

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Title I



North Carolina Modification for Local Area Workforce Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plans

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Land of Sky Regional Council
Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
339 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806-2088

Introduction and Instructions

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the chief local elected official (CLEO), a comprehensive four-year plan. Comprehensive Four-Year Plans were submitted in May 2020.

In North Carolina, annually, each Local Area WDB, in consultation with the chief local elected official, is to provide updates to the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan. The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2023 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024, and will include required current local policies. The Local Area Plan will support the alignment strategy described in the 2020-2024 NC Unified State Plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the NC Unified State Plan. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's mission is to ensure North Carolinians are better educated, healthier, and have more money in their pockets so that they can live more abundant, purposeful lives. The cornerstone to achieving this goal is to help people get good-paying jobs to support themselves and their families. Through NC Job Ready, Governor Cooper's workforce development initiative, North Carolina is working to build a stronger and better workforce. NC Job Ready is built on three core principles: education and skills attainment are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system. In addition, Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.

Through its strategic planning efforts, the NCWorks Commission developed a vision and mission for North Carolina's Workforce System. This vision is to build a job-ready workforce to strengthen North Carolina companies, attract new businesses, and ensure our state can adapt to a changing economy. The mission of the state's workforce development system is to ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity, and to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.

Federal and State Requirements for Local Administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Local Area WDBs should reference the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014. Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>.

North Carolina policy information is available at: <https://www.nccommerce.com/jobs-training/workforce-professionals-tools-resources/workforce-policies>. Local Area WDBs should reference the North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan at: https://files.nc.gov/nccommerce/documents/files/WIOA_North-Carolina_2020-2023-Unified-State-Plan_2022-Modification_Published-June-2022.pdf.

Local Area Plan Submission and Due Date

The Local Area Plan must be submitted through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE), the Division's web-based financial system.

The Program Year 2023 Plan is Due: May 5, 2023

Each attachment must be submitted and labeled separately in either Word or PDF format. Attachments that are not submitted separately will not be accepted. Forms requiring original signatures may use DocuSign® (or similar) and may be uploaded in WISE.

If original signatures are obtained, forms may be mailed (and must be uploaded in WISE) to the Local Area WDB's assigned Planner at:

Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

I. Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) Overview

The Local Area WDB Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). It is important that this section remains current during the Program Year. Updates should be submitted to the Local Area WDB's assigned DWS Planner when changes occur.

In the first section and anywhere else in the Local Area Plan, please include the appropriate salutation along with Titles such as Dr., The Honorable, Chairperson, and Judge.

1. Provide the **Local Area WDB's** official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the WIOA or, if not a Consortium, in the formal request for Local Area designation.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Consortium.

- If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name Consortium Agreement.
A copy of the Consortium Agreement for the Mountain Area Workforce Development Consortium is attached in WISE.
- If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name Local Area designation letter.

2. Provide the **Local Area WDB's** official name.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (MAWDB)

- If the Local Area WDB officially changed its name, please attach a copy of the Status of Incorporation, attorney's letter, or another document. If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation. **Not Applicable.**

3. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number, and email address of the **Local Area WDB Director**.

Name: Mr. Nathan Ramsey	Title & Salutation: Executive Director
Organization Name: Land of Sky Regional Council	Address: 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806
Phone Number: 828-251-7473	Email Address: nathan@landofsky.org

4. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, phone number, and email address of the **Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO)**.

Name: Mr. Jake Dalton	Elected Title & Salutation: Commission Vice Chair
Government Affiliation: Transylvania County Board of Commissioners	Address: 101 South Broad Street, Brevard, North Carolina 28712
Phone Number: 828-884-3271	Email Address: jake.dalton@transylvaniacounty.org

5. Provide the name, title, business name, address, phone number, and email address of the **individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO)**, if different than question 4.

Name: Ms. Trisha Hogan	Title & Salutation: Clerk to the Board
Business Name: Transylvania County Board of Commissioners	Address: 101 South Broad Street, Brevard, North Carolina 28712
Phone Number: 828-884-1936	Email Address: trisha.hogan@transylvaniacounty.org

6. Provide the name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds**. This is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)].

Name: Ms. Patricia Rosenberg	Title & Salutation: Finance Director
Organization Name: Land of Sky Regional Council	Address: 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806
Phone Number: 828-251-7470	Email Address: patricia@landofsky.org

7. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official**.

Name: Ms. Christina Giles	Title & Salutation: Administration and Communications Director
Organization Name: Land of Sky Regional Council	Address: 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806
Phone Number: 828-251-7431	Email Address: christina@landofsky.org

8. Attach a copy of the **Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent’s organizational chart** with an ‘effective as of date’

- Name document: *Administrative Entity Name Organizational Chart*. **A copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent’s Organizational Chart is attached in WISE.**

9. Provide the **Administrative Entity’s Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** number and assurance that the ‘System for Award Management’ (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website <https://sam.gov/content/home> to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].

