WIOA Dislocated Worker, if eligible. If the TAA participant is not co-enrolled, there must be a narration explaining what has prevented the participant from being enrolled in WIOA. Since most trade-impacted workers meet WIOA Dislocated Worker eligibility criteria, these individuals should enter the One-Stop service delivery system immediately following the announcement of a layoff. Immediately beginning the process of needs assessment improves participation rates and allows individuals more time to consider all of the options available to them. This is particularly critical due to the time lapse that could occur while awaiting TAA petition determination. This policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required One-Stop Partners on an annual basis and is available on our policy drive at all times.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(C)

All WIOA case managers are cross-trained in TAA case management. The department's case managers provide both TAA and WIOA services to ensure that the participant receives all eligible benefits and services. The TAA Procedures Manual outlines the Basic Career Services that are available to participants as well as other services that are available to co-enrolled WIOA/TAA participants such as Co-enrolled participants may gain access to supportive services like child care, as well as to other services such as in-depth assessment, interest inventories, reviews of transferable skills, and to certain kinds of training (short-term, incumbent worker training, etc.) not normally covered by the TAA program.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

Wyoming's TAA program manager attends all TAA virtual meetings facilitated by the Department of Labor. When changes necessitate updates, TAA program-related emails, Memos, and updated policies are redistributed to the Career Centers for TAA program awareness. Wyoming's TAA policy manual outlines the process for familiarizing One-Stop staff with the TAA program. This outlines eligibility requirements, coordinating with other programs, individualized career services, and allowances as well as completion guidance. Wyoming's TAA Policy is disseminated once a year to One-Stop Partners on an annual basis and is available on our State Drive at all times.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA.<sup>11</sup> FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

<sup>11</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

This is not applicable to single-area states; Wyoming is a single-area state. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS).

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.



Wyoming continues to develop new and improved strategies to identify and serve both Wyoming's in-school and out-of-school youth populations. Wyoming recognizes a transition to serving more out-of-school youth is an ongoing process and must take time to develop new and improved partnerships with WIOA programs as well as additional partnering organizations within various communities across the State. The State is committed to incorporating strategies for doing so.

Strategies have and will continue to incorporate strong partnerships with local homeless youth organizations, AE programs, TANF and SNAP staff and/or organizations, Job Corps, local businesses, alternative schools, justice-involved youth, disabled and transitioning youth, other youth organizations, and unemployment insurance claimants within the age eligibility that are targeted for out-of-school youth recruitment. Communication with school personnel, including principals, vocational teachers, and counselors, is crucial to locating students who have dropped out or those graduating and in need of assistance for occupational skills training to fill in-demand jobs

For in-school youth, DWS will provide service presentations, including Labor Market Information, labor exchange education, and youth program outreach. Youth program outreach will be focused on helping reach at-risk populations and help with high school retention.

The State's youth program also continues to include effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Working closely with these employers is necessary as the State strives to offer quality work experience opportunities to youth who need work-readiness skills and work-based learning. A minimum of 20% of youth expenditures will be put toward such activities.

Each DWS area has socioeconomic indicators that may require a more customized plan for delivering services such as job training opportunities, leadership skill development, guidance and counseling, adult mentoring, job shadowing, supportive services, tutoring and study skills training, alternative secondary school services, paid and unpaid work experiences, Registered Apprenticeships, post-secondary transition, and employment opportunities. A major goal is to establish partnerships that support the Youth Program and to strengthen these relationships, so they effectively provide WIOA program services now and in the future.

**3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.**

The State plans to carry out these activities by assisting young people who are disconnected, disengaged, and lack self-sufficiency by engaging them in employment, education, and training that will support them in succeeding in the labor market and transition them into successful adulthood. The 14-Program Elements are available at all One-Stop Centers; however, need for services will be determined through assessments and needs of the youth participant and documented on the Individual Service Strategy.

The 14-Program Elements are:

- 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 post-secondary credential;
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- Work Experience – Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; on-the-job training opportunities;
- Institutional/occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved;
- Education is offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors as appropriate;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
- Financial literacy education;
- Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services;
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education; and
- Participants and Workforce Specialists work together to determine which elements are provided, based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants in obtaining a focus to begin to develop competencies for the world of work and includes identification of skills, needed skills, work readiness, training, and career pathways.

### **Recruiting out-of-school youth**

The biggest change under the WIOA Youth Program is the shift to focus resources primarily on out-of-school youth. Wyoming is committed to incorporating strategies to incorporate strong

framework services, such as intake, objective assessments, and development of individual service strategies, case management, supportive services, and follow-up services. Another focus is providing a minimum of 20% of expenditures on work experience opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are low-income; have basic literacy skills not commensurate with respective grade level; who are high school dropouts; homeless, runaway, or foster-care children; pregnant or parenting; legal offenders; disabled; or lack vocational goals and reside in geographically remote areas will be the focus of the proposed plan.

The targeted groups are identified using a variety of methods that include the following:

- Coordinated assessment efforts with community partners;
- Partnering with State agencies;
- Alternative learning centers;
- School counselors;
- Probation and parole;
- Youth group homes;
- Residential treatment centers; and
- Other community organizations.

Partners reflect the suggested partner structure outlined in WIOA. These partners are a crucial resource as service providers for at-risk youth, including young people who are at risk for dropping out of high school, those who have already dropped out, or who have completed their high school education.

Staff will either solely or work closely with a partnering organization to use an application process to determine and document an applicant's eligibility for WIOA youth services. New components will consist of incorporating Career Pathways as part of both the initial objective assessment and the individual service strategy. The service strategy will also be directly linked to one or more performance indicators. The process includes an evaluation of the young person's residency, income eligibility, age, basic occupational skills and abilities, aptitudes, interests, barriers to employment, support service needs, academic requirements, financial resources, and vocational potential. Required documentation and verification of eligibility will be maintained in the Hire Wyo management information system. The program will also include effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Eligibility criteria – To be eligible for the WIOA youth program, an individual must be an out-of-school or in-school youth.

An in-school youth is an individual who:

- Is attending school;
- Is not younger than 14 nor older than 21;
- Meets the low-income requirement; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:

- Basic skills deficient;
- An English Language Learner;
- An ex-offender;
- A homeless youth or runaway, in foster care, or has “aged out” of the foster care system;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- A youth who is an individual with a disability; or
- An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes:
  - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy;
  - Youth in a single-parent family;
  - Remoteness;
  - Limited English proficiency;
  - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19–24 years old); and/or
  - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

The criteria for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment refers to Wyoming’s State barriers. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understands a waiver exception would be needed to be completed before enrollment.

An Out-of-School Youth is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school;
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at the time of enrollment; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - A homeless individual, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster-care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in out-of-home placement;

- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; and/or
- A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes:
  - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy,
  - Youth in a single-parent family,
  - Remoteness,
  - Limited English proficiency,
  - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19-24 years old), and
  - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

The criteria for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment refers to Wyoming’s State barriers. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understand a waiver exception would need to be completed before starting enrollment.

Through a strong partnership with Wyoming’s AE centers, youth participants are provided with leadership and guidance to assist with tutoring, study skills training, dropout recovery services, and High School Equivalency completion as an important part of their career pathway to successful employment and post-secondary education.

Follow-up services are a required element for all youth participants and must be provided, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis following case closure. Follow-up services include continued leadership development and adult mentoring, additional career guidance and employment support, and ongoing assistance with education planning and career pathway development.

Assistance with supportive services is made available to all youth participants both during WIOA participation and in follow-up through linkages with community organizations and financial support.

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

Wyoming defines the “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion as meeting one or more State-defined youth barriers. State-defined youth barriers will be used in conjunction with the federally defined barriers

when enough Wyoming youth are enrolled in the program to have the availability of this exception.

State-defined youth barriers are as follows:

- **Chronic school absenteeism and truancy:** A youth whose absenteeism or truancy puts them at risk of failing to obtain a high or equivalent;
- **Youth in a single-parent family:** A young person who is a member of a family headed by a single parent or guardian, including parents who have been divorced within the preceding six months, who are in current divorce proceedings, or who are currently legally separated and maintaining separate households;
- **Remoteness:** Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000;
- **Limited English language proficiency:** A youth whose native language is not English and who is unable to communicate effectively in English, resulting in a substantial barrier to employment;
- **Lacks employability skills for older youth, age 19 to 24 only:** An individual who lacks the skills necessary to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. Employability depends on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess, and the manner in which those assets are used; and/or
- **Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions:** A young person with a professionally diagnosed mental, behavioral, or medical health condition lasting three months or more, which generally cannot be prevented by vaccines, nor cured by medication, nor resolved without intervention (for example, parental/youth substance abuse, physical/sexual/psychological abuse, lack of social competence, or suicide proneness).

Wyoming has policies and procedures in place that address “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA Sec. 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment.” This is also addressed during WIOA training sessions.

- Policy on services available to eligible youth who are seeking effective and comprehensive activities to achieve academic and employment success.

These activities may include:

- Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential;
- Preparation for post-secondary education and training opportunities;
- Strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials;
- Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; and
- Effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local and regional labor markets.

WIOA affirms the commitment to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

An Out-of-School Youth (OSY) is an individual who is:

- Not attending ANY school (as defined under State law);
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment;
- One or more of the following:
  - School Dropout;
  - Within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - Recipient of H.S. Diploma or equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - Basic Skills Deficient;
  - A youth, an individual who has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;
  - A youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society;
  - Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
  - Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
  - Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL));
  - Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation; and/or
  - The case manager makes observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note.
- An individual who is an offender;
  - A homeless individual, aged 16 – 24 who meets the criteria defined under section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)), a homeless child or youth aged 16 – 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434A(2)), or a runaway;
  - An individual in foster care or who aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child who is eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;

- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or
- \*An individual who meets the low-income criteria and requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or secure employment (WIOA §§ 3(46) and 129(a)(1)(B)).

An In-School Youth (ISY) is an individual who is:

- Attending (or enrolled in) school (as defined by State law), including secondary and post-secondary school (for purposes of eligibility, WIOA does not consider providers of Adult Education and Job Corps programs to be schools);
- Not younger than 14 or older than 21 at the time of enrollment;
- A low-income individual; and
- One of the following:
  - Basic Skills Deficient;
  - Has English, reading, writing or computing skills at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;
  - a youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society;
  - Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
  - Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
  - Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL));
  - Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation);
  - The case manager makes observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note;
  - An English language learner;
  - An Offender;
  - A homeless individual, aged 14 – 21 who meets the criteria defined under section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C.11434a(a)(2)), a homeless child or youth aged 14 – 21 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434A(2)), or a runaway;
  - An individual in foster care, or who aged out of the foster care system, or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child who is eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;



- An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or
- \*An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure employment (WIOA § 129(a)(1)C).

\*The State of Wyoming has defined An Individual Who Requires Additional Assistance to Enter or Complete an Educational Program or Secure Employment as one or more of the following:

- **Chronic School Absenteeism and Truancy:** A youth whose absenteeism or truancy puts them at risk of failing to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- **Youth in a Single Parent Family:** A youth who is a member of a family headed by a single parent or guardian, including parents that have been divorced within the last six months or are in a current divorce proceeding or are currently legally separated and maintaining separate households;
- **Remoteness:** Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000;
- **Limited English Language Proficiency:** A youth whose native language is not English who is unable to effectively communicate in English, resulting in a substantial barrier to employment;
- **Lacks Employability Skills (Older Youth only, 19–24 years):** An individual who lacks the skills necessary to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. Employability depends on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess, and the manner in which those assets are implemented; and
- **Chronic Mental, Behavioral, and/or Medical Health Condition:** A youth with professionally diagnosed mental, behavioral, or medical health condition lasting three months or more which generally cannot be prevented by vaccines, nor cured by medication, nor resolved without intervention (e.g. parental/youth substance abuse, physical/sexual/psychological abuse, lack of social competence, suicide proneness).

#### D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Comments from the public comment period may be found on the Wyoming Workforce Development Council’s website once the public comment period closes.

The State of Wyoming is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is the provider of WIOA Title I Youth activities. The One-Stop Centers provide the 14 WIOA Youth Elements and offer these activities statewide through 18 of the One-Stop Centers. The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

#### 4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

Wyoming's Partner MOU -

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6\\_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic)

#### 5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council utilizes the process afforded in 2 C.F.R. § 200 and 2 C.F.R. § 2900 to apply W.S. § 9-2-1016 to the procurement process.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services and Training funding are provided by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council's (WWDC) fiscal agent, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is the provider of WIOA Title I Youth activities. The Wyoming One-Stop Centers provide all 14 WIOA Youth Elements and offer these activities statewide through the 18 One-Stop Centers. The Wyoming Workforce Development Council through its fiscal agent, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the core and required WIOA programs that exist in Wyoming.

#### 6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

##### **Training Services**

Wyoming has not established a sequence of service requirements for career services and training. One-Stop Center staff may determine what training is appropriate regardless of whether the individual has received basic or individualized career services first. Training services may be provided if the staff determines, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;

- Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the selected program of training services.

Training services, when determined appropriate, are provided through an individual training account or via a training contract. Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographical area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. The selection of training services is conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, is informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and is coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)). This is accomplished through development of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which requires that all providers of training services for adult, dislocated worker and out of school youth participants meet specific criteria designed to increase accountability and transparency through reporting and biennial review. WIOA requires that the WWDC, on behalf of the Governor, establish criteria and procedures regarding the eligibility of these training providers. The State's ETPL is a comprehensive list of various post-secondary institutions and public and private training programs that is made available to the public through the virtual One-Stop management information system, Hire Wyo, and includes occupational and performance information.

Individual training accounts are the primary method used for procuring training services. However, in certain circumstances, a contract for training services may be developed instead of an individual training account as explained under WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii) of WIOA; the full list of exceptions is provided below and include the following:

- If the individual is enrolled in on-the-job training, which may include placing participants in a Registered Apprenticeship program, customized training, incumbent training, or transitional jobs;
- If the board determines that an insufficient number of eligible providers of training services are enrolled to use individual training accounts;
- If a training service program of demonstrated effectiveness is offered in a local area by a community-based organization or other private organization;
- If the board determines that the most appropriate training could be provided by an institution of higher education to train multiple individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations; and
- If the board determines a pay-for-performance contract is the most effective means of providing training services.

**Work-based training Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers. Apprenticeships are most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. As Registered Apprenticeship programs, they automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.**

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:

- Employers who provide related instruction;
- Employers who use an outside educational provider;
- Joint apprenticeship training programs; and
- Intermediaries.

Additional details of the Registered Apprenticeship Program are provided later in this plan.

### **On-the-job training**

On-the-job training continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. Wyoming provides up to 50% of the wage rate of the participant to employers for training costs while the participant is in the program. On-the-job-training expectations are that the worker will be retained by the employer upon training completion.

### **Incumbent worker training**

Incumbent worker training is a new option under WIOA, and Wyoming has not yet decided how best to implement this new opportunity. Wyoming continues to explore options that would best work with the current incumbent worker training programs and WIOA.

### **Transitional jobs**

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100%. These jobs can be in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or who have an inconsistent work history, and in combination with comprehensive career and supportive services.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will be tasked with using Transitional Jobs with targeted groups, including the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and with individuals with disabilities.

## **7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.**

The State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions to coordinate Title I activities with those activities under Title II, is revising the approach of local involvement to meet the needs of a diversifying economy. The State Board in relation to Next Generation Sector Partnerships continues to provide professional development training to interested communities. The training begins with the needs of business rather than the menu of services available from the public sector.

DWS and AE will continue to integrate wrap-around services that include access to basic literacy, post-secondary education, career and technical training, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities.

The following procedure is used for granting funds to eligible providers. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is developed and aligned with requirements provided in the guidance from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career Technical and Adult Education. The thirteen considerations for awarding grants are explained in the general information section of the

application packet. Applicants are required to address each of the considerations in their response to the RFP. Scoring of applications considers these responses.

Applicants must describe in their responses any cooperative or collaborative arrangements, provision of services, how they will meet performance, one-stop partner responsibilities, how equitable access will be achieved, and how they will meet the needs of eligible individuals.

Specific goals are identified and aligned to a career pathways system utilizing strategies outlined by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council's Strategic Plan and the Educational Attainment Initiative. The RFP also includes a description of how funds are awarded.

All proposals are received by the WCCC office. Each proposal will be reviewed by three teams of independent reviewers using a standardized process described in the *Resource and Policy* section of the application packet.

The first team of readers reviews Demonstrated Effectiveness, which is a screening component of grant applications, and determines whether the application has met mandatory requirements. The team of readers will determine whether or not to advance the grant application to the Alignment and Compliance Teams.

The State Board, in fulfilling the Local Board function of reviewing applications, forms an Alignment Team subcommittee. This team reviews the alignment of the application to the Wyoming Unified State Plan, the State Workforce Investment Board's Vision, Mission and Goals, and statewide economic and educational initiatives. The team then makes recommendations for improvement or changes and sends these back to the state AE office for consideration in awarding funds.

A separate Compliance Team reviews the application for compliance to the state's RFP and WIOA requirements, completeness, and inclusion of all requested forms and budgets. This team will score and rank the applications.

The state AE office checks for signatures, UEI number and the assigned State vendor number, applies the funding formula, and determines awards. Recommendations from the Alignment Team must be addressed and revisions made within two weeks of award notice. The federally-required match of 25% will be made up of state funds and in-kind match resources.

**8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

Cooperative Agreements can be found at this link: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HMMjE5\\_QbSfxLVldR\\_FkLekJGZjEKaGO/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HMMjE5_QbSfxLVldR_FkLekJGZjEKaGO/view?usp=sharing)

**E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)**

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
  - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
  - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
  - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
  - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
  - E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND
6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:
  - A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
  - B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
  - C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
  - D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
  - E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE’S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.
7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

**ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains



The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.4%	75.4%	75.4%	75.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.9%	78.0%	75.9%	78.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,333.00	8,200.00	7,333.00	8,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	70.2%	73.4%	70.2%	73.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.1%	81.5%	75.1%	81.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

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*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available

to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	84.8%	87.2%	84.8	87.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	81.3	83.8%	81.3	83.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	12,735	13,000	12,735	13,000
Credential Attainment Rate	76.1	76.1%	76.1	76.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	78.2	83.0%	78.2	83.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment

Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021

will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.4	74.4%	74.4	74.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.8	75.8%	75.8	75.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,479	3,643	3,479	3,643
Credential Attainment Rate	54.0	56.6%	54.0	56.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.7	73.0%	67.7	73.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

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

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

#### A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

##### 1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

Career Services authorized by WIOA categorizes services into three delivery strategies: Basic Career Services; Individualized Career Services; and Follow-up Services. The primary services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff are Basic Career Services. The State of Wyoming intends to continue using state merit staff and will explore using other staff for Wagner-Peyser. All Basic Career Services must be available and will be coordinated with One-Stop center partners. Individualized Career Services may be made available by Wagner-Peyser staff per Training and Employment Guidance Letter 3-15. Career Services can be delivered in any order to assist clients to obtain and retain employment.

As stated above, the primary Wagner-Peyser services are Basic Career Services, which may include the following:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services to include:
  - Job search assistance, including placement assistance,
  - Provision of information related to in-demand occupations, career counseling and recruitment; and
- Services to employers;
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), WIOA, etc.;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information related to eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- Assistance completing financial aid documents for education and training programs;
- Provision of information related to nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Wage survey analysis on occupations;
- Job vacancy listings for local labor market areas; and
- Information for Unemployment Insurance including meaningful assistance with a direct expedited link to Unemployment Insurance staff.

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

Program Managers and Center Managers receive training specific to the programs they administer. The training is provided through seminars, phone conferences, and other means by U.S. Department of Labor personnel and other workforce experts. The Program Managers and Center Managers, in turn, train AJC personnel and others regarding these same programs to ensure continuity of operations and service. Regular phone and/or video conferences occur for JVSG staff, Workforce Specialists, Business Representatives, MIS Focus Group team, and other programs.

DWS recently partnered with Workforce 180 and offered all AJC staff the opportunity to earn several Workforce Professional Certifications. The certifications included:

- **Case Management Certification** - This is a three course series, that covers topics related to case management and includes:
  - The Five Frames of Coaching
  - Motivating the Unmotivated
  - Managing your Caseload
  - Helping VS Empowering
  - Using Emotional Intelligence
  - Theories Behind Change
  - Building Connections
  - The WIOA Connection
- **Business Services Certification** - This course provided staff a better understanding of how to assist and deliver services to employers. There was a strong focus on employer engagement, building rapport, overcoming objections, effective communication, how to utilize social media, and understanding the how, when and why to follow up with employers.
- **Reentry Services Certification** - This course provided staff the knowledge and ability to provide services to the justice involved. Staff were able to learn the importance of de-mystifying and understanding the client, their needs, which improves job retention and identifying career pathways.

DWS provided staff members training surveys and had discussions with the team following the training events. Based on the feedback received from DWS staff members, DWS plans on continuing this partnership with Workforce 180 and utilizing more of their learning opportunities on a consistent basis.

WIOA 101 Case Management training is offered monthly through case management conference calls and manager meetings. Policy and procedure updates are provided as needed through



Google Meet and online training. In-person training will be offered quarterly at central locations, which includes HireWyo System training. The location for this training rotates to make it easier for Workforce Specialists to attend. AJC managers are also required to attend.

DWS continues to conduct *Bridges Out of Poverty* training. Based on the work of Dr. Ruby Payne, *Bridges Out of Poverty* reaches out to the millions of service providers and businesses whose daily work connects them with people in poverty.. It is a one-time, day-long session offered as part of case management training, open to current staff and community partners that include hospital personnel, local non-profit staff, other State agency personnel, and employers.

The Employment and Training Division's management information system, HireWyo, provides a variety of self-paced training modules.

The State Department of Administration and Information conducts training classes in customer support, management, and other service-related areas.

On-the-job training is provided through activities that include job shadowing, self-directed study; standard operating procedure manuals; job aids; policy and procedure manuals; and workflow checklists.

Additional training provided includes:

- Wyoming has developed Case Note Training,
- New Employee Training offering through the WyoTraining system,
- Self-paced training modules,
- Workshops,
- Conferences,
- Classroom environment training to improve customer service techniques.

All are methods of ensuring that staff members are trained to provide the highest quality services to their customers.

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

The outreach workers in DWS are merit system employees from Wyoming's local American Job Centers. Wagner-Peyser funds are used to provide AJC clients across Wyoming with labor exchange services and the equipment/materials needed for facilitating both UI claimants and job seekers alike. This also includes mailing, faxing, and emailing of information to and from UI for claimants. As required by the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Wagner-Peyser and UI programs are brought together through the provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants. This includes access to HireWyo. Each claimant must apply to two or more jobs per week, and One-Stop Centers not only have trained staff available for assistance but also offer resource computers that claimants can use to search and apply for work; use of phones and fax for work-related purposes; printers and copiers for resumes and job applications, and workspace.

The AJC employees have regular contact with UI staff members and reach out to them when needed. The AJC staff work directly with clients and facilitate interaction with UI, sending client correspondence, ensuring forms are filled out correctly, calling to verify needs from UI and adjudicators in regards to claimant cases, interpreting and conveying requirements and actions that UI documents entail, identifying UI eligibility issues and discussing these with the claimant, and pairing with UI staff if further details are needed. Staff in all offices have received training regarding the UI process and identification of eligibility issues in multiple formats, including claimant guidebooks, email, video, peer tutoring, telephone, new hire training, and in-person (when available).

The UI claims center created a video – *Unemployment Insurance 101*. *UI 101* has been distributed to all of the AJCs. DWS has implemented the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program that requires the UI Claims Center and the AJCs to create improved and innovative communication to maximize reemployment efforts.

Continuous collaboration, orientation, and information sharing occur between the Wagner-Peyser program and all divisions, particularly the Employment and Training One-Stop System, which works consistently with DVR to provide disability services; the Workers' Compensation Division; the Labor Standards Division, which handles discrimination and wage complaints; the Wyoming Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) Division; the Department of Family Services, which provides individual and family services to income-eligible clients; and other organizations.

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

UI claimants are instructed to contact their local AJC upon filing a claim. The AJCs are notified of new claimants in their area to contact to extend service delivery. The *Unemployment Insurance 101* education courses were designed to help AJC staff assist claimants with questions and filing claims.

Intake (including identification through the State's worker profiling and reemployment services system of claimants likely to exhaust benefits) and orientation to information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System include:

- Initial assessment of skill levels that include literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including:
- Job search and placement assistance and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, which includes:
  - Information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(23));
  - Information on nontraditional employment (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(37));

- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the One-Stop Delivery System and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
  - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed, and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
  - Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
  - Information about local area performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System;
  - Information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit;
    - Housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD);
  - Assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
  - Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
  - Information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

Meaningful assistance for UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim is provided by the centralized Unemployment Benefits Call Center through a direct linkage phone or electronically. If One-Stop Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for a person to obtain or retain employment, the following services are available:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers. This includes diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
- In-depth interviewing, evaluations to identify employment barriers, and setting employment goals.

- Development of an individual employment plan to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services so the participant can achieve their employment goals. Services also include:
  - The list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
  - Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
  - Career planning (for example, case management);
  - Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct. Such services prepare clients for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services;
  - Internships and work experiences linked to careers;
  - Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire basic academic skills, critical-thinking skills, digital-literacy skills, and self-management skills. These skills include competencies in using resources, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining the skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education, training, or employment;
  - Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
  - Integrated education and training programs; and
  - Follow-up services are provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

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

Basic career services are offered to individuals through the Wagner-Peyser Program, which is available in person and electronically through the HireWyo system. In-person services include assistance with job registration through the HireWyo system, resume preparation, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. Priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses is enforced through federal and state policies and will be provided at all centers.

Staff-assisted services, including WIOA career and training services, are also offered at the AJCs. These services are coordinated with other programs, both within and outside of the AJCs. Through the centers, workers also will have access to the full array of other services provided by DWS, including access to the UI system.

Currently, UI claimants registered in HireWyo are provided applicable job postings as they become available. DWS is continuously looking for ways to improve the assessment and identification of barriers to employment for proper referral to other and/or additional resources, both internally and externally. In 2023, Wyoming implemented their Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. This program works in coordination with UI to claimants whom many struggle to return to work and are likely to exhaust their benefits.

As a requirement of receiving UI benefits, identified UI claimants are referred to and work with the AJCs to conduct a thorough eligibility review, create resumes, connect with community and partner resources and identify potential barriers to reemployment. Persons participating in the RESEA program may go on to employment, training or enter into other partner programs based on those identified barriers.

All AJCs throughout Wyoming offer basic, career, and training services for the state's adult, dislocated worker, and youth workforces. This includes veterans, public assistance recipients, people with disabilities, older workers, migrant and seasonal farm workers, unemployed workers, and underemployed workers. Services are provided through the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, Dads Making A Difference, Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER), WY Quality Counts, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Monitor Advocate, Foreign Labor Certification, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Employment & Training Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. Each program serves unique segments of the state's population, with the overarching goal of helping eligible individuals and families address employment and training needs, so they can achieve long-term self-sufficiency and increase earnings. Many of these programs are coordinated with other organizations, both within the AJCs and the communities served.

Two important Employment and Training Division components are the AJC staff and HireWyo. The HireWyo system facilitates common data collection for the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Investment Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, and other employment and training programs. Reporting of Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act data and performance outcomes, including veteran's data and outcomes, is accomplished through the federal data reporting and validation system.

The Employment and Training Division utilizes updated versions of HireWyo. The system is updated continually to keep abreast with new federal requirements, as well as features requested by Wyoming staff and administration. DWS has developed a Change Control Board for the system, which is facilitated by one staff member from the Program Strategy team and one staff member from the Workforce Services team. This group, made up of members from every team that uses or relies on the HireWyo system, meets monthly via virtual meeting to discuss HireWyo issues and share information on best practices. When necessary, the group includes representatives from Career Edge, the designer and operator of the HireWyo system. This team is crucial to the success of the system.

Wagner-Peyser policy guides required services, service delivery, and strategies for services to individual job seekers and businesses. Through the Wagner-Peyser Program, AJC staff use all available resources to streamline employer services and to refer eligible participants to job openings. Business service representatives in each AJC focus on employer needs. Business service representatives conduct initial and follow-up outreach to local companies. Monthly calls are conducted that include topics such as: technical assistance, coordinating activities, and sharing best practices.

**D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

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

UI claimants who are registered in the State job bank (HireWyo) will receive notification of appropriate job postings as they become available in connection with their skills or the job search parameters they have selected. This functionality is in the process of being developed at the time of writing this. DWS created a brief intake assessment that includes identification of barriers to employment at all levels within the Department to ensure proper referrals are made internally.

Additionally, all AJCs throughout Wyoming also have case managers who conduct Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Grant (RESEA) appointments. RESEA is a new program run in coordination and partnership with UI. UI will identify persons who qualify for RESEA services and provide the contact information for these individuals to AJCs who then will conduct the appointments. These appointments consist of eligibility reviews, completion of Wagner-Peyser application, referral to other services and programs (including WIOA) and referral to other community and partner services. Those selected for participation in RESEA services are required to participate in order to continue to receive UI benefits.

All AJCs throughout Wyoming offer basic, career, and training services for Wyoming's adult, dislocated worker and youth individuals. AJC staff are also trained in referring to other agencies to meet additional needs of individuals. Service provision includes veterans, public assistance recipients, people with disabilities, older workers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, UI claimants, unemployed workers, and underemployed workers. This is accomplished through the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Employment & Training for Self Sufficiency, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, Dads Making A Difference, Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER), WY Quality Counts, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Monitor Advocate, Foreign Labor Certification, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance programs.

Each DWS program serves unique segments of the state's population, with the overarching goal of helping eligible individuals and families address employment and training needs, so they can achieve long-term self-sufficiency and increase earnings. Many of these programs are coordinated with other organizations, both within the AJCs and the communities they serve.

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

The registration process of UI claimants proceeds as follows:

1. An individual is separated from work through no fault of their own;
2. The individual then enters an AJC to gain direct linkage access to UI, a call center in Casper, Wyoming. The individual may also use the internet to file a claim or call directly to open a claim with UI, which makes access to UI easier for clients;
3. Once a claim is opened, the individual is alerted repeatedly by mail, electronically, by telephone, and in person to register in HireWyo;
4. Claimants must develop at least one active resume. AJC staff assist individuals with any level of registration requested, including resume review and creation, how to use the labor exchange software to search for work, entering saved searches (Virtual Recruiters), and AJC staff conduct a verification call the following day to ensure claimants are alerted to the requirement of registering for work. Currently, claimants

who are registered in HireWyo are forwarded applicable job postings as they become available;

5. AJCs, in conjunction with the UI claims center, follow up with UI claimants to provide service delivery and labor exchange services.

In accordance with Chapter 27 and UIC Rules 20, 24, and 25 (if necessary), UI claimants are given two weeks to register with the HireWyo System or to follow the registration rules in the state in which they reside. If HireWyo registration is not completed correctly within two weeks, benefits are denied until the issue is resolved.

### 3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Claimants are asked a series of qualifying questions regarding their availability for and ability to work. Responses are used for the claim but are also opportunities to gauge a claimant's suitability for programs such as vocational rehabilitation and reemployment services. This is followed up by the local AJC making outbound calls to claimants to assist with work search registration. A reminder call is completed two weeks after an initial claim is filed. Employees listen for verbal queues from which they can make referrals to additional services. At any point, employees can report activity that would require the attention of the adjudication unit.

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

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) is the State Workforce Development Board for Wyoming. All Workforce programs are coordinated with the WWDC. The target populations of this partnership are adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The WWDC works closely with WIOA partners to ensure Wyoming has educated workers. WWDC members refer individuals and employers to AJCs regarding training, education, and placement assistance.

Additional guidance is contained in Attachment A to Wyoming's Partner MOU - [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6\\_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LBK7wQ6_1jFfoT4Lepgg2GShK6y4D-Ic)

#### **Wyoming Department of Workforce Services - Role as the Provider of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services**

The WWDC has selected the DWS as the provider of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services. As the primary provider of these services, DWS shall provide the services to Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth in accordance with P.L. 113-128, all applicable Rules and Regulations, and other formal guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, including but not limited to:

- Primary provider of services within the One-Stop Centers;
- Ensure basic services to job seekers and employers are being met such as access to job listings, labor market information, employment workshops, and mediated services;
- Provide the following career services:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation;
- Initial assessment;
- Eligibility for services;
- Referrals to programs;
- Performance and cost information;
- Information on Unemployment Insurance (UI);
- Financial aid information;
- Follow-up services;
- Provide the Program Strategy Team all legally releasable data requested;
- Provide eligibility determinations and access to training services; and
- Report all other Partner Agencies and Partners and innovative projects to the WWDC.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Agencies and Partners**

### **All Partner Agencies and Partners**

All Partner Agencies and Partners to this MOU shall comply with:

- Section 188 of the WIOA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations (29 C.F.R. § 38; Final Rule, published December 2, 2016);
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352);
- Section 504 for the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336);
- The Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288) pertaining to priority of service in programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor;
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (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 and other guidance related to implementing WIOA Section 188;
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232(g); 34 CFR 99);
- General Education Provision Act (GEPA) (Section 427)
- Confidentiality requirements governing the protection and use of personal information held by the Vocational Rehabilitation agency (34 C.F.R. § 361.38);
- The confidentiality requirements governing the use of confidential information held by the State Unemployment Insurance agency (20 C.F.R. § 603);
- All amendments to each; and



- All requirements imposed by the regulations issued pursuant to these Acts.

The above provisions require, in part, that no persons in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, disability, political beliefs or religion be excluded from participation in, or denied, any aid, care, services or other benefits provided by federal and/or state funding, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination.

Additionally, all Partner Agencies and Partners shall:

- Collaborate and reasonably assist each other in the development of necessary service delivery protocols for the services outlined in the Partner Agencies and Partners Services section above;
- Agree that the provisions contained herein are made subject to all applicable federal and state laws, implementing regulations, and guidelines imposed on either or all Partner Agencies and Partners relating to privacy rights of customers, maintenance of records, and other confidential information relating to customers; and
- Agree that all equipment and furniture purchased by any Partner Agencies and Partners for purposes described herein shall remain the property of the purchaser after the termination of the MOU/Addendum.

### **Governor or Designee**

The Governor of Wyoming or his designee shall, at a minimum:

- In partnership with the WWDC and other applicable Partner Agencies and Partners, develop and submit a State Plan that includes a description of the activities that shall be undertaken by WWDC and its Partner Agencies and Partners;
- Approve the WWDC's budget and cost allocation plan for the State;
- Approve the selection of the One-Stop Operator following the competitive procurement process; and
- Coordinate with the WWDC to oversee the operations of DWS as the One-Stop Operator.

### **Wyoming Workforce Development Council**

The WWDC ensures the workforce-related needs of employers, workers, and job seekers in the state are met, to the maximum extent possible with available resources. The WWDC, at a minimum:

- In partnership with the Governor or his designee and other applicable Partner Agencies and Partners within the state, develop and submit a State Plan to include a description of the activities that shall be undertaken by the WWDC and its Partner Agencies and Partners, and that aligns its strategic vision, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies to the economy;
- In collaboration with Partner Agencies and Partners develop the strategic vision, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies;
- In cooperation with the Governor or his designee, design and approve the One-Stop Center network structure. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Adequate, sufficient, and accessible One-Stop Center locations and facilities;
  - Sufficient numbers and types of providers of career and training services (including eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities);
  - A holistic system of supporting services; and
  - Selection of a One-Stop Operator for the State.
- In collaboration with the Governor or his designee, select, oversee, monitor, implement corrective action, and, if applicable, terminate the One-Stop Operator.
  - Determine the role of the One-Stop Operator;
  - Approve annual budget allocations for operation of the One-Stop network;
  - Help the One-Stop Operator recruit operational Partner Agencies and Partners and negotiate MOU/Addendum with new Partner Agencies and Partners;
  - Leverage additional funding for the One-Stop Center network to operate and expand One-Stop customer activities and resources;
  - Review and evaluate performance of One-Stop Operator; and

### **WWDC Staff**

Specific responsibilities include, at a minimum:

- Assist the Governor or his designee and the WWDC with the development and submission of the State Plan;
- Support the WWDC with the implementation and execution of the vision, mission, goals, objectives, and workforce-related policies, including all the duties outlined above;
- Provide operational and grant-specific guidance to the One-Stop Operator;
- Investigate and resolve elevated customer complaints and grievance issues;
- Prepare regular reports and recommendations to the WWDC;
- Oversee negotiations and maintenance of MOU/Addendum with One-Stop Partner Agencies and Partners. Provide administrative support to the Governor's WWDC and committees;

### **One-Stop Operator**

DWS has been selected as the One-Stop Operator in Wyoming and shall be referred to as the One-Stop Operator as appropriate. DWS will employ individuals to act as One-Stop leadership and oversee the operation of each One-Stop Center detailed above. Formal leadership, supervision, and performance responsibilities will remain with each staff member's employer of record. The One-Stop Operator, through the One-Stop Center Managers will, at a minimum:

- Manage all day to day operations that support quality service delivery to participants, including, but not limited to:
  - Managing and coordinating Partner responsibilities, as defined in this MOU;
  - Managing hours of operation;

- Coordinating daily work schedules and work flow based upon operational needs; and
- Coordinating staff vacations/unscheduled absences with the formal leader to ensure services coverage by center staff.
- Integrate systems and coordinate services for the One-Stop Center and its Partner Agencies and Partners, placing priority on customer service.
  - Integrated workforce service delivery, as defined by WIOA, means organizing and implementing services by function (rather than by program), when permitted by a program's authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating policies, staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts.
  - Functional alignment includes having One-Stop Center staff who perform similar tasks, serve on relevant functional teams, e.g. Skills Development Team or Business Services Team.
  - Service integration that focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams (consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program).
  - The services are seamless to the customer, meaning the services are free of cumbersome transitions or duplicative registrations from one program service to another and there is a smooth customer flow to access the array of services available in the workforce center.
- Oversee and coordinate Partner Agencies' and Partners' programs and the One-Stop Center network performance. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Providing and/or contributing to reports of center activities, as requested by the WWDC;
  - Providing input to the formal leader (Partner Agencies and Partners program official) on the work performance of staff under their purview;
  - Notifying the formal leader immediately of any lack of coverage of for a program;
  - Identifying and facilitating the timely resolution of complaints, problems, and other issues;
  - Collaborating with the WWDC on efforts designed to ensure the meeting of program performance measures, including data sharing procedures, to ensure effective data matching, timely data entry into the Management Information System(s), and coordinating data batch downloads (while ensuring the confidentiality requirements of FERPA, 34 C.F.R. § 361.38, and 20 C.F.R. § 603);
  - Ensuring open communication with the formal leaders in order to facilitate efficient and effective center operations;
  - Evaluating customer satisfaction data and propose service strategy changes to the WWDC based on findings; and

- Managing fiscal responsibilities and records for the workforce centers. This includes assisting the WWDC with cost allocations and the maintenance and reconciliation of the One-Stop Center operation budgets.
- Assist the WWDC in establishing and maintaining the One-Stop Center network structure. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Ensuring State requirements for center certification are met and maintained;
  - Ensuring career services outlined in WIOA Section 134(c)(2) are available and accessible;
  - Ensuring WWDC policies are implemented and adhered to;
  - Adhering to the provisions contained in the MOU/Addendum;
  - Reinforcing strategic objectives of the WWDC to Partner Agencies and Partners; and
  - Ensuring staff are properly cross trained by their formal leadership organizations and provided technical assistance, as needed.

The One-Stop Operator should provide insight and information for the State Plan, but will not assist with the writing, preparation and submission of the State Plan. They cannot manage or assist in competitive processes for selecting operators or select or terminate One-Stop Operators, career services providers, or Youth providers. The operator may provide input and insight, but is not able to negotiate performance accountability measures or develop and submit budgets for activities of the WWDC. The WWDC is responsible for the negotiated performance measures, strategic planning, budgets, and One-Stop Operator oversight (including monitoring).

### **Partner Agencies and Partners**

Each Partner Agency and Partner commits to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement. Partner Agencies and Partners will further promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the One-Stop Operator;
- Joint planning, policy development, and system design processes;
- Commitment to the joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures;
- The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes;
- The use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate;
- Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services;
- Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction;

- Participation in regularly scheduled Partner Agencies and Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration;
- Utilization of a portion of funds available for the program and activities to maintain the One-Stop System, including payment of the infrastructure costs of the One-Stop Centers in accordance with law; and
- Participation in the operation of the One-Stop System.

### One-Stop Services

Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and assistance related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches
Conduct outreach regarding the local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, or incumbent worker contracts
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment, and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Organize and conduct job fairs	Develop training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of One-Stop Center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resource issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry sector partnerships

### Job Seeker Services

Basic Career Services	Individualized Career Services	Training
Outreach, intake, and orientation to information, services, programs, tools, and	Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

<b>Basic Career Services</b>	<b>Individualized Career Services</b>	<b>Training</b>
resources available through the State's workforce system		
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs	Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition (ELA), may be provided in combination with the training services described above
In- and out-of-area job search and placement assistance (provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and nontraditional employment)	Referral to training services	OJT
Access to employment opportunities and labor market information	Group counseling	Incumbent Worker Training
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services	Literacy activities related to work readiness	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction that may include cooperative education
Information on the performance of the State workforce system	Individual counseling and career planning	Training programs operated by the private sector
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Case management for customers seeking training services; individuals in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance	Skill upgrading and retraining
Information and meaningful assistance on Unemployment Insurance claim filing	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships	Entrepreneurial training
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner Agencies and Partners services, programs, and referrals	Workforce preparation services (development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills,	Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an

<b>Basic Career Services</b>	<b>Individualized Career Services</b>	<b>Training</b>
	and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training	individual upon successful completion of the training
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA	Post-employment follow-up services and support (This is not an individualized career service, but listed here for completeness)	Other training services as determined by the workforce Partner Agencies and Partners' governing rules

### **Youth Services**

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 (a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential	Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate to include Adult Education services.
Paid and unpaid work experience with a component of academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities	Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved
Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
Supportive services	Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
Financial literacy education	Entrepreneurial skills training

Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training
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E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

Based on field visits, outreach sessions, conversations with employers, and information obtained from the state’s Farm Labor Contractor, most MSFWs speak English and/or Spanish. The majority of the H2A workers who come into Wyoming are from Peru and speak Spanish as well. Farmworkers and their families will continue to need health services, schooling, and English as a second language support. DWS will continue to work to provide these services in coordination with its partners. In reference to housing needs, the exact number of employer housing units provided for workers is unknown. However, those who participated in the H2A Program have an average of just four units per employer provided for workers. No numbers were reported for Migrant Food Processing Workers. DWS will continue to provide housing inspections as required. MSFW numbers continue to decline in Wyoming. The number of MSFWs continues to be very low in the state. Typically, the one-stops do not have MSFW traffic or registrations. Typically at one time, the most MSFWs that Wyoming sees is around 10-15 for the period of May through August.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS’ NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

Information obtained from the 2023 USDA National Agriculture Statistic Services indicates the value added to Wyoming’s economy by the agricultural sector was \$2.45 billion in 2022 and has been above the \$1 billion threshold since 2003. Of that total, Animals and animal products accounted for \$1.40 billion, crops totaled \$529 million, and farm-related income accounted for \$519 million. In 2022, 11,900 farms and ranches used 28.5 million acres to raise agricultural products in Wyoming. Farmer and rancher cash receipts totaled \$1.93 billion. Cattle and calves ranked as the largest livestock commodity raised in the state, followed by hogs and sheep. Hay was the largest crop raised, followed by corn, sugarbeets, wheat and barley.



The growing season in Wyoming typically starts in the spring and goes through the fall. Depending on the weather, alfalfa hay, barley, oats, and spring wheat are planted in March and April. Sugar beets are typically planted in April. Corn planting can begin during the end of April into May. Dry beans are also planted in May.

Hay is produced across the State. The bulk of the sugar beet crop is produced in the Bighorn Basin in the northwestern part of the state. Other notable sugar beet production occurs in Goshen and Platte counties, located in the eastern part of the state.

The production of most major crops in Wyoming is no longer considered labor-intensive, which has affected available work opportunities for laborers. The use of machinery and herbicides considerably reduced the need for manual labor in planting, tending, and harvesting processes. Machines typically harvest sugar beets, barley, corn, dry beans, wheat, and oats. As a result, few agricultural workers are involved in the process. Hay farming has evolved to the point where most individual harvests are completed by one or two workers using machines that produce and haul very large bales. Few operations rely on the 60- to 80-pound small bales, and fewer still free-stack hay without baling it. Flood irrigation is a thing of the past as most operations have gone to the use of pivots.

A considerable demand for foreign workers is present in Wyoming under the H2A program, as well as a small demand for migrant workers. In 2020, DWS processed 146 temporary agricultural job orders for in-state employers. Of those job orders, approximately 85% were for sheep herding and range livestock workers. The other 15% were made up of farmworkers and general ranch workers.

DWS anticipates that employers will continue to use herbicides and new technological developments that will limit the need for agricultural workers in Wyoming. Cold winters and hot, dry summers are typical Wyoming weather. The short growing season limits agricultural production in many places, with the frost-free period ranging from 60 to 140 days. These factors all affect the Wyoming agricultural industry.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Based on field checks, outreach sessions and conversation with employers as well as information obtained from the state's only Farm Labor Contractor, most MSFWs speak English and/or Spanish. The majority of the H2A workers that come into the state are from Peru and speak Spanish as well. Farmworkers and their families will continue to need health services, schooling, and English as a second language support. DWS will continue to work to provide these services in coordination with its partners. During the PY 2020, approximately 15 Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers were employed in the State during the peak season and approximately 20 seasonal workers during the off-peak season.

In reference to housing needs, the exact number of employer housing units provided for workers is unknown. However, those who participated in the H2A Program have an average of just four units per employer provided for workers.

#### 4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Three field offices in the state actively work with MSFWs. Each office has at least one AJC staff member who provides outreach services to MSFWs. These staff members receive training from the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as it becomes available and any collaborative training with other service providers for MSFWs, including NFJP grantees. Staff members will complete the online training modules on the Workforce GPS website related to outreach and MSFWs.

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

The SMA has developed a great working relationship with the State's only Farm Labor Contractor, who has helped to identify any day-haul operators in the area. Staff members visit the operators every quarter to provide information and services to MSFWs. DWS also reaches out to workers at their worksites and homes, and at the sites of other MSFW service providers. Outreach will be accomplished from Wyoming's AJCs by Workforce Specialists as part of their assigned duties.

As stated in e(1)(B) of this plan, estimates of the number of such farmworkers in the state have been consistently low. Wyoming is not designated by the U.S. Employment and Training Administration as a "significant state" for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker purposes. Also, none of Wyoming's local One-Stop Centers are designated as a "significant local office." Few MSFWs are being reported or otherwise identified as being in the State.

The SMA will continue to work with NFJP Grantee (MET) as well as the local farm labor contractor to locate farmworkers and their families who are not being reached by normal intake.

##### B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM ("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

The SMA continues to offer technical assistance through quarterly conference calls and schedules in-person training as needed, including new employee training. The SMA has plans to

address the required training for staff members related to sexual harassment and human trafficking. The SMA is coordinating sexual harassment training with the State's Human Resource Division and has teamed up with the Blue Campaign to provide field staff with training modules related to Human/Labor Trafficking. The SMA continues to be a member of the Governor's Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force that is sponsored by the State's Attorney General's Office. Field staff will attend any training that becomes available related to sexual harassment and human trafficking. An awareness card for human trafficking is in the process of being developed and will be printed in both English and Spanish.

All of the AJCs post bulletins concerning worker rights and other important topics. Furthermore, all workforce staff are trained in using the complaint system. While there have been no MSFW complaints in recent years, staff members know how to assist the workers. The only obstacle in accomplishing this and the provision of other services is the lack of readily-available Spanish-speaking staff in each office. However, AJCs have ready access to translation services.

#### C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

All DWS outreach workers are merit system employees from Wyoming's local AJCs. These employees have regular contact with the UI system, including the benefits program and employer taxation. Individuals performing outreach, like other local center staff, have access to the "UI 101" video, which provides an explanation of the UI system for claimants. The video answers basic questions about the processes for determining benefit amounts, filing a claim, eligibility issues, etc. Employees also have access to monthly updates to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about UI benefits and the UI tax system. Outreach workers will be instructed in the methodology for registering claimants for work, and what is required for work search activities. They will also have a basic awareness of the UI profiling system—its purpose and requirements; and will know how to refer employers to information sources for UI tax questions.

Because of the One-Stop System that Wyoming uses in its local AJCs, outreach workers are oriented to other organizations in the centers and have the opportunity for routine contact with them, so MSFWs can be referred to those organizations for help, as needed. These organizations include the DVR, which provides disability services; the Workers' Compensation Division; Labor Standards Division; Wyoming (OSHA) Division; and the Department of Family Services. Continuous orientation and information sharing occurs.

#### D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

All DWS state merit staff are provided with proactive opportunities to ensure that they are able to provide the highest quality service to both job seekers and employers through training conducted via PowerPoint presentations, training conferences, and conference calls. New staff orientation is provided with self-paced training modules and workshops in areas such as customer service. They are also instructed specifically in their duties as outreach workers. The State Monitor Advocate/Foreign Labor Certification Programs Manager conducts staff training and works with the outreach workers in the provision of informational seminars.

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

As of February 2024, the State's NFJP Grantee (MET) has relocated their office to Cheyenne. The SMA has made contact with the new office manager and office assistant via zoom meeting. Introductions were made and the SMA shared the MOU between the two agencies. Plans for conducting joint outreach are in the works for the upcoming growing season.

Workforce Specialists prepare materials that present DWS's services. Such materials are shared with the farmworkers and their families through field visits and outreach sessions. In addition, DWS shares health and safety materials and complaint system directions. Workers and their families are assisted in filing complaints. As much as possible, services are provided to each Migrant or Seasonal Farm Worker in their own language. DWS provides opportunities for individuals to register in the HireWyo labor management system and provides orientation regarding its use. The system is accessible in Spanish. The Bighorn Basin is served by the One-Stop Centers in Cody and Worland. AJC staff will provide outreach services where needed and in the workers' language.