HS8MVFRAHYH57. The ‘System for Award Management’ (SAM) registration is current as Council Land-of-Sky Regional.

10. Provide the name of the **Local Area WDB’s Equal Opportunity Officer** who shall be responsible for assuring that discrimination does not occur in its programs or projects. (CPS 10-2021)

Ms. Melissa Wright, Workforce Operations Director

Composition of the Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Area WDB Membership Requirements have been provided as a reference at [Appendix D](#).

11. Provide each **Local Area WDB members’** name, business title, business name and address, phone number and email address on the provided form. The first block is reserved to identify the Local Area WDB chairperson (*form provided*). Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)].

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Board List*. **The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board’s Membership List is attached in WISE. The block on the form provided, certifying compliance with required WIOA Mountain Area Workforce Development Board business nomination process has been checked and the Board is in compliance with this requirement.**

If a Local Area WDB list is not in compliance, please provide the current list and state the expected date that a compliant list will be provided (detailing vacant positions). Use and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names except to clarify those with multiple categories and do not count those names twice. Identify any names representing a dual category with an asterisk (*).

Notes:

- *Please complete the entire form. Check the block on the form provided certifying compliance with required WIOA Local Area WDB business nomination process.*

12. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the Local Area WDB in compliance with WIOA Section 107.

The Workforce Development Board has a process for ensuring that viable local business representatives are appointed to the Board. When a private sector Board vacancy occurs, the Workforce Director works with the relevant business association in the county, whose contingency has the vacancy, to develop a recommendation for a knowledgeable private sector representative. The recommendation from the business association includes someone with executive level experience with a local business and optimally, who resides within the county. Once a recommendation has been made to the Workforce Director, the recommended business representative is contacted and encouraged to apply to the County Commission for membership on the Local Workforce Development Board. It is the responsibility of the County Commission to approve the applicant for Board membership and to determine the length of term of service of three years if the vacancy is for an expired term or to fulfill an unexpired term.

The Chief Local Elected Official must establish by-laws consistent with applicable local procedures, state, and federal laws to include WIOA Final Rules and Regulations 679.310(g). The Local Area WDB shall submit by-laws that clearly demonstrate all WIOA and North Carolina required elements described in [Appendix A](#). Additional by-laws guidance/template and electronic meeting formats have been provided in [Appendix B](#).

13. Attach the Local Area WDB By-Laws including date adopted/amended. By-Laws must include the required elements found in [Appendix A](#).

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name By-Laws*. **A copy of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's Bylaws, including date adopted, amended, and required elements, is attached in WISE.**

14. To demonstrate that the attached Local Area WDB By-Laws comply, complete By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart (form provided). **The Mountain Area's Bylaws Required Elements Crosswalk Chart is attached in WISE.**

Sunshine Provision – The Local Area WDB shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Local Area WDB, including information regarding the Local Area Plan prior to submission of the Local Area Plan, and regarding membership, the designation and certification of one-stop operators, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, and on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Local Area WDB. [WIOA Section 107(e)]

15. Describe how the Local Area WDB will make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public. If stating the Local Area Plan will be on the Local Area WDB website, provide a link. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

The Mountain Area’s Draft Local Area Program Year 2023-2024 Plan Update will be posted to the website of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board at www.mountainareaworks.org on the resource tab and to the website of Land of Sky Regional Council at www.landofsky.org on the latest news tab. This is also linked to social media, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram. The Local Area Plan would be distributed via electronic mail to the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Distribution Lists, to the Land of Sky Regional Council Board Distribution List, local elected officials and to the local media outlets for public comments once the Draft Plan has been submitted in WISE, the system shared with the state for viewing documents. Public comment is for a period of 30-days, after which time, based on feedback from the Division of Workforce Solutions and public comments, if any, the final Program Year 2023-2024 Plan Update would be uploaded to WISE including any comments that represent disagreement with the Plan.

Public Comment – The Local Area WDB shall make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed Local Area Plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Area Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Local Area Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

16. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date.’ Include position titles and names.

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name Organizational Chart. **A copy of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board’s Organizational Chart attached in WISE.**

17. Complete the following chart for the PY2023 Local Area WDB’s planned meeting schedule to include, date, time, and location or virtual link. (Expand form as needed)

Date	Time	Location (include address and room # or virtual link)
August 22, 2023	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting
October 24, 2023	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting
December 2023	TBD- Not a regular meeting.	TBD
January 23, 2024	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting
March 26, 2024	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting
May 28, 2024	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting
June 25, 2024	3:00 PM	Land of Sky Regional Council 339 Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806 Virtual Component Included Link will be provided prior to meeting

Note: All Local Area WDB meetings shall be held in accessible facilities. All materials and discussions should be available in an accessible format upon request as indicated under North Carolina specific requirements detailed in [Appendix A](#).