#### 5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

Services are provided under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act. The One-Stop System in Wyoming, which includes all local AJCs, administers both acts. Under WIOA, states are provided with significant staffing flexibility to innovate within the workforce system, with various allowable statewide employment and training activities. These efforts are meant to ensure a high-quality workforce system and continuous improvement. Wyoming uses this approach to serve both farmworkers and non-farmworkers.

Previously, DWS has partnered with Motivation Education and Training (MET), the National Farm Worker Jobs Program grantee, which administers WIOA Section 167 in Wyoming and will continue to do so once (MET) has relocated in the state. DWS also coordinates with other organizations to provide services to farmworkers and agricultural employers. DWS will continue to foster a quality working relationship with MET through the memorandum-of-understanding process to ensure that all available and necessary services are provided. These services include outreach to MSFWs, as defined previously in this plan.

Career services, training, and related assistance are provided to eligible farmworkers and related youth through WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Program. These services may be received

in person at the job centers. Wagner-Peyser services are available electronically through the Wyohire System, which is available in English and soon to be Spanish.

In-person services include assistance in registering for work in the HireWyo System, resume preparation and repository, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. Priority of service for veterans, which is enforced through federal and state policies, is provided to MSFWs. Through the job centers, workers also have access to the full array of other services DWS and its partners provide.

Services are also available for individuals with disabilities. DWS uses a productive internal partnership between DVR and the Employment and Training Division to serve the needs of this population.

DVR maintains an active presence in most local AJCs where workers are served within the One-Stop System. DVR representatives also travel to other centers where a continuous presence is not maintained. Services for individuals with disabilities are provided based on need and coordinated plans.

A variety of methods is used to share costs between the two divisions. For example, each organization may pay a portion of an individual's training program. DVR also provides adaptive devices for some clients in training. In addition, the divisions coordinate to assist secondary school-aged students with individual education plans designed to help them achieve a high school diploma or a high-school equivalency education certificate.

Career services, training, and related assistance will be provided to eligible farmworkers and related youth through WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Program. These services may be received in person at the One Stop Centers. Wagner-Peyser services are available electronically through the HireWyo System, which is available in English and Spanish.

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

Staff members assigned to the Foreign Labor Certification Unit provide services to agricultural employers. Employers are apprised of all services available through the workforce system, including the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and any new changes that arise in the H2A process. Service for the seasonal agricultural employer and MSFWs employers are provided by workforce center staff through planned personal visits and promotional telephone contacts. The complaint system has been marketed through outreach sessions and field visits that included MSFW's and Seasonal Workers. The complaint system information has also been provided to advocacy groups such as NFJP (MET) and Ag Health Services.

#### C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Staff members assigned to the Foreign Labor Certification Unit provide services to agricultural employers. Employers are apprised of all services available through the workforce system, including the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and any new changes that arise in the H2A process. Service for the seasonal agricultural employer and MSFWs employers are provided by workforce center staff through planned personal visits and promotional telephone contacts.

## 6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### A. COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Since the last AOP, DWS has formalized a memorandum of understanding with MET, the WIOA Section 167 NFJP grantee in Wyoming, to facilitate information sharing and coordination of services to farmworkers, including outreach activities. Other memoranda will also be explored based on Wyoming policy regarding such associations. One-Stop Center staff members have access to written, website, and phone information on programs and can disseminate information in the appropriate format for the customer.

Through Language Line and 211, staff can get assistance for customers who are non-English speakers. Staff members provide verbal referrals after conducting the initial needs assessment. This information is also available for verbal referrals in the resource room as well as in print. Application assistance is available through One-Stop staff.

In addition to MET, should a location be reopened in Wyoming, DWS will continue to contact and coordinate with other organizations known to serve farmworkers or those who could potentially serve them. DWS will seek out other organizations that might help to provide services and partner with those organizations whenever opportunities arise. Some organizations that were working in Wyoming, such as the Migrant Head Start Program, are no longer funded. The numbers and types of organizations that provide services to MSFWs in Wyoming are continually changing and declining.

In the most recent reporting year, DWS & MET provided outreach services to about 20 farmworkers. DWS anticipates that about the same number will receive services during this plan period via similar venues.

How many MSFWs were served by other organizations in Wyoming is unknown. Migrant Health is no longer available. Frequently, definitions of farmworkers used by other organizations vary somewhat from DWS definitions. Nevertheless, DWS will coordinate as much as possible with these partners.

DWS anticipates that most MSFWs will be found in the Bighorn Basin of northwest Wyoming. DWS, through its three AJC locations in the area, plans to coordinate closely with MET and others to provide outreach services. AJCs in other regions of the State will also provide outreach based on the established need.

### B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in

formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

There are no comments or suggestions from the NFJP at this time. No public comment was received for this section.

#### C. DATA ASSESSMENT

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

During the past four years, DWS has continued to show improvement in its service to MSFWs and is meeting the established goals for quality and quantitatively proportionate services. The improvements are based on continuous education, efforts to improve, increased data entry and coordinating outreach efforts with the NFJP Grantee (MET). During PY-2022 and PY-2023, DWS did not reach all five equity ratio indicators in the LEARS reporting system, only reaching two during that time period. DWS continues to struggle with meeting the minimum services levels portrayed in the LEARS reporting system. These efforts continued to be hindered by a decline in the number of MSFWs coming into the State for work. Some organizations have ceased to operate farmworker programs or have lost funding to maintain the program. The recent closing of the (MET) office in Powell has made establishing a consistent relationship between partners and customers difficult.

To reach its goals, DWS will continue its efforts to reach out to all potential partners and establish productive working relationships. DWS will continue to improve its working relationship with MET once they are relocated in the state. The SMA will continue to educate and train field staff with an emphasis placed on identifying MSFW's, the registration process, and sharing of relevant data. The SMA will continue to work closely with the State's only farm labor contractor to identify any MSFWs and seasonal workers.

#### D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The SMA continues to work with DWS's partner organizations and the State's only farm labor contractor. Due to the recent low numbers of MSFW's in the state, farmworker organizations ceasing operations, and establishing new partner organization relationships DWS will renew its efforts to reach out to all potential partners to establish an effective working relationship.

The SMA has been working to build a stronger relationship with MET by increasing contact both in person and by phone. The SMA will continue to build a productive working relation with (MET) should they relocate back in the state..

DWS previously made improvements in its MIS, Wyoming at Work, to better track Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers. DWS has recently gone to a new MIS system HireWyo. The SMA will continue to monitor system data to ensure the proper data is being reported.

Policies and procedures have been developed for the H2A Agricultural Program and Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers program. These policies and procedures are updated by the SMA and are available through DWS's intranet site which provides access for all Program Managers, Center Managers, and field staff. The SMA has begun cross-training other Program Managers to ensure wider coverage and understanding of the programs.

Very little outreach activity has been conducted because of the very low number of Migrant & Seasonal Workers in the area/State. Outreach can be provided through DWS via personal contacts, distribution of printed materials in natural languages, community opportunity fairs, and migrant health fairs. DWS continues to pursue these but greater focus has been placed on finding such workers if they are in the State and providing the necessary outreach to them through the One-Stop Centers and MET.

Core workforce services, intensive services, training, and supportive services are provided to individual workers who visit the AJCs. Language assistance is also available through Language Line and 211. Services are provided under the provisions of the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIOA.

Filling agricultural job orders with domestic workers has become a challenge for DWS, as the current workforce shows disinterest in the field and there has been a decline in migrant seasonal farmworkers. DWS continues to ensure that any interested domestic workers will have the same opportunities for employment by maintaining job orders and educating employers and contractors. Wyoming has not identified many MSFWs in recent years. The previous MIS, Wyoming at Work system, identified only nine workers for the period of July 1, 2023 through Sept. 30, 2023. Three field offices in the State serve Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers regularly. The SMA will combine efforts with the agency's Employment & Training Monitor to monitor these field offices during the peak season for MSFWs.

#### E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

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

The SMA has reviewed and approved the AOP.

#### WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:



The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Initiate the discontinuation of services;</li> <li>2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;</li> <li>3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;</li> <li>4) Approve corrective action plans;</li> <li>5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;</li> <li>6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and</li> <li>7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.</li> </ul>	Yes
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

**WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	62.4	64.7%	62.4	64.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.9	61.9%	61.9	61.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	5,827	6,000	5,827	6,000
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

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

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

### A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Adult Education (AE) program in Wyoming has adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and the English Language Proficiency Standards for all Adult Education and Literacy providers funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The CCRS are aligned with the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in English, language arts, and math, as adopted in June 2012. The Wyoming State Board of Education has made no amendments to the original agreement, which aligns to Common Core State Standards. This alignment offers challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1995, as amended [20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)]. In addition, Wyoming’s Adult Education programs have adopted and are using, in instruction, the Wyoming Employability Skill Standards and the Wyoming Social Capital Skillstandards.

The College and Career Readiness Standards ensure that literacy students, AE high-school equivalency students, bridge students, and all workplace learners exit the Wyoming Adult Education programs with the skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education, training programs, and/or for employment. The standards reflect the knowledge and skills that students need for success in the 21st century, inclusive of problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, research, and the ability to use technology. The standards were fully implemented on July 1, 2016, in all local AE programs.

AE providers ensure that all instructors implement standards-based education in their programs and do so through integrated learning maps/plans, lesson plans, and the State-sanctioned observation tool entitled the ‘Standards in Action Checklist.’ In addition, the State requires that at least 80% of all instructors at a local provider site participate in ongoing State-sponsored professional development that supports both standards-based education and emerging Career Pathways essential components of reading, numeracy, writing, digital and financial literacy, and instruction in English as a Second Language, Integrated Education and Training (IET/IELCE) models, bridge programs, or workplace literacy.

The adoption of the CCRS and a Career Pathways system drives professional development, acquisition of materials and technology-based resources, as well as the selection of formative and summative evaluation processes. Aligning the standards and career pathways models provides all adult learners with a similar academic structure so that they are prepared for postsecondary education, training, and workforce without the need for remediation.

## B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

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

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

### Scope and Content

Wyoming conducts a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for eligible entities to apply for Adult Education (AE) grant awards for federal and state funds. Successful applicants are awarded a five-year renewable grant to provide Adult Education services and activities. Wyoming will run

all of its competitions for WIOA Sections 225, 231 and 243 in accordance with 34 CFR Part 463 Subpart C.

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) funds local eligible providers to deliver adult education services to 'eligible individuals', 16 years and older, who are not required to be enrolled in secondary school and are basic skills deficient, does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education or is an English language learner. (WIOA Sec 203(4)). The scope of the local AE program activities must demonstrate success with all levels of students, including those with low levels of literacy, those with disabilities (including learning disabilities), and/or English language learners in a career pathways system that allows for the development of the skills needed for successful transition to postsecondary education, training, or employment.

Eligible providers (34 CFR § 463.23) for AEFLA grants in Wyoming are organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include the following:

- Local educational agency;
- A community or a faith-based organization;
- A volunteer literacy organization;
- An institution of higher education;
- A public or private nonprofit agency;
- A library;
- A public housing authority;
- A nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- A consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

To be considered eligible for an award (34 CFR § 463.24), an applicant must demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data on its record in improving the skills of eligible individuals, in particular individuals who are basic-skills deficient, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in this application for funds. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

- An eligible provider that has been funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.
- An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in the first paragraph of this section. See WIOA Final Rules Subpart C, §463.24 and 29 U.S.C 3272(5)

In accordance with WIOA § 231(a), WCCC requires that each eligible provider receiving a grant or contract use the grant or contract to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. Details of these activities, as outlined below, must be provided in each program's proposal. Successful applicants are not required to provide all activities. Allowable activities include the following:

- *Adult Education:* Academic instruction and educational services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:
  - Read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
  - Transition to postsecondary education and training; and
  - Obtain employment.
- *Literacy:* Activities include instruction and education services below a postsecondary level in reading, writing, and speaking in English, and computing and solving problems. These services increase a student's ability to achieve a secondary school diploma or equivalent, transition to postsecondary education and training, and obtain employment.
- *English Language Acquisition:* Adult education and literacy activities for English language learners with an additional skill requirement, comprehension of the English language. The goal of the English Language Acquisition (ELA) program (CFR 34 § 463.31 and 463.32) is to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to:
  - attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and
  - transition to postsecondary education and training; or
  - employment.
- *Family Literacy:* Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs. Family literacy defined in WIOA must integrate all of the following activities:
  - Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for post-secondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency;
  - Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children;
  - Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and
  - An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

- *Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (34 CFR § 463.33)*: Provides immigrants and English learners access to English language acquisition services and civics education and may include workforce training. English infused with civics education helps immigrants and English learners understand the American system of government and what it means to be a citizen and to be involved in civics activities. To live and work in the United States means not only a command of the language, but equally important are the civics-related skills and knowledge necessary to become involved parents, workers, and community members. Therefore, every adult education and literacy council program offering English language acquisition services will include civics education.
- *Integrated Education and Training (34 CFR § 463.35)*: Instruction in basic academic skills and/or English language acquisition skills, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training contextualized for specific occupations or occupational clusters. Education will be provided in the context of industry-specific needs that involve employers and integrated with occupational skills training. Programs will provide work-relevant instruction through career pathways and integrated education and training activities. Instruction will be offered at Educational Functioning Levels appropriate to learners. The purpose of instruction will be education and career advancement. Providers will assist students in their roles as parents and family members by providing foundational skills that enable them to support their children's learning needs and improve economic self-sufficiency for their families.
- *Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities*: Instruction at a workplace or an off-site location designed to improve productivity. Instruction will include contextualized literacy, English language acquisition, and workforce preparation at Educational Functioning Levels appropriate to learners. Successful workplace literacy activities involve strong partnerships with employers or employee organizations designing and delivering the instructional program based on workplace needs.
- *Workforce Preparation (34 CFR § 463.34)*: Activities, programs, or services designed to help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills and employability skills such as critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills. These activities include competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. Workforce preparation skills will be integrated into the adult education and literacy curriculum, therefore occurring concurrently with adult education and literacy skills instruction. Per grant assurances, teachers will integrate technology in their lesson plans, and all students will have access to and use computers and technology to enhance their learning and digital literacy skills.

Potential providers identify the types of services they offer and explain in detail how they will provide these services. Applicants may choose to deliver one or more types of services from the above listing.

Proposals are solicited from applicants who can provide the aforementioned allowable services and activities which also incorporates digital and financial literacy with workforce preparation activities to:

- integrate career services through a career pathways system



- Adult Education applicants, as one aspect of the integrated WIOA system for Wyoming, will need to effectively demonstrate their ability to implement a career pathways system that provides the aforementioned AE services & activities.
- collaborate with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services to place participants in a paid or unpaid work experience program, including Integrated Education and Training, along the identified career track; thereby providing the participants with the opportunity to learn the skills necessary for that occupation.
- concurrently enroll participants in core partner programs so that services complement the educational program of study and provide for full wrap-around services

Because WIOA places great emphasis on aligning comprehensive adult education services with the integrated services of other core program partners, developing a seamless workforce system of integrated services is a primary focus in grant applications. Providers must demonstrate an ability to successfully participate in the local one-stop system as described in the State level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State Workforce Development Board and Partner Agencies and Partners consistent with WIOA Sec. 121(c)(2). This MOU defines the parameters within which education, workforce, economic development, and other required partner programs and entities operating in the State of Wyoming create seamless, customer-focused One-Stop Centers that align service delivery across the board and enhance access to program services. By realizing One-Stop opportunities together, partnering agencies can build community-benefiting bridges, rather than silos of programmatic isolation. Through this MOU, each partner commits to cross-training staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement. Partners are also required to promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- effective use of shared data to develop/maintain an integrated case management system, when possible.
- a referral system to help individuals overcome barriers to employment that may impede the successful completion of a program;
- effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the One-Stop Operator;
- joint planning, policy development, and system design processes;
- commitment to the joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures;
- the design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes;
- the use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate;
- leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services;
- participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction;

- participation in regularly scheduled partner agency meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration; and
- participation in the operation of the One-Stop system.

As a core partner in Wyoming's one-stop system, Adult Education providers are strategically linked to partnering agencies through a referral process to ensure co-enrollment and to ensure that each qualified participant has access to wrap-around services. Through the State Infrastructure Agreement (IFA), the core partners and partnering agencies utilize referrals and information as a means to contribute to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop system. Because the IFA utilizes a cost allocation formula that weights Adult Education referrals, it is critical that Adult Education applicants demonstrate an ability to develop and maintain extensive partnerships, particularly with the core partners, through which effective referrals can be made. This may be done through direct linkage or through on-site collaboration whereby a core partner may have office hours at a local Adult Education center.

Additionally, as part of the State's one-stop system, Adult Education applicants in Wyoming are required to offer, when applicable, the workforce development activities outlined in the Operational Planning Elements of this Unified State Plan.

### **Organization**

The Adult Education program application requires each respondent to clearly articulate how their instructional delivery model will be aligned, coordinated, and linked to statewide economic, educational, and/or workforce initiatives as identified through the Governor's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives and/or through Next Generation Sector Partnerships. Programs are also required to show how instructional delivery models are coordinated and linked with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community with the goal of developing career pathways with local partners. Partnerships may include secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, state workforce investment board, One-Stop Centers, job-training programs, social service agencies, business and industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations. Alignments must include flexible scheduling so adult education services coordinate with the students' wrap-around support services and logistical needs. The provider applicant must demonstrate the ability to provide services to individuals with a disability. The delivery model must be of sufficient intensity and duration so that students can make educational gains and they can exit the program with the skills needed to attain a career and/or meet educational goals.

Each AE provider must have the capacity to support the high-quality data information system (LACES) necessary to collect and report demographics, measurable skill gains, and outcomes appropriate to the services being provided. Primary indicators of performance for the WIOA annual statewide performance report include:

- Participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exiting the program
- Participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exiting the program
- Median earnings from unsubsidized employment in the second quarter after exiting the program

- Percentage of students who attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND enrolled in postsecondary education/training within one year of exiting the AE program
- Percentage of students who attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND employed within one year of exiting the AE program
- Percentage of students who attained a postsecondary credential while enrolled OR within one year of exiting the AE program
- Percentage of students who attained any type of credential (unduplicated)

All indicators are collected by local providers for federal reporting purposes.

Adult education providers are encouraged to submit an application demonstrating their ability to become an integral part of the career pathways system in Wyoming. Bridge programs may be described as a method to connect students to postsecondary education and training as identified through career exploration models. Applications may also address the program's ability to offer IET's and IELCE's. Information provided by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and other relevant stakeholders is to be used to identify local economic/business training needs. The applicant is expected to provide academic service support through WIOA allowable activities to support emerging and established industry needs.

Adult Education provider applicants must clearly describe how the local adult education activities support a career pathways system that addresses the most in-demand occupations in the State as outlined in the Common Elements of this Unified State Plan. Details must also be provided on how the applicant partners with other educational institutions (including high schools, colleges, or other technical training programs), local workforce partners, vocational rehabilitation, registered apprenticeships, and other agencies to fulfill adult education's role under WIOA and to help ensure that complete wrap-around services are available to qualified participants. A description of the provider's plans for their integrated education and training and/or bridge program design must be provided. At the invitation of community leadership, AE local directors will also participate in implementing the Next Generation Sector Partnership model to bring together key partners to listen and assist in problem-solving and solution development for the issues brought forward.

A description of the provider's plans for their integrated education and training and/or bridge program design must be provided.

Required progress reporting will include monthly data reports on measurable skill gain, financial status, and high school equivalency attainment. Quarterly reports will detail successes and challenges while comprehensive end-of-year reports will include narratives, tables, data quality checklist, and other federal/state components.

All AE providers requesting funding for English language acquisition programs must clearly demonstrate a need for program services and civics education. Program instruction must be provided by high-quality instructors who attend ongoing, professional development activities.

### **Funding Eligible Providers**

In accordance with 34 CFR 463.20, the WCCC provides direct and equitable access in applying for Title II grant funds, through a 'Public Notice' posted electronically on the WCCC website, and the same notice is advertised in prominent newspapers across the state, when possible. A minimum of one Bidder's Conference will be hosted for potential applicants to answer questions

and clarify criteria contained in the RFP. Questions and answers will be posted on the WCCC website for public reference. Direct application to the WCCC for all applications is used.

For each competitive grant for AEFLA funds, the State Office for Adult Education will advertise the request for proposals as a five-year, competitive grant to all eligible entities in Wyoming. The RFP will include sections to apply for: 1) Adult Education 2) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education and 3) Corrections Education with descriptions of allowable activities.

These RFPs are a competitive multi-year grant process that does not establish a dollar amount on submitted applications from a specific region in the State. WCCC uses 82.5 percent of state and federal allocations for local assistance grants and utilizes a performance-based funding formula. This formula includes a flat-rate component; enrollment targets, dropout rates, and poverty levels with weighting factors for rural areas. Performance considers educational functioning-level increases, employment, high-school equivalency completions, and postsecondary education or training entry. Distribution of funds to eligible providers follows the state provisions guidance in WIOA Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 222.

Local Administrative Costs, defined in WIOA Section 233; 34 CFR § 463.25 and 34 CFR § 463.26, are limited to not more than 5% of a local grant award for the purposes of planning, administration (inclusive of the requirements of WIOA Sec 116), professional development, the activities outlined in WIOA Sec. 232 and carrying out the one-stop partner responsibilities described in § 678.420, including contributing to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop system.

**Special Rule on Administrative Costs:** In cases where the cost limits described above are too restrictive to allow for the activities described in WIOA 232, the eligible provider shall negotiate with the State to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes.

The WCCC uses the 13 considerations specified in WIOA Section 231(e) to fund eligible providers in establishing and operating programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Request for Proposal includes the 13 considerations and asks respondents to summarize how they meet the described elements.

**Consideration #1:** Statewide economic and educational initiatives, such as the Educational Attainment Initiative, emphasize increasing the literacy levels of qualified participants so they can transition to postsecondary education and employment. This creates an opportunity for AE applicants to address regional needs and align local programming to serve individuals most in need of AE services.

When applicable, applicants must also consider how program activities can be aligned to workforce and economic needs identified by Next Generation Sector Partnerships, Perkins V (for career and technical education), and other economic and workforce programs initiated by the State of Wyoming.

Applicants must provide evidence that program staff work with core partner programs, local postsecondary institutions, Next Generation Sector Partnership (NextGen) committees, and other stakeholders to develop educational programming that meets regional and economic employment needs. The provision of labor market data is to be utilized to develop a comprehensive working knowledge of regional career opportunities so that effective planning, particularly for the career pathways systems and instruction, can be accomplished.

**Consideration #2:** Applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide services to individuals with a disability, including those with a learning disability. The delivery model must be of sufficient intensity and duration so that students can make educational gains and they can exit the program with the skills needed to attain a career and/or meet educational goals.

**Consideration #3:** Applicants must submit a minimum of four years of program data detailing the applicant's previous experience in grant management. The applicant's organization must also provide an organizational chart that identifies Adult Education placement in the organization, and the qualifications of all Adult Education employees. These requirements ensure that potential new programs provide background and experience, including services tailored for the primary AE population(s) and areas served. They also ensure that all institutional applicants are prepared to implement an effective Adult Education program by providing direct leadership and guidance to the program. The RFP will also require a description of project management, which will help to ensure successful outcomes.

All applicants, both prior recipients and new applicants, provide data demonstrating their ability to help students make measurable academic gains in reading, writing, mathematics, English as a Second Language, enrollment in postsecondary education and through other NRS approved measures, such as progress towards milestones, secondary transcript or report card, and/or technical/occupational transcripts. Additionally, applicants will have to provide information regarding its outcomes for participants as related employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. Prior recipients use LACES (the AE program's student data management system for the State of Wyoming) data to show how they have helped students make learning gains.

**Consideration #4:** The Wyoming Workforce Development Council's (the State WDB) Strategic Plan for the WIOA core partners outlines a practical vision that encompasses 1) brand perception 2) opportunities for training and credentials 3) development of sustainable career opportunities and 4) outreach and collaboration. This vision aligns very well with the State's Educational Attainment Initiative. These are the two primary foundational documents upon which Adult Education strategies and activities for workforce development come.

Adult Education applicants in Wyoming will focus on four main strategies aligned with the initiatives/goals outlined in both the Educational Attainment Initiative and the Workforce Development Council's Strategic Plan as addressed in the Strategic Elements section of this Unified State Plan:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive AE career pathways system that aligns workforce, education and economic development.
2. Enhance the accessibility and outcomes of Wyoming's workforce system by leveraging technology and data.
3. Execute an industry-led strategy, as identified through Next Generation Sector partnerships, when applicable, to meet employers' needs and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand.
4. Create and maintain strategic partnerships and alliances to leverage local resources and support integrated service delivery, whenever possible. Due to the State's very frontier regions, it may not be possible for some providers to create these strategic alliances, simply because comprehensive community services do not exist.

**Consideration #5:** Applicants must provide information regarding how they will address sufficient intensity and quality of instruction for participants to make substantial learning gains utilizing curricula that incorporate the essential components of reading.

Curriculum that supports high school equivalency certificate attainment, measurable skill gains, workforce/workplace literacy, and emerging career pathways are to be employed in all Adult Education and Literacy program services. Instruction in content areas (reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, and English language acquisition) are to be delivered by staff knowledgeable in the essential components of reading instruction, or who will participate in state leadership activities focused on the essential components of reading.

**Consideration # 6:** Applicants are required to provide evidence of how local activities incorporate best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practices. Examples may include:

- the use of instructional strategies to integrate academics and soft skills/social capital skills to improve the students' abilities to gain employment, enter postsecondary education, and/or enter a work experience or training (pre) apprenticeship program.
- standards-based educational practices
- the integration of research and theories, such as participatory learning theories, Theory U, brain-based research, mindset, learning styles, etc.
- the use of screening tools to identify participant challenges
- distance learning,
- Integrated Education and Training models
- Career pathways
- Teaching Skills That Matter, Star Reading, Essential Components of Reading, and other examples.

**Consideration #7:** Prospective program providers are required to articulate how distance learning and other modes of technology will be integrated into instruction to support digital and financial literacy attainment, as well as to meet students' specific learning needs.

**Consideration #8:** Adult Education applicants must provide evidence of their ability to provide learning in context, including Integrated Education and training models so that qualified participants develop the skills needed to successfully transition to and complete postsecondary education/training, obtain and advance in employment which leads to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

**Consideration # 9:** Applicants for Adult Education grant funds must verify that programmatic activities are conducted by highly-qualified instructors, counselors, or administrators, and confirm that all staff will participate in ongoing high-quality professional development. Planning for professional development in Wyoming's Adult Education program must utilize a three-tiered professional development planning tool that incorporates local, state, and federal trainings to offer a variety of instructional strategies that engage students and promote student persistence and retention.

**Consideration #10:** Applicants are also required to show how they have developed strong partnerships with the WIOA core partners and other community service providers to provide

wrap-around services needed for the success of mutual clients. Eligible provider applicants will also articulate how they plan to share students' academic and career plans with other agencies and support services within the local One-Stop System. Program staff will cooperate with agency partners to facilitate participant placements into work experience programs.

**Consideration #11:** Programs must provide flexible schedules, inclusive of distance-learning protocols, to coordinate with local support services (child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete adult education programs of study. Applicants are also expected to provide information on how classroom delivery modes facilitate access to participants located in the most rural regions of the area.

**Consideration #12:** Each Adult Education applicant must be able to support the high-quality data information system (LACES) as necessary to collect and report demographics, measurable skill gains, and outcomes appropriate to the services provided.

**Consideration #13:** Applicants must provide information indicating that the region needs additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Adult Education program applications require each respondent to clearly articulate how their instructional delivery model will be aligned, coordinated, and linked to statewide economic, educational, and/or workforce initiatives as identified through the Governor's Vision, Mission, and State Workforce Development Board Strategic Objectives and by the Educational Attainment Initiative.

Prospective providers are also required to show how instructional delivery models, incorporate academic standards-based curricula that are coordinated and linked with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community with the goals of developing career pathways with local partners, particularly to promote WIOA concurrent enrollments. Partnerships may include elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, state workforce investment board, One-Stop Centers, job-training programs, social service agencies, business and industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations. Adult Education programs are also encouraged to utilize the 'Ability To Benefit' clause when placing students into postsecondary level classes so that students may qualify for federal financial aid.

Applicants must also demonstrate the ability to offer basic and individual career services, outlined in Adult Education's State policy, and consistent with WIOA 134(c)(2). These services are to be offered in conjunction with literacy activities utilizing flexible, year-long scheduling to support participant and logistical needs.

### **Special Rule on Funding Adult Education Grants**

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

**Wyoming's Special Rule on Funding Adult Education Grants:** Wyoming's funded agencies under WIOA that are awarded a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this subtitle for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or other activities for individuals who are not individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of Section 203(4), except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy services. In providing family literacy services under this subtitle, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities other than adult education activities (Section 231[d]).

## **Evaluation**

The Request for Funds application provides information on how each application will be scored and reviewed. All grant applications are submitted directly to the WCCC for review, evaluation, and approval.

The evaluation of each application is conducted by multiple teams of readers.

1. **Demonstrated Effectiveness** (DE) (34 CFR § 463.24): This team of readers reviews the Demonstrated Effectiveness component of grant applications and will determine whether the application has met the DE requirements outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP). Through the DE component of the application, prospective providers demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on its record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition and other subject areas relevant to the services designated by the State. Applicants must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education/training. Applications that meet this screening requirement will have full grant applications advanced to the Compliance and Alignment Teams for consideration in funding. DE applications that do not meet the requirements outlined in the RFP will not have full grant applications advanced to the Compliance and Alignment Teams for funding consideration.

The WCCC requires eligible provider applicants to demonstrate their effectiveness in two ways:

1. An eligible provider that has been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.
2. An eligible provider not previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving Basic Skills Deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving the outcomes listed above. (See WIOA Final Rules Subpart C, §463.24 and 29 U.S.C 3272(5)).

New applicant organizations must include data demonstrating student learning gains, especially with low-literacy level students and English language learners. The application must also demonstrate how the students will obtain the knowledge and skills needed to successfully transition to postsecondary education, skills training, and/or employment.

Each respondent's application is reviewed and scored based on the thirteen considerations and budgetary considerations. A rubric aligning minimum and maximum scores for responses to each section will be included in the application package. Individual applications are evaluated



by a minimum of three reviewers resulting in a total score for each application. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to those applications garnering the highest scores for the geographic areas in which they propose to provide services. Request for proposals are developed on a five -year funding cycle with program performance measured on a quarterly basis. Each funded program completes a continuing services application in the years between the RFP applications.

2. **Alignment Team**: Because Wyoming is a single area state, the Alignment Team members must come from the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, (WWDC) which operates as the Local Board for Wyoming. Three members from the WWDC are selected by the Council to act as readers on the Alignment Team. Statute requirements mandate that this team of readers review submitted applications to the WCCC to provide Adult Education and Literacy activities under Title II for the local area, which in Wyoming refers to the State of Wyoming and its regional service areas, to determine whether such applications are consistent with the local plan AND to make recommendations to the WCCC to promote alignment with such plan. The WCCC must consider the results of this review team by the local board in determining the extent to which the application addresses the required considerations AND to promote alignment with the approved local plan.
3. **Compliance Team**: Reader selection for the Compliance Team will be conducted by the State Office for Adult Education and will consist of at least one individual from the following:
  - Fiscal person for the Adult Education grants at the SEA
  - An Adult Education professional
  - A Workforce Specialist from Wyoming
  - A professional grant reader/writer

The Compliance Team reviews submitted applications for compliance with the RFP application, WIOA requirements, and completeness and the inclusion of all requested forms and budgets. The scoring rubrics used by the Compliance Team are to be included in the RFP and readers will utilize them as outlined in the RFP.

### **Adult Education Family Literacy Act Definitions & Regulations (AEFLA SEC. 203)**

The State of Wyoming and the Adult Education Family Literacy Act Definitions and Regulations (AEFLA SEC) 203 WIOA Section 203 defines terms that are specific to AEFLA as follows:

**Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.

**Career Pathways:** A combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

- Aligns with the skill needs of the most-in demand industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships;

- Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
- Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a way that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

**Eligible Individual:** In accordance with WIOA Title II (Sec. 203 (4)), the term ‘adult education’ means services or instruction below the postsecondary level for an individual:

- Who has attained 16 years of age;
- Who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
- Who is—
  - Basic Skills Deficient;
  - Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
  - An English language learner.

**Eligible Provider:** Eligible providers are any organizations who have ‘demonstrated effectiveness’ in providing adult education and literacy activities and may include:

- Local educational agencies; community-based or faith-based organizations;
- Volunteer literacy organizations;
- Institutions of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agencies;
- Libraries;
- Public housing authorities;
- A nonprofit institution having the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to adults; and
- A consortium of agencies, organizations, institutions, and libraries described above (Section 203(5)).

**English Language Acquisition Program:** A program of instruction—

- Designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and
- That leads to—
  - Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or
  - Employment.

**English Language Learner:** An eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language, and—

- Whose native language is a language other than English; or
- Who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

**Family Literacy Activities:** Activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children’s learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency;
- Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children;
- Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

**Integrated Education and Training (IET):** A service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

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

**Literacy:** An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

**Postsecondary Educational Institution:**

- An institution of higher education that provides not less than a 2-year program of instruction that is acceptable for credit toward a bachelor's degree;
- A tribally controlled college or university; or
- A nonprofit educational institution offering certificate or apprenticeship programs at the postsecondary level.

**Target Populations (State Definition):** Target populations include qualified individuals with multiple barriers to employment and educational attainment, including individuals with disabilities, criminal offenders, single parents, and individuals with limited English proficiency or low levels of literacy.

**WIOA Referral (State Definition):** WIOA referrals are defined as 'referrals' made within the 'State-approved Referral' system that involve the participant and the participant's needs/wants to meet his/her goal(s). An individual is referred to a partner program for services, workshops, education, training, etc. in an effort to provide inter-agency partnership.

**Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

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

### C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

WIOA expands the use of funds for adult education programs in correctional facilities. This includes the instruction of basic literacy skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics; special education programs, secondary education credit and high school diploma or equivalency programs; and career-integrated education and training. Correctional institutions must describe and define the academic program areas in their grant application and how the agency will deliver any of these programs.

Grants for Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals authorized under WIOA Section 225 are competed for using the same announcement used for the Public Adult Education Instructional Program under Section 231. The competitive RFP includes the requirements and priorities of Subpart C in Title II of WIOA. Successful applicants are awarded a five-year renewable grant.

In awarding correctional funds, WCCC establishes a priority of:

*Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program. (34 CFR § 463.62)*

The WCCC requests prospective applicants include a description of how program priorities will be established for individuals who are likely to leave the institution within five years of participation. Applicants will identify the academic program activities they intend to offer participants from the list above.

1. The eight correctional academic programs listed above are the allowable activities under this section.
2. Each program reports inmate/participant data in LACES, the same reporting system used by the AE programs. This includes assessments, attendance, high school equivalency testing, and basic demographic information. In addition, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports must be sent to the State AE office.

Each eligible agency that receives assistance provided under this section shall annually prepare and submit to the State a report on the progress with respect to the programs and activities carried out under this section, including the relative rate of recidivism for the criminal offenders served. Only academic gains are reported.

### **Scope and Content**

As with the Adult Education grant, the WCCC funds correctional facilities to deliver adult education services to 'eligible adults' 16 years and older who are not required to be enrolled in secondary school and are incarcerated. The scope of the local AE correctional program activities must demonstrate success with all levels of students, including those with low levels of literacy, those with disabilities (including learning disabilities), and/or English language learners in a career pathways system that includes the services shown below. Agencies who apply for Title II: WIOA §225 funding for Wyoming's Correctional grant must prioritize the delivery of AE

services to individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Wyoming's correctional facilities that receive 225 funds are allowed to use these funds for Adult Education and literacy activities that can include: special education, secondary school credit, integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and transition to / re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Each program reports inmate/participant data in LACES, the same reporting system used by the AE programs. This includes assessments, attendance, high school equivalency testing, and basic demographic information. In addition, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports must be sent to the State AE office.

The activities for the correctional education programs are the same as those for regular programs of instruction for adults. In addition, programs are encouraged to use guidance and supportive services where possible and to provide education and training through cooperative efforts with providers in correctional settings. Special education, as determined through the intake process, will provide appropriate and effective instructional and testing accommodations for students identified as having a disability. Integrated education and training will include more job skills training. Career pathways will include apprenticeship opportunities. Peer tutoring is an arrangement in which students work in pairs to help one another learn material or practice an academic task.

#### **Funding Eligible Providers (34 CFR § 463.61)**

Each eligible correctional institution seeking funds submits an application responding to the grant outlined requirements. Allocation of the available funds is based on each eligible correctional institution's enrollment, performance, and demonstrated effectiveness. In addition to any reports required by Adult Education, each eligible correctional institution receiving funds under this section shall annually prepare and submit a report of progress. Reports of progress shall include, but not be limited to, activities carried out under this section, the relative rate of recidivism, enrollment, educational gains and/or High School Equivalency outcomes, employment (sustainable wage), and employment retention (length of employment).

Awards are made to provider applicants offering adult education services to correctional and other institutions (prisons, jails, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders).

Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis that is direct and equitable through the RFP process described in section III "Distribution of Funds for Core Programs". Funds available under section 225 (a) (1) of the WIOA will be for a five-year cycle; however, the Adult Education State Office will review the performance level of providers after two years to determine whether or not to conduct a new competition. All competing programs will adhere to direct and equitable provisions to award funds under WIOA section 225 (Corrections Education). The same grant announcement, application, and process will be used for all proposals, and all proposals will be treated the same way in the evaluation; and evaluated by the 13 considerations noted in WIOA 231 (e)(1-13). Distribution of funds shall follow Title II Subtitle B-State provisions, which states "Sec 222 (a) (1) shall use not less than 82.5% of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, of which not more than 20% of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225", which is Programs for Corrections Education and other Institutionalized Individuals.

Local Administrative Costs, defined in WIOA Section 233; 34 CFR § 463.25 and 34 CFR § 463.26, are limited to not more than 5% of a local grant award for the purposes of planning, administration (inclusive of the requirements of WIOA Sec 116), professional development, the activities outlined in WIOA Sec. 232 and carrying out the one-stop partner responsibilities described in § 678.420, including contributing to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop system.

**Special Rule on Administrative Costs:** In cases where the cost limits described above are too restrictive to allow for the activities described in WIOA 232, the eligible provider shall negotiate with the State to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes.

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

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) under Section 243 to provide educational services to adult English language learners (ELLs), including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries to acquire English language skills necessary to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens. IELCE program providers will be established through an open, competitive process, direct and equitable process as outlined in section III "Distribution of Funds for Core Programs." Funds available under section WIOA 243 will be for a five-year cycle; however, the WCCC will review the performance level of providers after two years to determine whether or not to conduct a new competition.

IELCE participants who have degrees and credentials in their native countries may be enrolled and are encouraged to concurrently enroll in integrated education and training programs along an identified career pathway tracks once they have sufficiently mastered English language proficiency. These individuals may also receive additional services like translation assistance

and online credential evaluations. Although there is no federally approved agency to verify overseas credentials, the International Affairs Office of the United States and the State Office for Adult Education recommends prospective applicants utilize one of the following services:

- National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) which is an association of 19 credential evaluation services with admissions standards and an enforced code of good practice.
- Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) which is an association of ten credential evaluation services with a board of advisors and an enforced code of ethics.
- World Education Services (WES) which provides credential evaluation for multiple purposes and is an endorsed member of the Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc.

To prepare and place an adult ELL in employment and integrate with the local workforce, IELCE courses must be provided content-based and integrated instruction on topics proposed by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (UCIS), local workforce/employer needs and requests and ELL needs within Wyoming. Programs are highly encouraged to involve students in activities. The topics are as follows:

1. English Language Instruction • Reading • Writing • Listening • Speaking
2. Civics activities: (4 Pillars of Civics): • Naturalization & Citizenship • Civic Participation • US History • Government
3. Workforce Training • Soft Skills: Completing Employment Applications, Interview Techniques, Computer Literacy, Workplace Culture • Employability Certificates: CRC, WAGE™ • Training Programs: Accelerated Opportunity, Apprenticeships, Employer requested Training

IELCE programs will operate in combination with integrated education and training activities through Career Pathways, including partnerships with business, industry and other educational institutions, as well as language instruction to address local needs. Partnerships provide opportunities for students to participate in employment training through accelerated opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships. IELCE programs can actively and specifically engage students by hosting guest speakers organizing field trips to local agencies and businesses, and guiding students through language, civic, and employment education.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how they will:

- integrate State Adult Education English Language Proficiency Standards into curricula
- offer career services and educational and career counseling services that assist an eligible individual to transition to postsecondary education or employment;
- a career pathways system that integrates the WIOA thirteen funding considerations (WIOA §241) into programming offerings;
- utilize referrals and concurrent enrollments with the WIOA core partners to ensure complete wrap-around services are offered, when applicable;
- develop effective partnerships with employers and/or training providers so that enrolled participants have the opportunity to obtain industry-recognized credentials;
- integrate civics, digital and financial literacy;



- employ high-quality Adult Educational staff who are offered access to ongoing professional development opportunities and
- integrated education and training programs

The same grant announcement, application, and process will be used for all proposals, and all proposals will be treated the same way in the evaluation; and evaluated by the 13 considerations as noted in WIOA 231 (e)(1-13). Submitted applications will be evaluated by the teams of readers identified for the Adult Education grant process and the applicant with the highest score will be the sole recipient of an IELCE grant in Wyoming. The 'one' provider who meets the criteria and demonstrates effectiveness in performing the integrated English literacy and civics education in combination with integrated education and training activities will be awarded. Services are to include instruction in the following areas: literacy, English language acquisition, rights and responsibilities of citizenship, civic participation, and workforce training. The applicant's successful partnerships and collaborative agreements with core partners are also considered when reviewing applications for funding.

When awarding the IELCE grant, the State uses a targeted approach to define the area of the State that has the greatest need. The provider will submit in their application a design for a project that includes an in-demand industry, as identified by the local Next Generation Sector Partnership Committee, when applicable.

United States 2022 census data indicates that Wyoming has a very low number of non-native speakers of English. This data suggests that only 6.3% of Wyoming's population, age 16 years of age or older, have limited English language skills. However, the number of ESL participants enrolling in AE programs has seen a rise from 12% of total enrollments in FY 20/21 to 16% of total enrollments by FY 22/23. The State expects increasing enrollments in this very small and often undocumented population of non-native speakers of English. Despite this growing need, funding for Wyoming's IELCE program is at a minimum level of \$60,000 statewide.

Funds will be distributed on a competitive basis that is direct and equitable through the RFP process as described in section III "Distribution of Funds for Core Programs". All programs that compete will adhere to direct and equitable provisions to award funds under WIOA section 243 (Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education).

Local Administrative Costs, defined in WIOA Section 233; 34 CFR § 463.25 and 34 CFR § 463.26, are limited to not more than 5% of a local grant award for the purposes of planning, administration (inclusive of the requirements of WIOA Sec 116), professional development, the activities outlined in WIOA Sec. 232 and carrying out the one-stop partner responsibilities described in § 678.420, including contributing to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop system.

**Special Rule on Administrative Costs:** In cases where the cost limits described above are too restrictive to allow for the activities described in WIOA 232, the eligible provider shall negotiate with the State to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.**

IELCE programs in Wyoming are delivered in combination with an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model by co-enrolling participants in a literacy and English language acquisition

program of study that incorporates instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizens and civic participation as described under WIOA § 463.33, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training (for a specific industry sector). The IET component is optional, but is offered to qualified enrolled participants. Local providers who offer an IELCE are required to work with the training provider to identify a single set of learning objectives to the IET component of an IELCE to meet federal requirements (§463.37).

Each of the three IET components (adult education, workforce preparation, and occupational training) must be integrated, must provide sufficient intensity and quality, and must be based upon the most rigorous research. IELCE programs are combined with integrated education and training activities as students demonstrate readiness to participate in the workforce training portion. The training and combined education are concurrent and utilize contextualized instruction in a high-demand industry or career cluster. Qualified participants also complete individualized career maps to outline their unique career pathways track.

Local IELCE providers engage with the community Next Generation Sector Partnership, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, local employers, and other relevant stakeholders who assist in the recruitment and development of industry-specific curricula. Within the Workforce Development System, key stakeholders provide IELCE participants with professional training and certifications for those interested. Local Workforce Centers and employers play a key role in helping to recruit participants and placing participants in occupations.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.**

The IELCE program provides educational services that consist of literacy and English language acquisition integrated with civics education, including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. In accordance with the Act, focus is placed on the engagement of adult education and literacy providers, employers, and occupational trainers to assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills essential for employment and self-sufficiency to become fully functioning members of society. Through collaborative partnerships with DWS, ELLs are provided with occupational skill training and placement in occupations in high-demand industries, as identified by the local Next Generation Sector Partnership groups, employers, or other relevant stakeholders.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The IELCE program provides educational services that consist of literacy and English language acquisition integrated with civics education, including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. In accordance with the Act, focus is placed on the engagement of adult education and literacy providers, employers, and occupational trainers to assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills essential for employment and self-sufficiency.

Through collaborative partnerships with DWS, ELLs are provided with occupational skill training and placement in occupations in high-demand industries, as identified by the local Next Generation Sector Partnership Group.

Local IELCE providers actively engage with the community Next Generation Sector Partnership and assist in the recruiting and developing of industry-specific curricula. Within the Workforce Development System, key stakeholders provide IELCE participants with professional training and certifications for those interested. Local Workforce Centers also play a key role in helping to recruit participants and placing participants in occupations.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.**

### **Addressing Wyoming's Workforce Needs**

Wyoming's workforce needs are changing as we move further into the 21st century. Wyoming's economy has long been heavily dependent upon its rich and vast natural resources. However, with the passage of new federal legislation, such as the Inflation Reduction Act, there is renewed emphasis on clean energy. Wind, solar and nuclear energy are now in-demand occupations in the State. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Wyoming is poised to see, by 2030, increasing job opportunities in solar and wind energy, battery storage, and other energy efficient jobs.

Additionally, Wyoming's aging population has created increased industry needs for qualified professionals in the healthcare industry. In 2022, this population represented 23.3% of individuals 60 years of age or older. This in-demand industry encapsulates multiple sectors for employment that range from entry level positions for such positions as housekeeping and food services, to more advanced and highly skilled credentialed professionals for the healthcare industry.

Wyoming's tourism and hospitality industries are other growing industries where tourists, both domestic and international, are attracted by the rural nature of this state and its numerous tourist destinations. These industries draw over 7.5 million visitors each year and generate \$247 million in tax revenue. Because of this growth there are also increasing demands for qualified employees in sectors that support the tourism and hospitality industries, such as transportation, entertainment and food services.

Wyoming's economy in the agriculture sector continues to offer increasing employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers in support of the \$1.88 billion dollars (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Services, 2021) this industry sector adds annually to the economy.

### **IELCE Programming**

In order to meet the needs of Wyoming's employers for qualified individuals in these industry sectors, it is critical that the State begin to tap this often overlooked and rather small sub-population of non-native speaking learners to help address growing employment needs. Prospective IELCE providers need to develop curricula along these career pathways sectors, and others as identified by the State Workforce Board, which provide the language skills necessary to effectively function in these types of occupations. Language skill training must utilize contextualized instruction, when applicable, while incorporating civics education, digital and financial literacy. Opportunities for participants to obtain entry level and or more advanced credentials are also required programmatic elements. IELCE providers must work with local employers, training providers, local Next Generation Sector partnerships, and other relevant stakeholders to build a comprehensive system that addresses the growing needs for Wyoming's industries.

IELCE applicants must also demonstrate how effective partnerships will be utilized to identify and meet regional economic and workforce needs for in-demand industries while also fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of being a one-stop partner as defined in CFR § 678 Subpart B.

## E. STATE LEADERSHIP

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

#### **Required State Leadership Activities**

The State distributes no more than 12.5% of Title II funds (WIOA §223) allocated to the state to carry out leadership activities. As outlined in section 223 of WIOA, these include both required and permissible state leadership activities.

The State carries out the required **four** leadership activities of:

**Activity #1: The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and One-Stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the strategy identified in the unified State plan under section 102 of the combined State plan under section 103, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.**

Throughout both state and local levels of Adult Education in Wyoming there is a precedent for collaboration and alignment of services amongst core partners, particularly among the WIOA core partners. Each year the State, along with WIOA core partners, collaborate to provide a statewide Summer Institute that focuses on the development of career pathways alignments as identified by the Wyoming Business Council and local Next Generation Sector partnerships. As increasing numbers of Next Generation Sector partnerships are identified and launched throughout the state, local adult education programs are tasked with implementing contextualized career pathways systems. The Summer Institute provides local providers and partnering agencies with an opportunity to address professional development needs to better target regional economic pathways. Topics included at these Summer Institutes can include content standards, instructional strategies and methodologies, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, contextualized instruction for specific industry sectors, use of technology, distance education and the use of virtual classrooms, virtual testing, best practices, and services to students with disabilities. Second, Wyoming's Adult Education program will continue to participate with other core WIOA partners, the State Workforce Investment Board, and other stakeholders in building a sustainable career pathways model that includes the services offered by each cooperating partner. In addition, Title II Adult Education programs will continue to identify and align with core partners in the areas of strategic vision/goals, analysis of economic conditions in the state and in the analysis of workforce development activities as needed throughout the state. Fourth, local adult education program directors will continue to meet with WIOA partners on a monthly basis to discuss referrals, develop relationships and facilitate co-enrollment between the agencies. And lastly, the State Director of Adult Education for Wyoming will continue to participate in monthly task force meetings to promote the collaboration and vision of workforce partners to ensure a seamless system is implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

**Activity #2:The establishment or operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under**

**section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of a State or outlying area, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.**

Given Wyoming's large geographic area, sparse population and minimum funding levels, local Adult Education programs have historically found that providing quality professional development could be challenging due to the high cost of travel and time to attend any centralized training. The State has, therefore, designed a three-tiered approach to professional development. The first tier is local level training(s), the second tier is state/regional level training(s), while the third tier focuses on training(s) provided at the regional or national level. All levels of training are supported with State Leadership funds under section 223. The State level training is the Summer Institute and it is a state mandate that 80% of instructors from all local programs attend this training. In addition, the state generally chooses one or two specialized training options per year which can host additional teachers. In the past year this has included nationally recognized training such as the Adult Numeracy Institute, IET Design camp, and Teaching Skills that Matter. Looking to the future, planned professional development trainings will include the OCTAE sponsored IET Design Camps, IET for Corrections, the State sponsored Align & Redesign Project, career pathways trainings or other trainings that focus on instructional topics or practices that will have the greatest impact for the greatest number of teachers across the state. To the extent that it is feasible, the State will prioritize training that uses a model of sustained contact between trainers and a cohort of teachers throughout the year. This may include multiple in-person meetings, online discussion groups, and opportunities to try new practices in the classroom between meetings. However, the exact model of such training will depend on the needs and resources identified in the State each year.