18. Attach a copy of the signed ‘Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions’ Form (*form provided*). [Required by the Regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 2 CFR 180, participants’ responsibilities.]

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Certification Form*. **The signed Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and other Responsibility Matters with Adobe-Sign is attached in WISE.**

Documents must have the original signature or DocuSign® (or similar) of the Administrative Entity signatory official. If using original signatures, mail the signed Certification form to the assigned DWS Planner at:

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

19. Submit the original Local Area WDB and Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Signatory Page (*form provided*), bearing the original signatures of the CLEO(s) and the Local Area WDB Chairperson, and attach a copy of the signed document if not using DocuSign® (or similar).

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Signatory Page*. **The signed Mountain Area Workforce Development Board signatory page and Chief Local Elected Official Signatory Page with Adobe Sign is uploaded to WISE.**

If using original signatures, mail the Signatory Page to the assigned DWS Planner at:

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

II. Local Area WDB Strategic Planning

The Local Area WDB is required to keep the Local Area Plan up to date and fluid as events and funding changes occur which may require local area responses. Local Area Plans will require annual modification. North Carolina has implemented integrated services delivery with an enhanced emphasis on regional planning and services. This approach is consistent with federal, state, and regional initiatives and opportunities. North Carolina's workforce development system includes businesses, organizations, agencies, employed and unemployed persons, training and educational institutions, adults, and youth. To enhance services to all constituents, aligning workforce development planning and services with regional labor markets is both effective and productive. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's NC Job Ready Initiative is built on three core principles: education and skills development are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system.

Locally, WDBs are creatively working to address the new challenges of job growth and expansion. Employers in Local Area WDB areas continue to have a shortage of lower-wage, entry-level and middle-skilled level workers. As a Local Area WDB and workforce system, Local Area WDBs are leveraging resources and engaging in new partnerships that include the business community, economic developers, chambers of commerce, NCWorks Career Centers, community colleges, public schools, and community partners. Working together, Local Area WDBs are paving the way for an even stronger economy through sector partnerships and career pathways initiatives.

1. Provide a description of the Local Area WDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an industry-driven, educated, and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Include goals relating to performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance and how it aligns with regional economic growth, industry sectors, and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's focus is on growth sectors of our local and regional economic and development, including the Certified Career Pathways of Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Skilled Trades and Construction, and Information Technology. The opportunities in the local career pathways open many positions to higher wages with training. The career pathways are also the way to economic self-sufficiency with manufacturing to make products, healthcare to care for the community, hospitality and tourism to bring opportunities and money into the area, construction and skilled trades to build the community, energy to be self-sufficient and information technology to communicate. The sector that is a large part of the plan is the commercial driver's license training implemented at the college so individuals can move the product in and out of the region. This is one of the most needed avenues currently. We are enrolling many in this field which will not only help our region but can assist across the nation with long hauls. This is also a much higher wage than local deliveries if an individual is interested. The Board is working with the Disconnected Youth Task Force in the region to combat barriers for youth. Barriers such as childcare, transportation and housing are a huge roadblock to working for adults also. History has shown this to always be a struggle that we will continue to fight. This is a constant conversation that we must work on frequently to be able to assist with ongoing

struggles. The Board members are also dedicated to working on this with the leadership of the Board Chair. The Youth Committee is establishing opportunities and goals to be able to include the community in this endeavor. Land of Sky is implementing a Vanpool program that will assist the community in the transportation sector. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's mission is to provide employers and job seekers a fully integrated system of employment, education, and training services for the purpose of developing the economic strength, development, and global competitiveness of the local area. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's is consistent with the policies of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the NCWorks Commission's Strategic Plan, as well as working with other Boards on the emphasis of upgrading the skills of the under skilled population of the regions, and barriers including the Youth population.

Our Performance Measures that are negotiated each year by the State show us where we are at with employment, credentials, measurable skill gains and median earnings. Credential attainment is important for the job seeker to gain higher wages and the employer to obtain skilled employees. Economic growth and economic self-sufficiency are especially important for a community and its individuals to thrive and raise a family. As of February 2023, unemployment was 3.0%. This shows that everyone that needs and wants to work is working. But this Board is not giving up on assisting employers in hiring, with job fairs and job seekers that want to train and work.