More routine and required training, such as new teacher on-boarding, training on NRS data collection and data validation, LACES database training, have been and will continue to be handled at the local level in conjunction with state planning and is supported by the use of leadership dollars.

State leadership funds help to inaugurate high quality professional development needed to improve instruction in the essential components of reading as related to the specific needs of adult learners. Leadership activities in the components of the Essential Components of Reading are used to create the foundation for adults to develop complex reading skills as required for postsecondary education and/or for employment. Instruction in the essential components of reading is made available to all programs through various venues depending upon the needs of the individual program staff. The state will contract with reading experts to bring job embedded professional development to the state as needed. Teachers will be required to participate in reading professional development that blends face-to-face and technology.

As resources permit, local programs can also apply for 'special project' discretionary funds to support local professional development projects. Such projects should be aligned with local needs and supported with evidence. For example, a local provider may determine through teacher evaluation and observation that training on the use of contextualized reading would help improve instructional quality at its outreach centers. The program would then create a training plan and request funds from the State to support this plan.

The overarching goal of Wyoming's professional development system for Adult Education is to provide Wyoming's adult educators with the skills and supports they need to be intellectually stimulated, have confidence in their abilities, and feel valued, all within a collegial atmosphere.

This type of continual learning environment supports instructors, staff, and administrators in their development of professional development and leadership skills that in turn, maximize the potential for success of the participants they serve. Each year local programs survey staff to identify professional development needs. The results are used to plan for professional development in the three tiered system.

### **Professional Development for On-Boarding New Adult Education Staff**

Local providers utilize a mixture of local training and state level training to on-board new AE staff. At the local level this can include such things as provider policies and practices, peer mentoring, and a general introduction to the program. In order to support and standardized new staff training, the State has developed online training modules:

- New Teacher Training:<https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/new-teacher-training>
- Eleven modules focus on various aspects of the Wyoming Adult Education program in Wyoming from accountability, learning theories in the adult education classroom, enrollment, persistence and retention to student efficacy.
- English as a Second Language Teacher Training:[https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/new-teacher-training\\_Nine](https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/new-teacher-training_Nine) modules walk the new ESL instructor through such things as teaching language as communication, materials, language and culture, learning disabilities and teaching vocabulary and comprehension to non-native speakers of English
- New Director Training Modules:<https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education-directors?jumpto=#new-director-ae-training-modules>. These modules help to on-board new local directors who are required to train with the State AE director either in person or virtual to review the concepts presented in each module.
- Other Professional Development Topics: <https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education-directors?jumpto=#new-director-ae-training-modules>
- Other PD topics available through the Commission's website include TABE CLAS-E training, CCR Standards Institute Training, NRS-Barriers to Employment and Distance Education, and Align & Redesign

### **Activity #3:The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including:**

- (i) the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;**
- (ii) the role of eligible providers as a One-Stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services, and**
- (iii) assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.**

The part-time nature of the Wyoming Adult Education program will require technical assistance for all levels of staff on a continuous and progressive basis. Wyoming's Adult Education

programs will offer training opportunities in such areas as rigorous and scientifically valid instructional practices and learning theories, participatory learning, assessment, academic and career advising, employability skills, digital literacy, contextualizing instruction, bridge programs, and college transition.

Technical assistance is also planned in data collection/validation for the student data management system (LACES), the electronic intake, monthly director's meetings, Statewide 'Meet & Greets' between Adult Education Directors and local Workforce Center Managers, Adult Education's participation in the Statewide Rapid Response System, opportunities to utilize braided funding streams for the expansion of AE services in Wyoming as well as for the statewide referral system developed for WIOA core partners. Transition to postsecondary education and training programs will be a collaborative effort among the core partners and community partners.

The core partners are committed to cross agency professional development efforts at both the state and local levels. Steps have already been taken to ensure that staff at all agencies are informed of partner services and are able to make appropriate referrals as needed to ensure full wrap-around services are provided to participants.

Local programs will continue to use multiple forms of technology, inclusive of Google Classroom, Zoom, and Canvas to instruct students in their programs and also for those adults who live in remote areas of the state. Technical assistance will be made available related to the use and instructional possibilities of such equipment and also in the development of effective online courses and cultures for remote learning.

In order to provide comprehensive round the clock technical assistance, the State has completed an Adult Education Policy and Guidance Manual which is available online at:<https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education-directors?jumpto=#resources>.

**Activity #4: The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.**

The State uses a variety of methods to monitor and evaluate the quality of local adult education programs and activities. Such methods include monthly desk audits, quarterly reports, data-quality monitoring, data validation, monthly fiscal reviews, annual program plans, and annual reports.

- Monthly data monitoring reports that evaluates progress towards achieving EFL targets, financial data and a per person calculation of cost of career services course. Monthly desk monitoring allows the local program to see the 'state' of their data, in progress toward meeting targets and the condition of the data. Desk monitoring complements the preparation of the end of year report.

A monthly state review of local provider's data complements these performance reports and captures data for each month in a longitudinal spreadsheet of monthly performance across multiple years. This allows the State to closely monitor current year performance as well as provide a comparison of to-date performance as related to a previous point in time.

- Quarterly reports which evaluates success and challenges, identifies technical assistance needs, how the program collects post-exit data, new initiatives, and student success stories

- Mid-year Goal Report: At each six-month period of the grant cycle, providers complete a report to indicate progress made towards goal achievements for the fiscal year.
- End of year reports provide for an evaluation of:
  - how the program implemented and used strategies identified in WIOA §231
  - program successes/challenges,
  - program improvements
  - performance data analysis
  - integration with One-stop partners
  - AE standards and effective educational practices
  - program alignments to the Unified State Plan
  - serving participants most in need through technology
  - professional development
  - Corrections Education
  - IELCE

This report is supported by various documents that include, but are not limited to:

1. NRS Tables
  2. Instructor Information and Professional Development Hours
  3. Financial Status Reports
  4. Data Quality Checklist
  5. In-kind and Match Funds
  6. Sample Lesson Plans Showing the Integration of one or more of the following:
    - a. Academic Standards
    - b. Teaching Skills That MatterContextualized Learning
    - c. Digital and/or Financial Literacy
    - d. Essential Components of Reading
- Adata quality checklist identifies the policies, processes and materials that local programs should have in place to collect valid data.
  - At the beginning of each year, prior to contractual awards being released, the State office for Adult Education conducts aRisk Assessment to evaluate local providers' level of risk for managing a federal grant The risk assessment is one tool used each year to determine the amount and type of intervention needed for the prover. Information from this risk assessment is used to assess an organization's structure and capacity-building needs and identify appropriate technical assistance and/or resources to strengthen operations if funded.



- A combination of monitoring methods is utilized to assess effectiveness of Professional Development (PD) and the dissemination of promising practices and models including classroom observations, student educational gains by teacher, focus groups (when applicable), and self-reporting tools. AE programs in the State are required to utilize a three-tier planning document that outlines local PD strategies at the local, state/regional, and national levels. Classroom observations must also utilize the Standards in Action Checklist to validate that the College and Career Readiness Standards are being used in the AE classroom.
- The State conducts on-site or virtual monitoring visits to each local provider up to two times per each five year grant cycle. More frequent monitoring visits may occur if risk assessment measures indicate a high risk for the local program, if 'Specific Conditions' as identified under Part 200, Subpart C §200.207 are implemented or if circumstances arise with a local provider that the State deems the program to be of high risk. Approved AE providers are required to complete an AE site visit and compliance checklist. This checklist is used to virtually monitor providers and contains a 16-chapter checklist of items that local providers are required to submit documentation for as evidence of compliance to federal and state regulations. Monitoring includes a review of sixteen areas covering all aspects of the program and its activities. This includes:
  - Intake, orientation, and a front-loaded Career Service course
  - Student eligibility
  - Sufficient intensity and duration
  - Educational and career counseling
  - Program personnel
  - Staff professional development
  - Assessment
  - WIOA system network
  - Student files
  - Cooperative planning and partnerships
  - Facilities
  - Data management
  - Internal evaluation processes
  - Fiscal review
  - Reporting
  - GEPA-Section 427

The goals of this monitoring review process are:

- Ensure the programs meet Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and state requirements
- Continuously improve the quality of federally and state funded activities;

- Provide technical assistance in identifying and resolving compliance/accountability issues;
- Ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data collection and reporting as well as currency of policies and procedures;
- Interact with program administration, staff, students and stakeholders to get other perspectives of the program; and
- For local programs, an opportunity for professional growth and continuous improvement

During this review, local programs are required to compile an electronic notebook of evidence of compliance for each item shown on the State compliance checklist. Technical assistance is provided to programs whenever necessary to address findings and/or observations. Programs that are found to be out of compliance with State or Federal policies or law, or which have demonstrated unacceptable practices or consistently low performance will be subject to a Corrective Action Plan or a Targeted Monitoring. “Consistently low performance” will be based upon actual program performance against program indicators, the extent to which state targets are met, past performance of the program, the relative performance of other providers, and other mitigating program circumstances. Programs which fail to implement a Corrective Action Plan as determined necessary by the State may be subject to the loss of grant funds.

Program data is reviewed monthly with quarterly reviews occurring after data matches for employment and postsecondary are uploaded into the State’s Management Information System (LACES).

The dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state will be carried out by the State through regular meetings with program directors and state conferences with instructional staff. Regular meetings with WIOA core partners also provide the opportunity for State inter-agency planning and to avoid duplicating efforts in order to maximize the impact of activities delivered by each partnering agency.

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

### **Permissible State Leadership Activities**

Each eligible agency may use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for one or more of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- Supporting State or regional networks of literacy resource centers;
- Developing and implementing technology applications, translation, technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology;
- Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;
- Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways (H. R. 803—192);

- Providing assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this Title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the State-adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3);
- Developing and implementing a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education;
- Integrating literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers;
- Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that:
  - specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and
  - take into consideration the following:
    - State adopted academic standards.
    - The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State or outlying area.
    - The primary indicators of performance described in section 116. Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State or outlying area.
    - Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State or outlying area.
- Developing and piloting strategies for improving teacher quality and retention;
- Developing and implementing programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically-valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels;
- Outreach to instructors, students, and employers; and
- Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

With limited federal funding, the State has delineated these activities to either the State or to the local provider or a combination thereof. The State has also identified the Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WYLLA) as the professional development arm for AE centers in Wyoming. In conjunction with the State, WYLLA is responsible for the State annual Summer Institute.

Local providers may utilize awarded grant funds for professional development activities in support of:

- The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology or distance education, including professional development to support the use of technology
- Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults.
- Integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers
- Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities

Using the State approved, three-tiered professional development planning document, local providers may strategically plan for PD opportunities for these activities at either a local, regional, or national level.

The State is responsible for:

- The provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3).
- Outreach to instructors, students and employers
- The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels.
- Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purposes of this title

Although the State supports all leadership activities, the State Office for Adult Education does not have staff or the infrastructure for a professional development team. As such, in FY 22/23, the State formally recognized the Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WYLLA) as the professional development arm for Wyoming's AE program. In cooperation with the State, WYLLA organizes the annual State conference and provides additional PD opportunities, when applicable.

The State is also developing an online training program for the Align & Redesign project using Google Classroom. It is anticipated that this will be available for all AE staff by 2024/2025.

Through collaboration between the State and local programs, leadership activities supported at both the State and local levels include:

- Developing content and models of integrated education and training and career pathways
- The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary institutions or institutions of higher learning
- Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that:
  - take into consideration State adopted academic standards

- the current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State
- the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116
- standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State.

## F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

### **Assessment of Core Program**

AE program quality is viewed through two lenses. The first focuses on the elements of a quality program that lead to student outcomes. The second focuses on delivering instructional services to students, from recruitment and transition through postsecondary education to training or employment.

Standards and their indicators identify best practices for designing and managing an AE program. Best practices combine applied research findings, evidence-based practices, and professional wisdom. The quality of a program may be seen in the adoption and implementation of best practices that lead to the consistent delivery of high-quality services. Standards of quality the WCCC will use are:

- Program design and leadership;
- Alignment of programs and curricula to statewide initiatives, such as Next Generation Sector Partnership, Educational Attainment Initiative, the Wyoming Governor’s Mission and Vision for the State and any other initiatives identified by the Commission as critical to the workforce system
- Capacity and sustainability;
- Learner Career Services course, intake and enrollment;
- Assessments and meeting negotiated targets;
- Goals and Career Pathways implementation;
- Learner support and retention;
- Referrals made and tracked on the LACES system;
- Special learning needs and barriers to learning;
- Contextualized and integrated curriculum;
- Instruction aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards;
- Learner records, data quality, data collection, and data validation;
- Transition services;

- Teacher quality and professional development through LACES;
- Teacher observation using Standards In Action and the Wyoming rubric;
- Interactive partnerships with community and core partners (DVR and DWS programs); and
- Participation in Next Generation Sector Partnerships, when applicable

WCCC state leadership activities will offer high-quality professional development programs to improve instruction aligned with local required adult education and family literacy activities. All AE program staff will be required to participate in 15 hours of professional development each year. This requirement includes 80% of the instructional staff attending the state-sponsored institute or other targeted institutes designed to improve performance. Every program must have staff members who are responsible for data entry attend data training. Training must be provided to volunteers or paid personnel for subject areas they are assisting with under the supervision of an instructor. All professional development completed by AE staff is tracked through the LACES database.

Instruction in the essential components of reading (text complexity, evidence of reading and writing in complex text, and use of non-fiction texts to increase knowledge) is a priority for AE providers. Mastering the reading components is a predictor of success in postsecondary education, training programs, and the workforce. Instruction in the rigors of mathematical concepts, reasoning, problem-solving, and strategic use of tools/equations to apply math in daily life and on the job is also offered. This instruction also pertains to the specific needs of adult learners in a contextualized approach, whenever possible.

Digital & financial literacy and the use of technology are integrated into classroom instruction, professional development, and relevant online forums. The State will disseminate information regarding models and promising practices related to the digital literacy needs of students and staff.

Annual AE program monitoring will include desktop reviews and virtual monitoring processes to ensure effectiveness in program improvement goals and the program's progress toward reaching negotiated state performance targets. Local providers are also expected to monitor performance through data dives to evaluate various components of the program. Career Pathway plans will be used to guide the development of new curricula and partnerships with core community partners in industry areas identified by the State Workforce Investment Board. The plan will establish an integrated workflow among the partners and employers whenever possible.

The State Office of Adult Education at the WCCC also conducts a biannual virtual comprehensive monitoring for each adult education and literacy program to ensure that state and federal laws and policies are followed, to review program performance, and to connect with Local Education Agency Administrators. Based on the findings during the virtual monitoring, the State Office of AE provides technical assistance to program directors and staff to ensure continuous improvement. This monitoring review consists of sixteen chapters where topics are reviewed for compliance:

1. Intake/orientation
2. Student eligibility, marketing, and retention
3. Sufficient intensity & duration

4. Education/instruction and career counseling
5. Program personnel
6. Professional development
7. Assessment
8. Student files
9. Cooperative planning & partnership arrangements for developing/implementing career pathways
10. Facilities, equipment & supplies
11. High-quality data management information system
12. Internal program evaluation
13. Fiscal review
14. Reports
15. WIOA system network
16. GEPA

Once each program is reviewed, the program receives a report which indicates all findings, recommendations, and commendations. The program then develops and submits a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), when applicable which details how each finding will be remedied. The program director and the State Director for Adult Education then work together to ensure that each finding is corrected.

Ongoing data analysis will be used for evidence of program quality. Monthly data reports, including self-evaluations of pre- to post-test gains, retention, pathways activities, and exit outcomes, will be sent to the State by each local provider. Quarterly narrative reports will describe successes and challenges of the local program, support or barriers for performance, and opportunities to request technical assistance. The State will also review data for trends in problem areas to target State leadership training. All programs will continue to have data quality and analysis training from the State and the data management system LACES by LiteracyPro that will help to strengthen their programs.

Providers must supply performance measures of academic gain and outcome measures for up to one year after exit for each enrolled participant. All providers not meeting end-of-year performance measures will be subject to a Corrective Action Plan and/or Target Monitoring Process and will be given technical assistance. If low performance continues for a second year, the provider will be in jeopardy of losing funds in subsequent years. When funds are not awarded to a prior local AE provider for non-performance, the WCCC will release a Request for Proposals to secure a new provider.

The State will monitor student data to identify patterns in student transition to postsecondary education, employment, and credential attainment. Data workshops or online training on data analysis, data disaggregation, and data quality will be held at least semi-annually.

### **Assessment of Quality Professional Development**

WCCC – AE state office staff or an appointed designee will assess the quality of its professional development designed to improve:

- Instruction in the essential components of reading instruction;
- Instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners;
- Instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel; and
- Dissemination of information about models and promising practices.

To inform the assessment of the quality of professional development, State AE leadership turned to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)'s research report "How Teachers Change: A Study of Professional Development in Adult Education" (2003), which gives four areas to consider in assessing the quality of professional development. Wyoming will use these to assess professional development. The content must be relevant to the program's short- and long-term stated goals. It must include well-defined objectives;

1. The content and processes must be student-outcomes focused (student learning at the center). The content must deepen and broaden the teachers' knowledge and skills in the subject/topic area. It must also demonstrate varied and effective styles of pedagogy and include summative and formative assessment to promote understanding;
2. The process has to be based on evidence for continuous improvement and is best when offered by subject-matter experts with a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the content themselves; and
3. The process has to have a maintenance infrastructure that incorporates strategies for part-time staff and addresses staff turnover.
4. Paper/pencil or online surveys will be used in the evaluation process. Any surveys conducted by the presenter/trainer will also be collected and reviewed for immediate feedback from the training recipients. In addition, an analysis of student data will be used to determine if the training had an impact on student outcomes and retention.

Assessment of Partnership Career Pathways implies developing a system by the WIOA core partners and community partners that offer high-quality education and training which aligns to the skill needs of industry. The Next Generation Sector Partnerships model is a targeted way to initiate a Career Pathway planning process.

Each local program will include continuous improvement plans and annual goals and describe how they are integrated into this model. Each local plan will include a description of transition support services and available scholarships that are open to AE students.

Continuous improvement goals will be reviewed at the beginning of the program year. Quarterly reports on goal achievement will be monitored. End-of-year goals performance will be assessed.

State and local AE providers will work with One-Stop partners to provide students access to education and training services.

### **Assessment Through Trend Reporting**

Program report cards will provide local AE providers with results of the current year and two previous years. This will include average hours, enrollment, educational functional level gain, and transition to postsecondary education or training.



## Linking Professional Development Needs to Improve the Quality of Instruction

Effective professional development enables educators to develop the knowledge and skills they need to address students' learning challenges. To be effective, professional development requires thoughtful planning, careful implementation, and feedback to ensure it responds to educators' learning needs. To this end, it is critical that Wyoming's Adult Education programs not only identify professional development needs but also implement a system that fully addresses these needs whenever possible.

The identification of professional development needs is identified at multiple levels as described above and the State uses this information to provide targeted professional development areas which are often provided through the yearly Summer Institute.

In addition, the State Office for Adult Education provides technical assistance to all programs where an identified challenge, as identified through an assessment of the core programs, professional development, or any other area of concern. In addition, targeted professional development on any area of concern is also addressed through monthly director meetings/trainings, the State Institute, which provides multiple topic-based subjects, and/or through directed training on an individual topic.

Furthermore, each provider conducts a professional development needs analysis on a yearly basis to identify localized professional development needs. Once these needs are determined, local directors coordinate with the State office for Adult Education, the Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WyLLA), the PD arm for Adult Education in Wyoming, the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), or other agencies that may provide specialized trainings.

### ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

**ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

## AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

### CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

#### Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to [wioa@ed.gov](mailto:wioa@ed.gov) at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

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

3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)  
[\[http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html\]](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

<b>APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>Enter information in this column</b>
Applicant's Organization	Wyoming Community College Commission
<b>PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>Enter information in this column</b>
First Name	Ben
Last Name	Moritz
Title	Executive Director
Email	ben.moritz@wyo.gov

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

**EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

**GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

**State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

### **GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants**

The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:

- The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or
- The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The first of four questions is:***

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

The 2020 RFP competition included a GEPA requirement with applicants assuring to provide equal access to education and to promote educational excellence. Identical processes will be followed for the 2025 competition.

Applicants are required to describe the steps to be taken to ensure equitable access to and equitable participation in the project or activity to be conducted with federal adult education assistance. Their description must address the access needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including the barriers highlighted in the Act.

**2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?**

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The second of four questions is:***

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

Based on local circumstances, local programs determine whether these or other barriers may prevent students, teachers, etc., from such access or participation in the federally-funded project or activity.

**3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?**

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.***

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The third of four questions is:**

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

A request for enhanced GEPA information is included in the reapplication for continued funding to local programs. It requires a more detailed response consistent with program requirements, explaining the steps and citing examples of how the applicant plans to satisfy this provision for each of the barriers.

**4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?**

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)** applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The final of four questions is:**

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

GEPA barriers identified by subrecipients must be addressed and protocols implemented with the fiscal year.

The AE state office will comply with GEPA. WCCC is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate in hiring practices for either employees or outside consultants. Prior to state leadership activities, including the State Institute and local directors' workshops/task force meetings, the State Program Manager will survey participants for special needs requests. In designing each event, equity concerns and the six types of barriers that can impede equitable access and participation will be considered for participants and trainers. Accommodations will be provided as requested allowing equitable access to activities. The State Program Manager will ensure ease of accessibility to the venue.

The AE state office will monitor the local programs on their GEPA compliance during onsite/virtual program monitoring reviews.

**ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);



- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	46.0%	59.0%	46.5%	60.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	44.0%	65.0%	44.5%	65.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$3,550	\$4,100
Credential Attainment Rate	59.0%	70.0%	60.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	59.0%	52.0%	60.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

1

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
(COMBINED OR GENERAL)**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

**A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.**

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER-CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR SRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

*Select A or B:*

*(A) is an independent State commission*

*(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council*

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) <i>(B. Coombs)</i>	1	3/2024
Parent Training and Information Center <i>(J. Figensor)</i>	1	10/2021

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Client Assistance Program ( <i>C. Peterssen</i> )	2	11/2023
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency) ( <i>C. Chavez</i> )	1	11/2021
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider ( <i>J. Cummings</i> )	1	4/2024
Business, Industry, and Labor	VACANT	VACANT
Business, Industry, and Labor	VACANT	VACANT
Business, Industry, and Labor	VACANT	VACANT
Business, Industry, and Labor	VACANT	VACANT
Disability Advocacy Groups ( <i>J. Tatro-WGCDD</i> )	2	3/2024
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services ( <i>D. Deal</i> )	1	3/2024
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	N/A	N/A
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ( <i>H. Bailey</i> )	1	7/2022
State Workforce Development Board ( <i>H. Simoni</i> )	1	3/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio) ( <i>N. Harper</i> )	2	No Limit
Tribal VR ( <i>N. McGill/L.Brown</i> )	2	03/2023
Department of Corrections	VACANT	VACANT
Individual with a Disability ( <i>K. Meyer</i> )	1	3/2024
Veterans Administration VR ( <i>A. Bruno</i> )	1	4/2024

3. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

DVR and the SRC are engaged in an active recruitment campaign utilizing social media and in-person contacts with potential candidates to fill vacancy positions for Individuals with a Disability and Employers. DVR and the SRC are working on recruiting business/employers by reaching out to those that have previous recipients of the Ripple award, and polling counselors for recommendations of employers within their communities that may be good candidates for an appointment to this board due to their support and advocacy of individuals with disabilities in the employment setting.

Additionally, the SRC has worked to update the Council's website and provide more comprehensive information on the Council's purpose, a schedule of SRC General council and committee meetings, as well as links to meeting recordings and minutes. The SRC application is available online and can also be completed with assistance from and SRC member:  
<https://dws.wyo.gov/dws-division/vocational-rehabilitation/state-rehabilitation-council/>

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides advice to and works in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The SRC plays a significant role in ensuring that the Vocational Rehabilitation Program operates effectively and remains responsive to the needs of those served. The SRC works in partnership with DVR to develop policies, evaluate program effectiveness, and carry out other functions related to Wyoming's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The working relationship between the SRC and DVR is a partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services resulting in successful employment outcomes.

The SRC Chair, VR Administrator and VR Liason meet as needed to discuss VR reports, policies and procedures, and agency training. The SRC Chair and SRC Review committee were provided with a draft version of the VR State Plan to review and provide comments and feedback.

The SRC offers a quarterly client satisfaction survey to be completed by current VR clients. This survey is offered once a year in each of the four VR regions. The survey is available both online and a hard copy format is available to clients in each VR office. Information collected from survey responses is reviewed and analyzed by the SRC and shared with the VR Administrator and Liason to identify and address any systemic challenges clients may experience.

The SRC currently is scheduled to meet six times a year. Five of these meetings will be virtual via Google Meet and the sixth meeting will be a hybrid virtual and in person meeting. The sixth meeting will be held in conjunction with the State Independent Living Council (SILC). These meetings are open to the public and held in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act. On the alternating months when there is not a scheduled SRC meeting, the SRC subcommittees meet virtually to conduct committee business.

The SRC will continue to meet at least once a year in a joint session with the State Independent Living Council. Both groups find these meetings of value. This is an opportunity to discuss disability-related topics of mutual concern and to seek ways for each council to advance the goals and interests of disabled people in the state. Additionally, this creates an opportunity for both councils to share client needs survey results and address necessary advocacy efforts.

The SRC offers an award to local businesses that are nominated for their efforts to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This award is known as the Ripple Award. Community businesses are nominated by DVR counselors for their efforts and the nominations are then voted on by the SRC. In 2023 there was one Ripple Award presented. The SRC will work with local counselors to increase awareness of the award and the number of nominations submitted in order to recognize more community businesses in the coming years.

The SRC receives copies of all the Federal and State reports as they are submitted. At quarterly meetings, DVR provides an informational “dashboard” and shares data with the SRC on how the dashboard information impacts DVR’s ability to complete its mission.

The SRC has experienced significant turnover in 2022 and 2023. They have recently elected a new chairperson who is a former SRC member who has returned to the council. They are engaging in active recruitment efforts and are focused on recruiting more DVR participants and employers.

**5. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY’S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

During the process of the State Plan development, DVR shared 2023 CNSA recommendations and proposed goals with the SRC Chair and SRC Review Committee. The SRC Chair and Review Committee were given the opportunity to review the draft of the VR portion of this state plan and had no input or recommendations at this time. The SRC Chair made a comment stating "We are excited to see new goals with action steps and look forward to having regular updates provided at our Council meetings on the progress and data being seen for each goal area listed".

**B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).**

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

**1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:**

**A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT;**

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1998, requires each state to conduct a needs assessment every three years, to identify and understand the needs of individuals with disabilities in the state, and to use the information to make appropriate operational and programmatic adjustments that ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services to such individuals.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a statewide comprehensive needs assessment every three years. The most recent began in 2020 and was completed in May 2023.

The 2023 effort was a statewide assessment conducted jointly by DVR and the State Rehabilitation Council. Wyoming DVR has collaborated with their WIOA program partners in this assessment and the subsequent planning process to ensure that the workforce needs of the state to include individuals with disabilities were addressed.

The were the following findings:

- Transportation remains the most pressing need, especially in the rural areas of Wyoming. The pandemic exacerbated the need for transportation as existing public transit systems, which already had limited routes, restricted or eliminated routes altogether.
- Since the last CSNA the use of the traditional supported employment model of services has become less frequent. While the need for SE is present for many individuals with most significant disabilities in Wyoming, the problem remains that there is a very long waiting list for extended services through the Medicaid waiver program.
- Individuals with mental health impairments are the most common group served by DVR. The mental health system throughout the State was described lacking in all places except for Cheyenne. Rural areas of the State often have little or no psychiatric care and therapeutic intervention is often reserved for individuals in crisis.
- There were several other rehabilitation needs frequently mentioned by the interview participants. These included the need for work experience, soft skills, training, assistive technology and benefits planning.
- There was a general need to educate employers about the ability and capabilities of individuals with disabilities, but this need was especially stressed when discussing the needs of individuals with blindness and visual impairments.
- The fear of benefit loss continues to impact the return-to-work behavior of SSA beneficiaries. The need for benefits planning is pervasive and essential in helping motivate SSI/DI recipients to strive for self-sufficiency.
- Affordable housing is a need that emerged and is due primarily to the increase in housing costs related to the pandemic.
- There is a need to ensure consumers have broadband Internet access and basic computing skills. The societal shift to remote or virtual service delivery among multiple agencies and remote work during the pandemic makes connectivity a significant need for individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.

**Response Statement:** DVR, will collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council and other partner agencies as applicable to address the above findings through the following efforts:

- Continuing to advocate for systemic changes to increase opportunities and access to public transportation. DVR will also continue to explore innovative ways of providing transportation to rural clients by working with the Centers for Independent Living.
- DVR will continue to develop recruiting tools and training for CRPs to provide SE services across Wyoming. The SE and CE policies were identified as findings in the 2023 RSA audit. These policies have been updated to provide DVR staff greater clarification on the policy and procedure for using SE and CE for clients with Most Significant Disabilities. Additionally, DVR partnered with Diavergent for virtual services in remote

Wyoming communities. This VR service will lead to quality job placements and subsequently ensure comprehensive supported employment for clients. Finally, in an effort to address the long wait time for the Medicaid Waiver, DVR has incorporated Waiver information and referral into Pre-ETS practices, in an effort to encourage participants and guardians to start the process while the student is still attending school, thereby decreasing the wait time after completion of the education program.

- DVR recognizes the limitations of mental health support and treatment in the State of Wyoming. DVR will continue to advocate for systemic change in regards to mental health treatment resources. DVR supports the Governor's efforts to address mental health limitations in Wyoming including participating in the Governor's Mental Health Summit. DVR advocates and often facilitates client access to virtual mental health care, including counseling and medication management. DVR was recently awarded a \$10 million DIF grant to begin offering Pre-ETS services and mental health support to students in Wyoming beginning at age 10. DVR is partnering with the CILs and WDE on this project.
- Rehabilitation needs are addressed at the individual participant level. DVR has developed partnerships with our Title 1 partners at Employment and Training to work on entry-level employment skills, including soft skills, work experiences, and training. DVR currently has more than one option for referring clients for benefits planning. DVR has an internal staff person to whom participants can be referred for benefits counseling, and participants can also be referred to the local WIPA contractor. DVR is continuing to address training and resources for assistive technology, including the use of YesLMS training for counselors.
- Wyoming is an Employment First State. DVR continues to work with our partners and stakeholders to provide education and information to employers regarding the abilities and capabilities of individuals with disabilities. DVR has provided training to all staff on business engagement and is committed to developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through work experience, internship and apprentice opportunities.
- DVR recognizes that many participants fear losing their Social Security benefits and, as a result, fail to obtain employment to allow them to reach self-sufficiency. DVR currently has more than one option for referring clients for benefits planning. DVR has an internal staff member who is an SSA-authorized Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor (CPWIC) to whom participants can be referred for benefits counseling, and participants can also be referred to the local WIPA contractor. Additionally, DVR is working to develop training for staff and providers on strategies that contribute to the pursuit of work above the level of SGA, including self-sufficiency for SSA beneficiaries.
- Wyoming has seen a significant increase in housing costs post-pandemic. DVR collaborates with our Title 1, 2 and 3 partners as well as community stakeholders to provide housing assistance information and referrals for participants. Additionally, DVR is working to help ensure clients are making quality informed choice decisions regarding training and employment to help them to earn a more sustainable wage and find affordable housing. Advocacy for systemic change to access to affordable housing is performed when the opportunity presents.
- DVR will continue to work with our Title partners and stakeholders to advocate for, and address the systemic change needed to bring broadband internet access to all DVR

participants in Wyoming. DVR addresses broadband internet access challenges as they pertain to the rehabilitation needs of participants. DVR partners with Title 1 and Title 3 partners to identify and provide basic computer literacy skills training when needed.

**B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;**

The prevalence of disability among ethnic categories distinguished by working age (18–64 years) for the State is listed in the table below. (Note: Data is taken from five-year US Census estimates as data was not available for all races in one-year estimates). DVR data is taken from its case management system.

**Disability Status + Age (18 – 64 years) + Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number of WAWD in WY</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>Number in DVR</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>All</b>	39,349	100.0%	NA	NA	NA
<b>White</b>	32,030	81.4%	1617	84.5%	3.1%
<b>Black/African</b>	274	0.8%	48	2.5%	1.7%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	4,013	10.2%	159	8.3%	1.9%
<b>Am Indian &amp; Alaskan Native</b>	686	2.0%	63	3.3%	1.3%
<b>Asian</b>	309	0.9%	17	0.1%	-0.8%
<b>Native Haw. Or Pac Islander</b>	34	0.1%	9	0.1%	0.0%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

The following themes repeatedly emerged in terms of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who were potentially unserved or underserved by DVR:

- The rehabilitation needs of minorities with disabilities was not significantly different from the general population of individuals with disabilities receiving services except for the need for language interpreters or bilingual co-workers or supervisors.
- Related to geography, the rural areas of Wyoming continue to be identified as potentially underserved because individuals with disabilities in these areas do not have access to transportation to get to DVR satellite offices, and broadband connectivity is limited in some areas.
- Related to race, participants felt that the consumer make-up of DVR reflected the racial make-up of Wyoming in general. Hispanics were cited most frequently as a potentially underserved population. The reasons for this were identified as language barriers such as no DVR staff that are bilingual, mistrust of government agencies, and stigma associated with disability.



- Related to disability type, individuals who are Blind or Deaf-Blind were identified as potentially underserved. Participants were not sure of how high the demand in these groups was for services since Wyoming is so rural and has limited resources and services available to assist these individuals.
- The homeless population in Wyoming has increased since the last CSNA, and these individuals may be underserved by DVR. This information is consistent with those that indicated that affordable housing was a significant need.

**Response Statement:** DVR, will collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council and other partner agencies as applicable to address the above findings through the following efforts:

- DVR is committed to providing rehabilitation services that meet the individual participant's needs. DVR will continue to seek out additional interpreter resources including use of technology to bring interpreters to rural communities.
- DVR will continue to work with our Title partners and stakeholders to advocate for systemic change regarding transportation and broadband internet connectivity to decrease the barriers that individuals with disabilities face in accessing quality rehabilitation and employment services. DVR offices can offer virtual services to clients that may have transportation challenges in an effort to decrease the barrier to accessing DVR satellite offices.
- DVR acknowledges there is often a cultural barrier that Hispanic individuals may face when accessing services for their disabilities. DVR will continue to work with our Title partners and stakeholders on efforts to reach the Hispanic population. DVR is actively working with our Human Resource department to ensure as an agency DVR creates inclusive job descriptions and develops recruitment strategies to attract a diverse pool of candidates. DVR has translated applications and program brochures into Spanish. All DVR staff have access to the Language Line for assistance with interpreter services for Hispanic participants. DVR will continue to seek out additional interpreter resources including use of technology to bring interpreters to rural communities. DVR has partnered with Aira for visual interpreting services and they have Spanish speaking interpreters available for participants with visual impairments whose preferred language is Spanish.
- DVR will continue to expand services and resources to participants who are Blind or Deaf-Blind. In January 2024, DVR partnered with Aira for visual interpretation services to assist clients with accessing rehabilitation services. This service is also available to any visually impaired individual that accesses the DWS webpage, allowing them assistance with navigating the website to access resources. DVR will continue to partner with our Title partners and stakeholders, including WDE, to identify Blind and Deaf-Blind individuals that may benefit from DVR services.
- DVR acknowledges that the homeless population has grown in Wyoming and that this may be an underserved population. DVR will continue to collaborate with community partners and stakeholders to identify eligible individuals with disabilities that may be homeless. DVR will continue to explore ways to decrease access to services for this population and will include the use of rapid engagement to help facilitate client access to rehabilitation and employment services.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The 2023 CSNA showed the following data from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

### Wyoming's Workforce Training and Employment

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the Center to get training?	12	28.6%	30	71.4%	42
Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	12
Did the training result in employment?	4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12
Did you go to the Workforce Center to find a job?	34	81.0%	8	19.1%	42
Did they help you find employment?	12	35.3%	22	64.7%	34

Analysis of responses indicated the services respondents received at the Workforce Training Centers did not result in desired outcomes in several areas including: 28.6% of respondents went to the Workforce Center to get training, and half indicated that they received the training they were seeking, and only four found work as a result of the training. 81.0% of respondents who went to the Workforce Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Of that total number, 35.3% found employment as a result of the help provided by the Workforce Center.

Additionally, the CSNA made the following findings:

- The relationship among core partners has been growing and getting stronger each year. Partnership is now characterized as the norm rather than the exception.
- The Workforce Centers did not close during the pandemic, which contributed to keeping the partnership strong between DVR and the Centers.
- The Workforce Center partners and DVR have engaged in joint leadership training as a way to foster a shared vision of program integration and increase collaboration.
- DVR consumers are routinely connected to the Workforce Centers in Wyoming and DVR utilizes partner programs to facilitate this connection in addition to their own staff.

- DVR and the Title I and III programs utilize Integrated Resource Teams for multiple consumers as a way to improve communication, joint planning and service delivery.
- The co-location of DVR in the Workforce Centers has greatly contributed to the integration of programs and increased shared funding of cases.
- Cross-training has become a common occurrence between DVR and the Workforce partners. This contributed to greater understanding of each other’s programs and increased collaboration.
- There is a need to improve the physical and programmatic accessibility of Workforce Centers throughout the State.

**Response Statement:** DVR, will collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council and other partner agencies as applicable to address the above findings through the following efforts:

- DVR will continue to increase collaboration and cross training with our Title 1 Workforce partners. Cross-training has been provided annually to ensure that all staff have an understanding of each agency’s role, responsibilities, and services for participants (including those for participants with the most significant disabilities). DVR provides disability awareness and sensitivity training to Workforce Center staff when requested.
- DVR will work to identify examples of effective partnerships between DVR and Workforce Centers across the State and use these as examples for training and replication in other areas;
- DVR will partner with the Business Training and Support Unit (BTSU) and Workforce Centers to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs.
- DVR will continue to explore and improve capacity to track co-enrollment of participants to improve referral outcomes and maximize expenditure of funds.
- DVR will continue to advocate for the improvement of accessibility features and access in Workforce Centers.

**D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.**

The 2023 CSNA examined educational attainment rates, unemployment rates, and Labor force participation rates for youth in Wyoming. The following was determined:

**Educational Attainment for Ages 18 – 24 Years**

Area	Less than High School Graduate	HS Grad (includes equivalency)	Some college, or Associate’s degree	Bachelor’s degree
<b>*US</b>	12.2%	32.1%	43.9%	11.8%
<b>*WY</b>	12.5%	34.5%	45.0%	8.1%

*\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates*

## 2018 Employment by Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Youth Ages 16 – 20

Disability Type	US Percent Employed	Wyoming Percent Employed
Any Disability	28.6%	29.6%
Visual Disability	29.5%	No Data Available
Hearing Disability	32.7%	No Data Available
Ambulatory Disability	16.6%	No Data Available
Cognitive Disability	22.6%	23.2%
Self-Care Disability	8.6%	No Data Available
Independent Living Disability	13.6%	17.6%

Source: <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/>

The data indicate that Wyoming's employment rate for youth with disabilities exceeds the national average by 1.0 percent. Wyoming youth with cognitive disabilities and youth with independent living disabilities are employed slightly above the national average.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on youth labor force participation and unemployment. The following provides national data for youth ages 16–19 and 20–24 with and without disabilities.

### Labor Force Participation Rates for Youth

	Labor Force Participation Rate	
	Disability	No Disability
Age 16–19	24.3%	36.8%
Age 20–24	46.7%	72.0%
	Unemployment Rate	
	Disability	No Disability
Age 16–19	21.0%	11.4%
Age 20–24	16.5%	8.7%

*\* Generated using unpublished data obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Table 1. Labor force status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, age, and disability status, January 2022 through June 2022. (Source: Current Population Survey).*

The data indicate that in all indicators of employment nationally, youth with disabilities perform far below their peers without disabilities. This data reinforces the need to provide youth with disabilities every opportunity to participate in work experiences and learn what is required in the world of work. The provision of pre-employment transition services represents an important first opportunity to reach students with disabilities in Wyoming and across the nation.

The 2023 CSNA identified several recurring needs for Wyoming's transition-age youth with disabilities.

- The rehabilitation needs of students and youth with disabilities are consistent with the general population of DVR consumers. Transportation is a significant need, as is the acquisition of work skills and work experience.
- The development of soft skills was repeatedly identified as a need for youth and students with disabilities if they are to be successful in employment settings.
- All five of the required pre-employment transition services were identified as needs. Work-based learning experiences were cited as especially important, and DVR and the schools have expanded these opportunities for students.
- The rate of youth applying and being served is increasing every year.
- DVR needs to increase the number of students they serve that have 504 plans. This continues to be an issue as far as outreach and will likely take a concerted effort and informational campaign to the school district staff across the State.

While VR has shown an increase in the provision of Pre-ETS services, there is still much room for growth and improvement. There continues to be a strong need for the five core Pre-ETS services across the state to help transition youth to obtaining the necessary skills to improve employment outcomes. DVR has worked hard to establish strong relationships with the schools and to increase services to students with disabilities, including developing relationships with key school personnel in each of Wyoming's 48 school districts, charter schools and institutions. DVR staff are often invited to participate in transition planning and IEP meetings for potentially eligible students. Counselors continue to work to coordinate transition services included under IDEA with school personnel to minimize duplication of services. DVR works with Community Rehabilitation Programs and Providers across the state to provide Pre-ETS services that are not covered under IDEA, particularly after school and during school vacations. Additionally, DVR is exploring new opportunities to expand these services through various providers.

## 2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The 2023 CSNA data furnished evidence that additional resources are needed to serve DVR clients through the provider world (Community Rehabilitation Programs - CRPs). The data indicates that changes are needed in the provider service configuration to continue to effectively serve a wide and diverse range of needs of clients on the DVR caseload. The needs relate to specific training topics for providers and a greater variety of job placement options across Wyoming communities. The primary needs identified that relate to Wyoming Community Rehabilitation Programs were:

- There is a need to establish more employment services providers outside of the Cheyenne area. The needed services include employment preparation, job development and placement, supported employment, and job coaching.
- There continues to be significant portions of rural Wyoming where there are no CRPs or individual service providers available and there is a need to establish CRPs for all DVR services.
- Funding issues and lack of providers have created limitations in CRP's ability to maintain staff and place clients timely. Some are struggling with sustaining their

business and worry about their ability to continue. The pandemic accelerated turnover at CRPs and this has affected their quality of services and wait times for services.

- DVR and CRPs collectively agree that training (including cross-training) would be helpful for both groups.
- CRPs expressed the desire to meet routinely with their colleagues and DVR to share information so that they can be up to date on any policy or procedure change, identify opportunities and challenges, and build a network of support for providers.

**Response Statement:** DVR, will collaborate with the State Rehabilitation Council and other partner agencies as applicable to address the above findings through the following efforts:

- DVR will continue to explore recruitment and training of CRPs outside of the Cheyenne area. DVR is exploring collaboration options with the Waiver program to reach CRPs that are knowledgeable and trained to work with the Most Significantly Disabled participants and provide SE and CE services to these individuals through DVR.
- DVR acknowledges that many of our rural communities have a limited number or no available CRPs to provide services to individuals with disabilities. DVR has partnered with Diavergent to provide virtual job development and job coaching services to individuals in rural areas where there are no current CRPs. During the 2024 Wyoming Legislative Budgetary session, DVR made a request of the joint appropriations committee to create four full-time Transition Navigator positions to help increase the delivery of Pre-ETS services to each of the four DVR regions across the state. The positions were approved and will be posted at the start of PY24. These positions will help the agency in meeting statewideness of Pre-ETS due to the capacity of current staff and rural nature of Wyoming. Caseloads are continuing to grow and Wyoming DVR has 48 school districts to provide Pre-ETS services to, not counting the additional pocket areas of Pre-ETS such as juvenile facilities and institutions.
- Fiscal forecasting continues to be a priority for DVR - Referrals to other funding opportunities, such as the Waiver, are provided to CRPs to help them to diversify their income streams and not be solely dependent on DVR funds to sustain their business.
- Cross-training with CRPs and DVR staff will be provided at a minimum of once per year. DVR has created a position responsible for CRP training.
- DVR will provide opportunities to include CRPs and individual service providers in the trainings provided for DVR staff to allow for exchange of information and best practices and ensure that all parties are up to date on any policy and procedural changes.

### C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment, economic self-sufficiency, personal independence, and full inclusion into the community. In 2023, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council established new goals for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which includes DVR. The SRC provided specific recommendations for the State plan and again through the public comment process. The DVR and SRC met and reviewed priority goals based on these recommendations.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;

B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

In December 2023, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWCD) established the following goals for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), which includes DVR. The goals include the following:

**Goal 1:** *Invent an image by enhancing brand perception and awareness*

**Strategies:**

- DVR will participate in the building of cross-program knowledge for all Wyoming Workforce Center staff. This will allow all staff for DVR and our partner programs to have a better understanding of programs and services available and help ensure that there is a unified delivery of services for all populations across all Workforce Center locations.
- Central office DVR staff continue to participate in quarterly all-agency leadership meetings to gather and share information on programs.

- DVR Central office staff will provide yearly training on DVR-related activities when requested by partner agencies.
- Additionally, local offices will engage in collaborative efforts to serve clients, including participation in Workforce job fairs. Each DVR region will track participation in community job fairs on a quarterly basis, and enter the information on the agency tracking document.
- **Goal 2:***Drive collaboration with DWS agency partnerships to provide opportunities for training and credentials*
- DVR will continue to support eligible individuals with access to education and training to obtain an advance in their career efforts.
- **Strategies:**
- DVR will continue to emphasize co-enrolling eligible participants in an effort to collaborate with partner agencies to provide increased opportunities for training and credentials.
- DVR staff will make contact at least once a quarter with the local Adult Basic Education (ABE) agency in their communities to discuss how DVR can assist with training and credentials for eligible participants.
- Additionally, DVR will work to identify eligible participants for WIOA co-enrollment training and credential opportunities. DVR will work with Title I and Title II partners quarterly to identify and co-enroll a minimum of five (5) eligible WIOA participants for co-enrollment training and credential opportunities.
- **Goal 3:***Enhance Access to Our Services*DVR will continue to work to identify and address ways to increase both client and employer access to our program services. **Strategies:**
- This will include increasing the use of technology for virtual appointments and meetings in remote areas and for those with transportation limitations. Currently, an average of 12% of VR clients are reported to be seen virtually for appointments. VR will work to increase the number of VR clients served virtually by three (3) percent by the end of FFY24 and by five (5) percent by the end of FFY25.
- DVR is developing a system for the electronic submission of client applications to help enhance access to services and will have this deployed by 12/31/2024.
- Additionally, DVR has trained all staff on rapid engagement practices to increase client participation and access to DVR services by decreasing the time taken to reach plan development.
- **Goal 4:***Engage in Community Outreach.*DVR is supporting the effort through the establishment of a division goal to increase business engagement and outreach to stakeholders and community partners. DVR staff are engaged in ongoing efforts to increase outreach activities. **Strategies:**
- Activities include continuing to increase DVR partnerships and relationships with fellow WIOA partner agencies, including Employment and Training, Workers' Compensation, and Adult Basic Education.



- DVR staff will attend at least one scheduled community job fair per year in each region to reach employers and community partners.
- Wyoming DVR has identified the following additional goals for the division:**Goal 5: RSA Performance standards.**DVR's goal is to meet or exceed the performance standards required by RSA as per our negotiated levels of performance. **Strategies:**
- Ensuring proper data entry into the case management system.
- DVR staff will be provided training at multiple points throughout the year to address the procedures for collecting and validating the necessary data.
- All RSA 911 reports will be reviewed for errors and anomalies before submission to ensure the accuracy of data required to meet the negotiated levels of performance.
- Random quality assurance file reviews will be conducted quarterly on 25% of cases that are to contain data and documentation to be measured, including Education Functioning Levels (EFL), Measurable Skill Gains (MSG), Credential Attainment, and wages for employment.
- **Goal 6:Pre-Employment Transition Services.**DVR will work to increase Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) across the state and meet or exceed the minimum expenditure of 15% of the Federal Reserve as required by RSA in each fiscal year. **Strategies:**
- Expand Pre-ETS services through the increased use of contracts and recruiting new vendors to deliver services.
- DVR staff will be provided training at multiple points throughout the year to address the procedures for collecting and validating necessary Pre-ETS data.
- DVR staff will work to increase collaboration with schools at both the state and local levels.
- An updated MOU with the Wyoming Department of Education will be enacted by September 30, 2024, outlining the Pre-ETS provision of services and responsibilities for each agency.
- **Goal 7:Mental Health.**DVR aims to help address the mental health crisis present in Wyoming through both General VR services and Pre-ETS. **Strategies:**
- DVR will increase collaboration with local mental health providers through quarterly outreach activities to provide information on the DVR program and services to mental health staff and clients.
- DVR will also increase collaboration with the Wyoming Dept of Health - Behavioral Health Division by exploring the development of an MOU between agencies and participating in yearly cross-training activities with the Behavioral Health Division.
- DVR will address the mental health goal for Pre-ETS students through the Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant, an interagency, collaborative partnership to identify and facilitate systems and policy changes to increase children and youth's access to transition services and mental health supports. This grant planning period ends September 30, 2024, and implementation at pilot sites will begin by October 1, 2024.

- **Goal 8: Client Services.** DVR will increase client engagement and service delivery through various methods. **Strategies:**
- DVR field staff will use rapid engagement practices to decrease the time a client waits for the initial Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to be developed. The goal is that 75% of applicants in a program year will be in an approved IPE within 45 days.
- Additionally, DVR will identify and develop measures to improve the Pre-ETS referral process for students and parents, increasing Pre-ETS applications and services.
- Increasing the use of technology for virtual appointments and meetings in remote areas and for those with transportation limitations and exploring options for utilizing artificial technology to increase client engagement (ex: Semi-automated rehabilitation assistant (SARA) to increase client engagement and decrease staff burden).
- Client services will also be increased through business engagement and outreach activities by providing knowledge and information to employers regarding DVR services and support for employees with disabilities.
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#### D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

##### 1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

##### **Goal 1: Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR continued to develop outreach efforts to promote not only opportunities available for DVR participants and employers but how they can be a collaborative effort with other One-Stop partners. DVR increased internal communication with other partner divisions through participation in quarterly DWS Management meetings and cross-training with Employment and Training staff in local field offices to gain a better understanding of how each program operates and ways to further collaborate and increase program effectiveness. Meetings have been offered both in-person and virtual. This goal has been revised for PYs 2024-2027 and will be reassessed each program year. The revised goal is written as PY24 Goal 1: *Invent an image by enhancing brand perception and awareness.*

##### **Goal 2: Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts.**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR continued to identify and explore ways to increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts. DVR increased internal communication with other partner divisions through participation in quarterly DWS Management meetings and cross-training with Employment and Training staff in local field offices to gain a better understanding of how each program operates and ways to further collaborate and increase program effectiveness. Meetings have been offered both in-person and virtually. DVR

participated in outreach efforts, including job fairs, Governor's Initiative events, and social media postings on the DWS social media sites. This goal has been revised and continued for PYs 2024-2027 and will be reassessed each program year. The revised goal is written as **Goal 2: Drive collaboration with DWS agency partnerships to provide opportunities for training and credentials and new Goal 4: Engage in Community Outreach.**

**Goal 3: Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers.**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR remained committed to providing customized and individualized support to all DVR clients accessing services to reach their employment goals. Employment goals were selected based upon client skills, interests and abilities and exploration of labor market trends. DVR continued to provide individual referrals to One-Stop partners to address client needs. DVR staff participated in outreach efforts that included quarterly contacts with a minimum of five different employers and/or community stakeholders to learn more about their business needs and services and how DVR could be a resource. This goal has been discontinued for PYs 2024-2027; however, DVR continues to prioritize providing customized and individualized support to clients, and concepts of this goal have been included in several of the PY24 goals.

**Goal 4: Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources.**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR participated in cross-training opportunities at both the local and state-levels to provide updated information on program services and collaboration opportunities. At the end of FY23, DVR reports show that 30.5% of clients were also co-enrolled with Wagner-Paisner services at the time of intake. Additional co-enrollments were reported at time of intake in WIOA -Adult and Youth programs, Dislocated Worker and Adult Education. This goal has been revised for PYs 2024-2027 and will be reassessed each program year. The new goal is written as: **Goal 2: Drive collaboration with DWS agency partnerships to provide opportunities for training and credentials**

**Goal 5: Use the career pathways system to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries**

**Evaluation:** DVR remains committed to helping clients obtain and advance in employment. DVR utilizes a variety of career pathway systems to help clients to achieve their employment goals. Education and training opportunities are offered to clients to begin pathways that will increase the likelihood of future career advancement including the STEM and Medical fields. DVR continues to work with students in high school to provide career exploration and exposure. DVR continues to collaborate with the University of Wyoming on the Rural Youth Apprenticeship Development (RYAD) program to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to youth in the construction industry. There were seven (7) students that were enrolled in the RYAD program at the end of FY23. This goal has been discontinued for PYs 2024-2027; however, DVR continues to prioritize providing customized and individualized support to clients, and concepts of this goal have been included in several of the PY24 goals.

**Goal 6: Improve services to transition-age clients by increasing the number of clients served and successful outcomes by 5%.**

**Evaluation:**

DVR continues to identify and address ways to improve services to transition-age clients. DVR saw no significant change in the number of Pre-ETS clients served in PY23. DVR is continuing to work on updating the MOU with the WDE to address service delivery in schools. DVR has a

dedicated staff counselor assigned to each high school in the state and continues to explore opportunities to develop quality Pre-ETS programs with CRPs across the state. This goal has been revised for PYs 2024-2027 and will be reassessed each program year. The new goal is written as **Goal 6: Pre-Employment Transition Services**.

**Goal 7: Increase the presence of DVR services and partnerships with businesses across the state**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR created a Performance Management Initiative (PMI) goal for each counselor and manager that focused on business outreach and engagement. DVR staff participated in outreach efforts that included quarterly contacts with a minimum of five different employers and/or community stakeholders to learn more about their business needs and services and how DVR could be a resource for disability-related needs/challenges. This goal has been discontinued for PYs 2024-2027, however DVR remains committed to increasing DVR partnerships and employer engagement and will address these topics in PYs 2024-2027 **Goal 4: Engage in Community Outreach** and **Goal 8: Client Services**.

**Goal 8: Continue to improve the recruitment, training and retention of staff.**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR continued to provide financial assistance to counselors in accredited MRC programs. In PY22 DVR had five (5) counselors enrolled in an MRC program. DVR continues to provide financial support for counselors to take the CRC exam and to maintain their certification. Training is offered to all DVR staff through monthly agency Zoom calls, regional trainings, and yearly all-agency training. Additionally, YesLMS access is provided to all field staff which allows staff to be assigned required trainings and also choose to participate in additional trainings that are of interest to them. YesLMS allows for the earning of CEUs to maintain CRC certification. DVR continued to improve local relationships with partner agencies through cross-training and collaboration. This goal has been discontinued for PYs 2024-2027, however DVR will continue to develop and maintain efforts to improve the recruitment, training and retention of staff. DVR created a new position in PY 2023 that will oversee and develop agency training to help with regular and consistent training efforts. Additionally, the agency remains committed to supporting staff with financial assistance to earn an MRC degree as well as access to the YesLMS learning management system for individualized staff development training.

**Goal 9: Develop and establish a plan to increase and improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

**Evaluation:** In PY22, DVR continued to utilize the CRP manual to provide training and policy and procedural information to new and existing CRPs across the state. This manual was developed and implemented in PY21. During PY22, discussions were held with CRPs across the state regarding strategies and incentives to help expand services to the rural areas. Virtual service delivery options by CRPs were offered in various locations. This goal has been discontinued for PYs 2024-2027, however DVR continues to prioritize the need to increase the number of qualified CRPs across the state, and will be providing training opportunities and increased communication efforts with new and existing CRPs.

2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

Indicator	PY2022 FinalNegotiated Level	PY2022 ActualReported Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	42.6%	50.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	34.6%	46.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,100	\$5950
Credential Attainment Rate	26.8%	27.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	57.6%	29.6%

DVR is pleased to report that the agency met and exceeded four of the five negotiated performance levels. DVR did not meet the negotiated level of performance for Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs), however this level underwent additional review and was not counted towards PY22 performance levels for all agencies. DVR has worked with the VRTAC-QA for technical assistance on this topic and provided training to all field staff on what measures can be counted for MSGs and how to accurately enter them into the case management system to count towards reported levels.

**3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).**

DVR has provided innovation and expansion funding for activities designed to continue addressing needs identified previously in needs assessments. Most activities are designed specifically to expand and improve services available to people with the Most Significant Disabilities. DVR will continue to solicit ideas and programs used to improve or enhance services to clients with disabilities in the State, possibly to include additional community rehabilitation programs in the State.

In PY23, DVR used innovation and expansion funds to support the State Independent Living Council. Expenditures included travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, and facilitation services, and costs related to consumer satisfaction/outreach efforts.

In PY23, DVR provided funding support for the State Rehabilitation Council. Expenditures included travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, facilitation services, and costs related to consumer satisfaction/outreach efforts.

**E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.**

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:**

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

The Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to ensuring that rehabilitation services are made available statewide to individuals with the most severe disabilities who have not traditionally been competitively employed or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent. The goal of the State's supported employment program is to maintain a system whereby individuals with the most significant disabilities are afforded the opportunity to participate in competitive integrated employment.

Supported Employment Services are provided on a statewide basis, with multiple community rehabilitation programs and a number of independent vendors currently providing services. DVR prioritizes the use of supported employment models that maximize competitive integrative opportunities for persons with most significant disabilities in real work sites, doing meaningful work. The DVR explores comparable benefits and makes appropriate referrals to other agencies to leverage additional funding sources to increase resources and expand opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. Title VI funds will be used to provide supported employment services after the individual has been placed in competitive integrated employment.

Wyoming's annual allotment of Title VI, Part B funds is \$300,000 and is distributed through four regional budgets.

DVR has been monitoring and ensuring that all Title VI funds are expended in accordance with the grant requirements. To further enhance the utilization of the Title VI funds, and differentiate between Customized Employment and Supported Employment, the agency is engaging in technical assistance support from the VRTAC-QE. All field staff have participated in training on these topics and one staff member from each of the four regions has completed the Customized Employment training offered through Virginia Commonwealth University and are identified as the regional experts and resources for fellow staff members. DVR is also exploring developing training opportunities with community rehabilitation partners

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

In order to receive Supported Employment (SE) services, an individual must also have an SE goal on their IPE and have already been placed in an employment setting. Supported employment services, also identified on the IPE, begin at the time of the individual's job placement.

DVR's policy is to provide extended services for youth for up to four years or until a youth reaches the age of 25, with other entities providing long-term support after that time period. Funding for extended and supported employment services provided by the DVR to youth will come from the 50% reserve. For youth, the transition to Extended Services begins after all supported employment services are complete (24 months) and not to exceed four years or until such time that a youth reaches the age of 25 and no longer meets the definition of a "youth with a disability," whichever occurs first.

DVR has an increased focus on ensuring a continuum of services on youths with disabilities moving from Pre-ETS into General VR and SE services as eligible. DVR is also providing training to field staff on correct coding for Supported Employment services, both Youth and Adult. Routine quality assurance reviews of files marked as Supported Employment are reviewed for appropriate use of funds.

An individual shall be eligible to receive supported employment services using Title VI Part B funds if:

- The individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services;
- The individual is determined to be an individual with the Most Significant Disabilities and
- A comprehensive assessment of the individual's rehabilitation needs is made that includes an assessment of rehabilitation career and job needs, which identifies supported employment as the appropriate rehabilitation objective for the individual.

Individuals appropriate for supported employment are those:

- Youth and adults for whom competitive integrated employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a Most Significant Disability;
- Individuals who, because of the nature and significance of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services from the DVR; and,
- Individuals who need extended services provided by another entity after achieving an employment outcome to maintain employment.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

DVR is working to develop and/or update agreements, including MOUs, with partner state agencies and other entities to increase resources and services for individuals receiving supported employment. DVR has a current MOU with the Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division that requires updating to ensure that roles and services outlined within the MOU meet the current WIOA standards and are in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(19)(v). DVR is proposing to have this updated MOU

developed and finalized by the end of PY 2027. This MOU will describe how the Behavioral Health Division and DVR can collaborate to provide supported employment services to help clients achieve long-term employment success. This will also include how DVR and the Behavioral Health Division can effectively collaborate to begin transitioning supported employment clients to extended services no later than 24 months after the client has entered supported employment. DVR continues to utilize third-party liability agreements for long-term support for individuals under the Medicaid Waiver system.

DVR has an informal agreement with all agency CRPs, using the CRP Manual and Acknowledgement form, in which CRPs may be authorized to provide supported employment services to youth and adult clients in supported employment while the client is employed and requires such services. The CRPs assist with the transitioning of supported employment clients to extended support as applicable.

DVR will also continue to utilize comparable benefits and/or collaborative services from IDEA-covered entities through the use of an MOU agreement with WDE that outlines the roles and responsibilities for providing transition services, including those for youth who are eligible for supported employment services.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	2250	2250	\$5,200,000	0

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	900	380	\$450,000	N/A

**G. ORDER OF SELECTION**

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

\* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

**2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—**

**A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

No

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”

Not applicable

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;

C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

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Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Counselor	27	28	36
Administrative Assistant	16	18	28
Area Manager	4	4	5
Contract Manager	1	4	5
Program Consultant	5	5	6
Rehabilitation Coordinator	1	2	3
Program Analyst	1	1	1
Equipment Distribution Manager	1	1	1
Administrators	4	4	4

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

1:96 Counselor to Client ratio

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

2850 individuals

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

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Wyoming does not have an institution of higher education that trains rehabilitation professionals. The two nearest such programs that staff utilize are at the University of Northern Colorado and Utah State University. These programs concentrate on private and public rehabilitation, respectively. DVR also uses Assumption College as an optional location for distance education. All programs are certified by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP).

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates

**B. THE VR AGENCY’S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

DVR recruits counselors from the University of Northern Colorado, Utah State University, and Assumption College whenever possible and has worked to improve communication with the schools to announce open positions and to recruit potential counselors. DVR provides information on open agency positions via email to each University contact to disseminate to eligible program participants and staff.

Announcements for all state positions, including Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions, are posted on the State Personnel web page. Announcements are also made through ads in local and regional newspapers, on agency social media pages, and HireWyo. DVR, in accordance with the ADA, seeks to employ and advance qualified individuals with disabilities, as well as minorities.

DVR’s comprehensive system of personnel development requires a counselor to have a master’s degree and be eligible to take the certified rehabilitation counselor exam. DVR attempts to hire individuals who meet the personal development requirement, but if that is not possible, an attempt is made to hire someone with a related bachelor’s degree and two years of experience. Such a new hire is made aware that at the end of his/her two-year probationary period, they will be expected to attend a Council of Rehabilitation Education accredited school to receive a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling. They will have four years to complete the degree.

The following is a current breakdown of DVR staff members who meet or exceed the personal development requirements:

- 19 staff members in DVR have their certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) license;
- Of the 19 staff members with a CRC, eight (8) are DVR field Counselors;
- One (1) DVR Counselor has completed the MRC degree requirements and is currently eligible to test for the CRC;
- Two (2) counselors are currently working in an MRC program, or classes for Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) category R;
- Seven (7) counselors have completed their probationary period and are awaiting area manager approval or funding availability to enroll in an MRC or category R program; and

- Seven (7) counselors are currently in a probationary period and will begin working to meet the personnel development requirements at the appropriate time.

DVR actively updates and implements a system that addresses current and projected personnel training needs. DVR develops training plans for individuals using the State of Wyoming's Performance Management Initiative (PMI). This tool helps the agency establish and track goals for staff development.

The Policy and Training manager identifies and works to address the training needs of all employees. These training needs are addressed at an individual level and collectively as an agency through regular monthly all-agency Zoom calls, regional in-services and the annual division in-service training for both counselors and assistants. DVR also sends individuals to training sessions provided by the State of Wyoming Personnel Division, numerous private or public vendors, CRCC University, and many webinars. DVR field staff also have access to the YesLMS platform to complete assigned training and training that is of interest to them pertaining to rehabilitation needs.

DVR has made a conscious effort to address retention and recruitment of staff by advocating for pay raises for all field professional and paraprofessional staff. The most recent pay raise for state employees occurred on July 1, 2023, bringing pay up to 90% of market rate.

DVR has an education contract that is signed for all counselors entering an MRC or CRC program in which they will be utilizing DVR clients, time and/or financial support for their program. This contract allows DVR to seek reimbursement of costs associated with supporting the counselor during training. If a counselor has received education funding through the DVR, the individual contractually agrees to continue employment with the DVR after obtaining their master's degree at a rate of two months for every three credit hours taken. If employment is ended before this time, repayment may include forfeiture of final accrued annual or sick leave. This contract was implemented in February 2020.

### **Futures group**

The "futures group" is designed for staff members who are interested in moving into new or different roles within DVR and in developing the future direction of DVR. The current membership includes counselors, assistants, and program consultants. Membership is open to any permanent employee, with the approval of the supervisor and the DVR administrator. This group meets quarterly to provide input on business issues affecting DVR. They work directly with DVR program managers and may attend selected management team meetings to provide input. They also identify projects that may benefit the DVR. In 2021, the group created a comprehensive CRP manual for vendors. The group also works to address many issues, such as staff retention, continued policy development, case management system changes, and other special projects as assigned.

## **C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS:**

### **I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN**

COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

*i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;*

DVR approaches personnel development through a number of avenues. Each employee's current level of education and training and short- and long-term training needs are tracked by area managers who evaluate methods for addressing these needs annually through the Performance Management Initiative (PMI) review system. Individual training needs assessments are conducted with the Policy and Training Manager to evaluate current levels of education, understanding of fundamentals of vocational rehabilitation, disability-related issues, professional development, and related topics. Self-evaluation and supervisor input and recommendation sections are completed through the State Personnel Division. DVR maintains a training budget administered by the Department's Fiscal Division to better control training funds and focus funds on targeted areas.

All staff members participate in annual in-service training. Two (2) in-service training sessions are scheduled annually, one for counselors, managers, and consultants, and one for support staff. The topics arise from staff needs and issues identified in quality-assurance reviews and are specific to vocational rehabilitation subject matter. A wide variety of training has been made available to counselors and consultants. DVR has a philosophy of training support staff in a manner similar to counseling staff to ensure consistency. However, many training topics for counselors are to help those who have CRCs obtain continuing education credit to maintain their license. Training has been provided by the DVR, Social Security Administration, and numerous private vendors.

Training topics offered at the 2023 staff in-service included: Understanding Psychological Evaluations, Vicarious Trauma, Stress Management, Self-Care, Drug Awareness and Internal training on the case management system. Regional in-services are held each year to enhance training opportunities for all staff and have included Pre-ETS, Assistive Technology, case management and other trainings identified as a need or interest.

Cooperation with WIOA partners within DWS and other entities in state government (including the Department of Health and the Wyoming Department of Education) ensures that training opportunities are available that address topics relevant to the field of rehabilitation. Staff members have access to intensive training that applies to serving individuals with disabilities. These conferences and/or seminars are also an opportunity to collaborate with other entities that deliver services to individuals with disabilities. DVR staff also regularly provides training to WIOA partners that addresses considerations related to working with individuals with disabilities.

Administrative Assistants are offered ongoing training in fiscal processes, case documentation, customer service and office-related courses, including effective writing, organization skills, and working with difficult clients.

DVR regularly collaborates with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) program to provide Assistive Technology (AT) assessments for consumers and training and technical assistance for DVR staff.

*ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.*

DVR's Central Office has a lending library that contains reference materials relevant to vocational rehabilitation counseling. Reference materials are often requested by field staff or area managers and may be purchased for their use. In-service speakers and trainers often provide research information, as do many conference presenters. Training for personnel is delivered through workshops, conferences, video conferencing, and webinars. DVR also uses e-mail and web links to disseminate information on research, studies, and other relevant information related to disabilities and vocational rehabilitation.

**Performance Management Initiative (PMI).** DVR must adhere to the State of Wyoming personnel rules, which include a performance appraisal system. The PMI requires area manager reviews twice a year with each employee. Such reviews can lead to improved performance through an analysis of strengths and weaknesses and the identification of training issues.

The quality assurance/improvement consultant reviews case files on a quarterly basis with a standard protocol. The consultant reports findings to the DVR administrator, who then works with the training officer to recommend training to correct deficiencies. The consultant also notes practices that are working well. If system-wide issues are found, policies are reviewed and changed if necessary, or staff members are given additional training to understand policy changes or to comply with the policy.

**Affirmative action.** DVR ensures that affirmative action is considered when employing and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities and minorities in employment. Thirteen percent of DVR staff members have reported disabilities. The State Personnel Division follows affirmative action requirements and ensures that DVR maintains appropriate hiring procedures.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

*A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and*

The Wyoming Department of Administration and Information Division of Human Resources (A&I) is designated as the State Human Resource agency. Working in collaboration with A&I, DVR has established minimum standards for VR counselors, rehabilitation specialists, rehabilitation coordinators, transition consultants, and area managers. These standards are reviewed periodically in light of changing personnel needs, labor market supply, and training resources. DVR relies on State standards for administrative assistant and program administrator positions and generic job classifications within the state Human Resources system. DVR has established specific knowledge, skills, and ability requirements for individuals to enter these positions.

*B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

DVR is committed to hiring qualified rehabilitation staff beyond the current minimum standards established by the State of Wyoming Personnel Division. An individual must have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or another master's degree that would allow the person to meet national certified rehabilitation counselor requirements. DVR seeks candidates with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling, social work, sociology, psychology, or other related fields.

The State of Wyoming does not have a licensing standard for rehabilitation counseling or for a rehabilitation counselor. The DVR standard requires a person to have a master's degree and to be eligible to sit for the certified rehabilitation counselor exam. The State Human Resource Division has set a master's degree (typically in social services or related fields) as a minimum qualification, and up to three years of progressive work experience (typically in vocational rehabilitation), or a related bachelor's degree and four to six years of progressive work experience (typically in vocational rehabilitation). Preference is given to potential employees with a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRC).

Because of difficulties in recruiting and hiring qualified rehabilitation professionals, when faced with no other alternative, DVR does hire individuals with a bachelor's degree in a related field with a minimum of two years of relevant work experience. (Note: This is the State of Wyoming's personnel standard). In so doing, the new hire is advised of DVR's expectations as they pertain to personnel standards and is offered the position only with the person's agreement to pursue a master's degree.

Based on standards developed through the personnel system, each staff member participates in the annual Performance Management Initiative (PMI) that analyzes job performance and identifies training needs. DVR continues to do annual training needs assessments of all staff, tracks training needs, and links individuals to appropriate training. Training needs to be addressed at the Statewide in-service training are determined by polling DVR staff, quality assurance results, disability trends, RSA best practices and other measures as applicable.

DVR will assess counselor training needs on an individual basis to ensure compliance with personnel standards. Department of Workforce Services Human Resources Division maintains individual counselor records that identify training needs, training received, and anticipated target dates for completion of education programs.

Priority of training includes completion timeframes as follows:

1. Individuals with bachelor's degree > master's rehabilitation – three to five years
2. Related master's degree > certified rehabilitation counselor – one to three years



Training progress for counselors is monitored and tracked annually. Staff must have an updated understanding of the evolving labor force and emerging knowledge included in regional and statewide in-service training. DVR also consults with its liaison from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) to ensure that subject matter is relevant.

DVR's personnel development system attempts to create qualified rehabilitation counselors through a distance-learning grant at Utah State University (USU) and other universities. Staff members without master's degrees must take the USU or other distance learning programs with financial assistance from the agency. The USU Master of Rehabilitation Counseling program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program offers traditional on-campus courses, as well as classes are offered through Internet-based distance education. Those who complete either the on-campus or distance program are eligible to take the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) examination. Each student must complete a practicum of three credit hours that requires 100 clock hours (at least 40 hours providing direct client contact) and an internship of nine credit hours requiring 600 clock hours (at least 240 hours providing direct client contact). Both of these experiences must be completed in a community agency providing rehabilitation counseling services to people with disabilities, and Wyoming DVR provides the opportunity for staff in the program to utilize current clients to meet this requirement. A limited number of scholarships are often available to staff through a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The Policy and Training manager maintains a record of the MRC training progress for counselors and the expiration date of current CRCs. Each counselor or consultant keeps a record of progress toward the meeting agency standards and CEUs.

#### 4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

DVR makes it a common practice to provide services to the client in their preferred language and method of communication. All DVR staff have access to the Language Line for on-demand interpreting in the client's preferred language. This service provides the interpretation of over 250 different languages for the limited or non-English speaking individuals that DVR may serve. The Language Line is beneficial for Wyoming DVR's rural communities where interpreters are unavailable for languages such as Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese. Many of Wyoming DVR's larger communities have interpreters available locally that are current DVR vendors and can provide in-person interpretation when necessary. DVR's handbook is available in Spanish, and all commonly used client forms and letters have been translated into Spanish.

For individuals who are Deaf, Deaf, and/or blind or low-vision, DVR offers interpreting services both in-person and virtually. DVR has an agreement with AIRA, to provide visual interpretation of visual information accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. This visual interpretation can include the interpretation of documents, websites, and other vital information to allow clients to fully participate in DVR processes, school, and employment. For clients that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, DVR provides American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services both in person and virtually to meet the client's communication needs. A program consultant who specializes in services for the deaf and hard of hearing is available for

ASL interpretation in the Casper field office. DVR also provides assistive listening devices and augmentative alternative communication devices for clients if needed.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

DVR currently awaits final approval of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Education. The purpose is to outline a collaborative framework that includes the responsibilities of each agency in coordinating state and local services and resources, as outlined in state and federal regulations and rules as they apply to students with disabilities in transition from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services. This MOU includes the coordination of procedures and activities to coordinate a comprehensive system of personnel development under IDEA. These activities include facilitating joint training between DWS/DVR and appropriate school district personnel on new state or federal requirements or initiatives that impact the provision of services to students with disabilities. The MOU outlines how both DVR and WDE will provide technical assistance to each agency's personnel and other stakeholder groups through formal and informal training, collaborative efforts to address joint issues, and exchange of information on policies and procedures. Additionally, the MOU includes how DVR and WDE will co-facilitate the Wyoming Transition Team (WyTT).

DVR has one Program Consultant dedicated to transition services who consults and coordinates with local, state, and federal education officials to improve the transition process for students with disabilities. The transition consultant is a resource on issues related to transition, provides training to staff, and provides a consistent statewide message from the DVR to the local education agencies. The transition consultant actively educates DVR personnel, as well as education staff, on Pre-ETS. The transition consultant is actively working on developing relationships, resource materials, training and any other needed service to educate and expand Pre-ETS coordination with WDE staff.

J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

DVR continues to work collaboratively with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to provide comprehensive services to youth and students with disabilities. Specifics of the collaboration between the two agencies are listed in the draft MOU which is expected to be finalized by May 31, 2024. Steps to ensure that collaboration continues will include the following:

- Coordinating with the State Education Transition Liaison to develop and enhance strategies to reach all qualified students, as well as to provide services that are designed to support the student along the continuum of services.

- Providing technical support and training to the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to further understanding of DVR policies, including how to refer students to services and DVR's scope of practice.
- Participating in state-wide collaborative groups including the Wyoming Transition Team (WYTT) to educate and support members, including DVR, LEAs and the Wyoming Dept. of Education to work collaboratively to support student's transition services.
- Exchanging relevant aggregate student data to highlight the need for additional support in reaching eligible students.
- Meeting with the WDE's State Transition Consultant on a monthly basis to discuss challenges, address deficits, and to support each program to best serve students.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION (SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION 614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;

C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;

E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND

F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A

PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK COMPENSATED  
AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

The MOU between DVR and WDE is currently undergoing revisions to ensure that it is meeting all of the requirements of Section 612(a)(12) of the IDEA and Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act. This is expected to be finalized by May 31, 2024. The current MOU was enacted on 11/2021.

*A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;*

Designate a contact person at WDE and DWS/DVR to coordinate joint training and technical assistance programs and determine the lead agency to offer assistance. These designees will ensure timely notice of such training is provided to each agency and the LEAs as appropriate.

Provide consultation and technical assistance to LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities prior to the student exiting school. Consultation and technical assistance will include preparation and completion of IPE's, Section 504 Plans, and any other plans created for the student that lead to post-secondary vocational outcomes.

Provide training, consultation, and technical assistance to LEAs on policies, procedures, and best practices when working with students with disabilities. Training, consultations, and technical assistance will cover topics such as: when to refer students to DWS/DVR; eligibility for services and planning for the post-secondary transition; informed choice; and the scope of vocational rehabilitation services. WDE offers technical assistance for districts that do not meet 100% compliance on Indicator 13. This technical assistance will increase depending on what tier of intervention the district is determined to need. These are offered in phone conferences, emails, video conferences and online videos. WDE offers virtual trainings which are recorded for all LEAs on transition services. DWS / DVR offers in-person, phone, print, and virtual platforms for information on programs, and consultation / technical assistance for LEAs. DVR will provide WDE with training videos to be made available to LEA's in need of guidance.

*B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*

Per the Mou agreement with WDE, both DVR and WDE staff will facilitate the identification of students with disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services as early as possible during the transition planning process. This includes students who are eligible for the purposes of Section 504, incarcerated or institutionalized, or at risk of dropping out of high school. Both agencies will assist in career and vocational planning and facilitate transitioning from an IEP to an IPE and collaborate where appropriate to develop an individualized plan for employment that takes into consideration the student's individualized education program or Section 504 services if applicable and in a timely manner prior to the student exiting the school setting as required by 34 CFR 361.45. Under DVR policy, an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) is developed for students and youth with disabilities within 90 days of eligibility and before they leave high school. DVR staff are trained to develop IPEs based on the Projected Post-

School Employment Outcome for the students, which includes utilizing the informed choice of the student or youth with a disability eligible for the VR program, noting that the IPE may be amended during the career development process; and that the IPE must be revised to a specific vocational goal once the career development process is complete.

*C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provision for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;*

The current pending MOU agreement between DVR and WDE includes the roles and responsibilities of each agency for providing transition and Pre-ETS services. This MOU agreement outlines how the agencies will collaborate to provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS services for eligible students with disabilities who need these services as per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) signed into law in 2014. Pre-ETS core services include: job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences provided in a competitive, integrated environment, to the maximum extent possible; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education; workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and instruction on self-advocacy. These PreETS services, which also include auxiliary aids or services to access or participate in pre-employment transition services, may be provided to students who meet pre-employment transition eligibility requirements and in cooperation with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

DVR will coordinate with local education agencies (LEAs) for the provision of vocational services whenever possible (i.e., vocational assessments, career exploration, job shadowing, vocational guidance, rehabilitation counseling, and work experience) for eligible students in accordance with an approved IPE. LEAs are responsible for providing and paying for any transition services that is considered special education or related services necessary ensuring FAPE, as required under IDEA. Additionally, nothing under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing a LEA's obligation to provide transition services under IDEA. Pre-employment transition services and transition services can be both vocational rehabilitation services under the VR program and special education or related services under IDEA. Therefore, decisions as to which agency, the VR agency or LEA, is responsible for providing and/or paying for pre-employment transition services or transition services considered to be both a special education (or related service) or VR service must be made at the State level. If the LEAs ordinarily provides any of the Pre-ETS services to its students, the LEAs should not cease providing the service simply because the service could be provide as a Pre-ETS service under the Rehabilitation Act by DVR.

DVR will provide the five (5) required Pre-Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible and eligible students, including job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on enrollment opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. In addition to the five (5) required services, Pre-Employment Transition Services also include four (4) coordination activities which include:

- Attending individualized education program meetings for students with disabilities when invited;
- Working with local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment, and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships and;

- Working with schools, including those carrying out activities under Section 614(d) of the IDEA, to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services and;
- When invited, attend person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

If funds are available after providing the five (5) required Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the four (4) coordinated services, DWS/DVR may fund through vendor services or provide internally the provisions of authorized activities as follows:

- Implementing effective strategies that increase independent living and inclusion in their communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
- Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual and significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
- Providing training to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition staff, and others supporting students with disabilities;
- Disseminating information on innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to implement pre-employment transition services;
- Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under IDEA;
- Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel;
- Developing model transition demonstration projects;
- Establishing or supporting multi-state or regional partnerships that involve States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or others; and
- Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of those who are traditionally underserved.

*D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;*

DVR and WDE will develop and implement a statewide marketing and outreach plan designed to engage all stakeholders, including students, parents, advocates, teachers and faculty, administrators, employers, and community and neighborhood organizations in identifying students with Disabilities who are eligible for services under this MOU.

Both agencies will encourage LEAs and regional DWS/DVR district offices to participate in local activities that provide information on DWS/DVR services, eligibility, and application procedures to Students with Disabilities and their parents and advocates. These outreach activities may include: parent/teacher conferences, career fairs or special projects targeted toward

traditionally underserved groups of students and include agreements at the local level that reflect this agreement to ensure the district/school referral of students and cooperation.

*E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 C.F.R. part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment and*

Per the MOU, neither DVR nor WDE shall consider subminimum wage employment for students with disabilities as regulated in Section 511 (34 CFR 397) and will not enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage. Joint monitoring facilitated by WDE and DWS / DVR to ensure that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an agreement with an employer to offer subminimum wages.

*F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability are engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.*

Per the MOU, neither DVR nor WDE shall consider subminimum wage employment for students with disabilities as regulated in Section 511 (34 CFR 397) and will not enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage. Joint monitoring facilitated by WDE and DWS / DVR to ensure that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an agreement with an employer to offer subminimum wages.

#### K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

DVR will continue to promote the dual customer approach for DVR services. DVR will continue to offer training to all staff on best practices for employer engagement and track attendance and completion. This will serve as the foundation for enhanced employer engagement in all communities within the state. Additionally, DVR will continue to provide the following:

- Employer outreach in each community, including attendance at local Chamber of Commerce events and other business-focused groups.
- Providing consultative services to businesses, including support with ADA, Service Animals, and other disability-specific questions.
- Continuing to engage in outreach and job development by both DVR staff and CRP's to educate employers on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, including Pre-ETS students.
- Continuing to educate employers on fiscal benefits of hiring people with disabilities, including the WOTC tax breaks and others.

- Attending local job fairs to network with employers in their respective communities and to provide information on the benefits of working with DVR.
- Facilitating local and state-wide nominations/awards for businesses that are supportive of people with disabilities.
- Continually working to maintain relationships with businesses by periodic check-ins and providing relevant information that could assist them.
- Recruit business owners to participate in the State Rehabilitation Council and other groups to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Providing information via social media and other outlets that is relevant to businesses and people with disabilities.
- VR will continue to work with employers and partners to develop quality employment site options for Pre-ETS clients to participate in Work-based Learning Experiences, to gain specific skills and knowledge pertaining to the career they are interested in exploring.
- VR will continue to work with DWS agency partners and employers to develop opportunities for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and placements for individuals, including students with disabilities.

#### L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

#### **Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services Program**

The Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services Program coordinates and cooperates with numerous federal, state, and local agencies and programs to provide services to people with communication impairments.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Wyoming Legislature gave the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) administrative authority over the Wyoming Telecommunication Relay Service, also known as Wyoming Relay. The legislation established a special fee as the method of funding. DVR, through a competitive bid process, has awarded contracts to telecommunications relay service providers and oversees the contracts. DVR also works cooperatively with the Federal Communications Commission, the Wyoming Public Service Commission, local exchange carriers, and radio common carriers to ensure that Wyoming Relay provides quality telecommunications relay service for conversations between people who use specialized telecommunications equipment, which may include text telephones and people who use the standard telephone network. Wyoming Relay meets or exceeds all operational, technical, and functional federal and state standards.

The legislation establishing Wyoming Relay also created a committee on telecommunications services for the communications impaired. The seven members of the committee are appointed



by the Governor. DVR collaborates with this consumer-based committee to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of current services, determine the need for new services, develop marketing and outreach plans, establish the rate of the special fee, and determine equipment needs for the telecommunications equipment distribution program.

Wyoming Relay works cooperatively with DVR staff, phone companies, independent living centers, Wyoming Department of Education outreach consultants, special education teachers, consumer groups, assistive technology service providers, public health agencies, and senior citizen centers to provide information and training on obtaining and using specialized telecommunications equipment, including wireless devices, accessibility features and apps, text telephones, amplified telephones, and telephone signaling devices for consumers with communication impairments. Training is customized to the needs of the audience and may include how to find and use interpreters. This training is also provided to individuals, students, businesses, organizations, and city, county, state, and federal agencies. Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services also has developed a specialized training program and works cooperatively with local and state law enforcement agencies. Public safety dispatchers are trained to ensure 911 emergency access for callers using text telephones, real-time text, video relay service, captioned telephones, and other specialized equipment and services. All peace officers attending the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy receive training to ensure they provide accessible services to individuals with communication impairments. Over the past year, Wyoming Relay has continued to collaborate with the Wyoming State Museum to offer digital skills training, including training on accessibility features and apps for individuals with disabilities to senior citizens in the Cheyenne area. Wyoming Relay provided suggestions and feedback to the Wyoming Business Council as part of the planning process for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program and the Digital Equity Act Program.

DVR works with the Wyoming Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (Registry) to ensure that all known interpreters in the state receive a form jointly developed by DVR and Registry that serves as a tool for assessing the skill level of interpreters. DVR collects the completed forms from interpreters, verifies interpreters' credentials, and then compiles information interpreters choose to make public on a list of interpreters. This list is distributed to the general public, individuals, businesses, organizations, and governmental agencies. Information on upcoming interpreter training opportunities is disseminated to all interpreters on the list. DVR participated and collaborated in Governor Gordon's assessment of current service provisions, challenges, and service gaps for Wyoming citizens who are Deaf or hard of hearing. One of the recommendations resulting from this assessment was to hire a state interpreter/interpreter coordinator to provide direct interpreting services to state agencies, to coordinate contract interpreters and to further assess the needs, barriers, and utilization of interpreter services. A budget request for a full-time-equivalent (FTE) interpreter/interpreter coordinator has been submitted to the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC).

Additionally, a Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services consultant is available to work with hearing-impaired students at the request of students, parents, school personnel, Wyoming Department of Education outreach consultants, or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

### **Wyoming Institute for Disabilities/Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources**

VR works with the University of Wyoming's Institute for Disabilities (WIND) and the University's Assistive Technology Resources Center (WATR) to provide assessments, demonstrations, training and other supports for clients that require assistive technology in order to provide quality comprehensive services.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

DVR does not have any agreements with the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

DVR's Program Consultants are working to identify all youth that may qualify for services. They reach out to the local school districts, the Wyoming Boys' and Girls' School, juvenile corrections and other entities, including mental health agencies that work with youth. Their outreach is intended to provide information to those individuals who may be eligible for services to let them know that the DVR may be able to help them secure training and employment. The DVR also collaborates with WIOA youth programs, as well as Adult Education. Division counselors conduct outreach to adjudicated youth, homeless youth, and youth in treatment facilities. At present, these outreach efforts have not resulted in establishing cooperative agreements, but the DVR is open to such agreements in the future if the need is determined.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

In Wyoming, the contracting process available to all state agencies is regulated through the Wyoming Administration and Information Procurement/Purchasing Office. The link describing the contract process is located at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1otUIXc6kEvNgkzJpplaKnPW2VfvtFFJA/view>.

DVR uses these contracts for agency purchases only. None of these contracts are used to purchase services for any individual VR consumer, as these are purchased through the client authorization process.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has other formal and informal interagency arrangements and levels of cooperation.

**State Medicaid Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.** The Health Care Financing Division of the Wyoming Department of Health manages the Medicaid funds under this program.

In 1995, the DVR entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Division of Health Care Financing to increase collaboration between DVR and the Division of Developmental Disabilities on behalf of mutually eligible clients. This MOU is used to increase the use of funding available to the State for the vocational rehabilitation of individuals with severe disabilities, to move individuals who are enrolled in Developmental Disabilities transitional training programs to supported employment and other suitable employment outcomes, and to expand the number of individuals with severe disabilities served by DVR. The MOU has not been updated since then, but the mission of the two divisions has not changed. Two divisions cooperate to best use DVR funds and funds from the Medicaid waiver services to maximize benefits to the clients and the client's ability to obtain and maintain employment. The two divisions work to make appropriate referrals to either program. When a mutual client is present, services and the appropriate funding source (DVR funds or Waiver funds) are

coordinated and directed. The MOU also looks into the long-term support for the client to maintain employment and independence. DVR will be actively working to coordinate with the Division of Health Care Financing to create an updated MOU agreement that reflects the significant changes in healthcare and VR service delivery since the last MOU was signed in 1995.

DVR also collaborates with the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. The DVR Administrator maintains an active membership role on this Council to provide insight into how DVR can assist individuals as well as to learn about ways the DVR can do more. DVR staff present and participate in training that the Council conducts. Council staff present at DVR's annual in-service training.

#### 6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

In Wyoming, the State Agencies responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities are the Wyoming Department of Health Division of Healthcare Financing, and the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. DVR regularly collaborates with both entities. The DVR Administrator maintains an active membership role on the Council to provide insight into how DVR can assist individuals as well as how to improve partnerships. DVR staff also present and participate in training that the Council provides, and to reciprocate, the Council and Division of Healthcare Financing staff present at the DVR's annual in-service training.

#### 7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

The Wyoming Department of Health Behavior Health Division is the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with mental illness. In September 2007, DVR completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Health Behavioral Health Division (formerly Mental Health Substance Abuse Services Division) to provide more effective services to people with disabilities, in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This effort includes increased collaboration in evaluating, planning, and implementing supported employment services for persons with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and transition-age youth. Joint, biannual training focuses on these and other issues.

#### 8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Wyoming is fortunate to have two American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs (AIVRS), which have greatly improved access to vocational rehabilitation services for those Native Americans served by these AIVRS Programs. DVR has established an ongoing working relationship with the Northern Arapaho program. The Division has an assigned VR counselor to work with that project to assist them with co-enrolled clients.

Native American clients living on reservations have the choice of either being served by the AIVRS, the State Unit or jointly by both programs and DVR encourages clients to be served either by the AIVRS Program or jointly by both programs. The AIVRS Programs have a better understanding of the cultural and service-delivery barriers that exist on reservations. DVR does not conduct extensive outreach activities on the reservations as this function can more effectively be conducted by the AIVRS Programs. DVR focuses efforts on networking with the

AIVRS Programs to ensure that Native American clients have access to the full range of vocational rehabilitation services.

AIVRS does not offer Pre-ETS services and the local Wyoming DVR program provides Pre-ETS services to the following schools that have a high Native American population: Fort Washakie, Lander, Wyoming Indian, Arapaho, Riverton and St. Stephen's. DVR assisted with paying wages, coordination of student working schedules, self-advocacy support, job trainer support, and referral to additional community support. This collaboration provided students not only with valuable employment exploration opportunities, but also an introduction to DVR and AIVRS services through the lens of cultural understanding and humility.

This past year the relationship with DVR and the Eastern Shoshone tribe reached a higher level of collaboration of service being provided to Eastern Shoshone members, including more dually enrolled clients. The DVR counselor assigned to the Northern Arapaho schools was invited by the Northern Arapaho AIRVS administrator to participate in the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR). DVR has a formal MOU with each AIVRS Program and is working to update both agreements by September 30, 2025.

DVR and the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Business Council have an MOU agreement in place concerning rehabilitation services for Native Americans. DVR staff have offered to provide educational/training support to the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Business Council Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff. Eastern Shoshone staff have been invited to participate in the State Independent Living Council and DVR staff training events. DVR is working to update this MOU.

DVR and the Northern Arapaho Tribal Council have a written MOU in place concerning rehabilitation services for Native Americans. DVR staff have offered to provide educational/training support to the Northern Arapaho Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff. The Northern Arapaho staff have been invited to participate in the State Independent Living Council and DVR staff training events. DVR is working to update this MOU.

#### 9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

DVR continues to work to develop collaborative relationships with non-profit organizations across the state to help provide necessary services to support individuals with disabilities. These non-profit organizations include local Boys and Girls Clubs for Pre-ETS services and Volunteers of America for counseling and other employment-related supports for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VR works with private non-profit organizations across the state for job development and supported employment services.

#### ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

**The VR agency must select the "Edit" button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.**

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must include
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

The State Plan must include
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the

The State Plan must include
requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?

Yes

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT). AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2] AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.



ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN<sup>[5]</sup>, THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS<sup>[6]</sup>, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

<sup>[5]</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>[6]</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Nicky Harper

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

**To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the "Edit" button.**

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
<b>Name of Signatory</b>	Nicky Harper
<b>Title of Signatory</b>	DVR Administrator
<b>Date Signed</b>	05/16/2024

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

### Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	44.0%	50.7%	44.0%	50.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	35.6%	47.3%	35.6%	47.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,704	\$5,960	\$4,704	\$6,000
Credential Attainment Rate	26.8%	30.0%	26.8%	31.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	58.6%	40.0%	58.6%	44.8%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

### GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

#### EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that

provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

### **GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

#### **State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The first of four questions is:**

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

DVR's mission is "To advance opportunities for persons with disabilities to be employed and independent" and our vision is to "Assist individuals with disabilities in overcoming challenges to employment". WYDVR is committed to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State through collaboration, diversity and inclusion efforts. WYDVR is absolutely committed to ensuring equitable access and equitable participation in the project activities and the collaborative partners will hold each other accountable. WYDVR is intending to ensure equitable access to program services by increasing resources and services in underserved rural areas.

**2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?**

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The second of four questions is:**

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

Potential barriers that may impede equitable access for participants include transportation, community resources, and broadband internet. As identified by the 2022 WYDVR Comprehensive Needs Assessment, access to transportation remains the most pressing need, especially in the rural areas of Wyoming. Wyoming is a frontier state with public transportation limited to three larger communities. Participants may have difficulty accessing services due to geographic distances and/or lack of reliable local transportation. The mental health system throughout Wyoming is described as lacking throughout the state. Rural areas of the State often have little or no psychiatric care and therapeutic intervention is often reserved for individuals in crisis. Participants with mental health disabilities across the state may encounter delays in accessing appropriate services. The lack of statewide broadband internet connectivity in rural areas may also impede access for participants and stakeholders to DVR services. The societal shift to remote or virtual service delivery among multiple agencies and remote work during the pandemic makes connectivity a significant need for individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)** applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The third of four questions is:**

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

DVR proposes to address the barriers identified in a variety of ways. VR counselors are available in 16 field offices and multiple satellite offices. Telephone and virtual meetings are available for participants upon request, minimizing transportation limitations for services. Utilizing existing broadband access, within schools and libraries will allow participants will be able to access DVR services, including telehealth and web-based employment readiness training. DVR will further collaborate with local communities and partner agencies to continue to increase local broadband access in rural areas. DVR is working to develop vendor recruiting, monitoring and training in an effort to develop more qualified CRPs to provide services.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)** applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The final of four questions is:**

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

DVR is actively working to address these barriers through counselor training and increasing service delivery methods. Telephone and virtual meetings are available at this time and will continue to be offered. DVR is working to develop vendor recruiting, monitoring and training in an effort to develop more qualified CRPs to provide services and is planning to have this in place by the end of PY23.

## **EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES**

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

### **GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants**

#### **State applicants must respond to the following four questions:**

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The first of four questions is:**

*Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.*

DVR's mission is "To advance opportunities for persons with disabilities to be employed and independent," and our vision is to "Assist individuals with disabilities in overcoming challenges to employment". WYDVR is committed to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with Most Significant Disabilities who require Supported Employment services through collaboration, diversity and inclusion efforts. WYDVR is absolutely committed to ensuring equitable access and equitable participation in the project activities and the collaborative partners will hold each other accountable. WYDVR is intending to ensure equitable access to program services by increasing resources and services in underserved rural areas.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

**Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)** (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

**State applicants must respond to four questions.**

**The second of four questions is:**

*Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?*

Potential barriers that may impede equitable access for clients with Most Significant Disabilities (MSD) who require Supported Employment (SE) services include transportation, community resources, and broadband internet. As identified by the 2022 WYDVR Comprehensive Needs Assessment, access to transportation remains the most pressing need, especially in the rural areas of Wyoming. Wyoming is a frontier state with public transportation limited to three larger communities. Participants may have difficulty accessing services due to geographic distances and/or lack of reliable local transportation. The mental health system throughout Wyoming is described as lacking throughout the state. Rural areas of the State often have little or no psychiatric care and therapeutic intervention is often reserved for individuals in crisis. Participants with mental health disabilities across the state may encounter delays in accessing appropriate services. Lack of available CRPs to provide supported employment services continues to be a challenge. The lack of statewide broadband internet connectivity in rural areas



may also impede access for participants and stakeholders to DVR services. The societal shift to remote or virtual service delivery among multiple agencies and remote work during the pandemic makes connectivity a significant need for individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.

**3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?**

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The third of four questions is:***

*Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?*

DVR proposes to address the barriers identified in accessing SE services in a variety of ways. VR counselors are available in 16 field offices and multiple satellite offices. Telephone and virtual meetings are available for participants upon request, minimizing transportation limitations for services. Utilizing existing broadband access within schools and libraries will allow participants to access DVR services, including telehealth and web-based employment readiness training. DVR will further collaborate with local communities and partner agencies to continue to increase local broadband access in rural areas. DVR is working on policies and procedures for vendor recruiting, monitoring and training in an effort to develop more qualified CRPs to provide SE services.

**4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?**

***Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.***

*GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package*

***State applicants must respond to four questions.***

***The final of four questions is:***

*What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?*

DVR is actively working to address these barriers through counselor training and increasing service delivery methods. Telephone and virtual meetings are available at this time and will continue to be offered. DVR is working to develop vendor recruiting, monitoring and training in

an effort to develop more qualified CRPs to provide Supported Employment services and is planning to have this in place by the end of PY23.

## VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. <sup>24</sup> If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

#### ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

#### ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments

on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.4%	75.4%	75.4%	75.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.9%	78.0%	75.9%	78.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,333.00	8,200.00	7,333.00	8,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	70.2%	73.4%	70.2%	73.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.1%	81.5%	75.1%	81.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

**ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - DISLOCATED PROGRAM  
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	84.8%	87.2%	84.8	87.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	81.3	83.8%	81.3	83.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	12,735	13,000	12,735	13,000
Credential Attainment Rate	76.1	76.1%	76.1	76.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	78.2	83.0%	78.2	83.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

1

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

**ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.4	74.4%	74.4	74.4%



Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.8	75.8%	75.8	75.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,479	3,643	3,479	3,643
Credential Attainment Rate	54.0	56.6%	54.0	56.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.7	73.0%	67.7	73.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

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*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### WAGNER-PEYSER ACT - WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the

core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	62.4	64.7%	62.4	64.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.9	61.9%	61.9	61.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	5,827	6,000	5,827	6,000
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM - ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such

performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	46.0%	59.0%	46.5%	60.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	44.0%	65.0%	44.5%	65.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$3,550	\$4,100
Credential Attainment Rate	59.0%	70.0%	60.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	59.0%	52.0%	60.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMBINED OR GENERAL) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the

first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan’s approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

### Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	44.0%	50.7%	44.0%	50.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	35.6%	47.3%	35.6%	47.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,704	\$5,960	\$4,704	\$6,000
Credential Attainment Rate	26.8%	30.0%	26.8%	31.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	58.6%	40.0%	58.6%	44.8%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (BLIND) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan’s approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)				

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)				
Credential Attainment Rate				
Measurable Skill Gains				
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

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*The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.*

#### ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance

#### OTHER APPENDICES

One response was received for public comment. The letter, as well as the response, are attached.

Public Comment

Response