The Youth are a huge part of this community, and we are working with them, including students with barriers and disabilities, in co-enrollment as adults, comprehensive guidance and counseling, employment, soft skills, job search, job shadowing, resume building, career search, interview practice, apprenticeships, on the job training, paid work experience, and any other way we can serve them. The co-enrollment with the Youth and Adult Groups has helped more Youth in training for careers. We have the virtual aspect implemented into our program and will continue to use this virtual aspect in reaching out to everyone including digital literacy customers who prefer this technology and are more responsive to it than other options. We will continue to reach out to the Limited English Deficient, the Adults, the Youth, the Dislocated Workers, Disabled, Homeless, Veterans and anyone else that we can offer our services to help our community. The Youth and Disabled have been very responsive to the virtual platforms, and we will continue to offer these in addition to in person services. The virtual platform has been extremely useful to persons with disabilities, especially if their disability has been due to mobility issues or anxiety and they may be searching for remote work. The Board with our Contractors is working in conjunction with broadband programs for the students who are homeless or have a home but cannot afford internet or computers. Our Healthcare growth has continued unabated as healthcare needs expand due to an aging and growing population base in the region. Through our 50+ program, we can reach out to many experienced workers to assist in their needs. Mission Health is the largest private employer in Western North Carolina but with many issues and lack of interest in the medical field, they are running the hospital with travel nurses so the Board is trying to leverage as much interest as we can in marketing through our Career Centers and job fairs. The lack of interest in employment currently also affects the nursing homes, daycares, and schools which we are also trying to assist with through our Career Centers, and through job fairs. Hospitality and Tourism, including restaurants, has taken a turn for the worse with the lack of interest in employment. They are faced with cutting back on hours and days. We are assisting all employers and job seekers to provide support to bring back the economy in our community with diversity, equity and inclusion as much and as soon as we can by applying for all grants we possibly can to obtain funding to reach out to more employers and

individuals, such as reentry, substance disorder with assistance in many ways such as supportive services, barriers, staffing, training, work experience, and so forth. We have recently obtained the American Rescue Plan Act Grant to assist with the reentry, substance disorder and small businesses with 25 or less employees that were harder hit with economy issues.

2. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive service for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Local Area WDB will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable. Include how these strategies will be a result of regional economic and employer-driven priorities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(3)]

The core providers for Mountain Area Workforce Development Board include Asheville Buncombe Technical College and Blue Ridge Community College, Human Resource Development, Adult Basic Education, English Language Learners and Literacy, Goodwill Industries with training and employment readiness. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board works to expand access to eligible individuals, especially those with barriers by educating and cross training Career Center staff on each program for purpose, eligibility requirements, goals, credentials, measurable skill gains, educating staff on barriers and referral sources, assistance for food, housing, clothing, transportation, child care, mental health, physical health, domestic violence, reentry, substance use, basic skills, disabilities, and cross-agency marketing of offerings and services such as the Disconnected Youth Task Force, and cross-agency marketing of Career Pathways and enrollment in core programs, along with co-enrollment and offering on the job training, and work experience opportunities for eligible individuals completing core programs. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has convened career sector meetings with the P20 Council and other partners who can develop postsecondary credentials aligned with Career Pathways. The sectors identified for Career Pathways include Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Skilled Trades and Construction and Information Technology. Based on sector strategies in the high demand sectors of the local economy, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board will work with local education agencies, community colleges, NCWorks Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Skills programs and Literacy Councils, veterans' services programs, MyFutureNC, Jobs for NC Graduates, P20 Council and apprenticeship programs to develop Career Pathways for in demand occupations. P20 Council recently obtained a Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities Grant to facilitate the alignment of workforce development efforts with existing economic development strategies, partnerships, job opportunities and economic vitality. Mountain Area Workforce Development Board will expand access to employment and training programs by using the NCWorks Career Centers to provide recruitment, screening, referral, and pre-hire training services for employers who are hiring in the growth sectors of the economy. This process of recruitment, screening, and referral for high demand occupations provides opportunities for NCWorks Career Center staff to identify clients who have an interest in an occupation but may not have the necessary skill set to acquire employment at that time. This process can also be used to identify clients who have specific skill deficits

or lack the necessary credentials to secure employment in the field. We must remember that it is not just freedom to work, but freedom to learn, and we want to make this possible for as many in our community as we can. This helps the employee obtain higher wages and the employer to have a better skilled employee. The Board is working to incorporate youth apprenticeships, job shadowing and on the job training for youth to experience work as much as possible. This leads to a better career for the individual in a more rapid time limit with higher wages. In addition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds there are other sources of support at the colleges such as Pell grants, State Employee Credit Union, Geer, Cares Act, and private scholarships, including employer assistance, for short-term training, and other sources of financial aid can be used to help interested jobseekers pay for the occupational skills courses and credentials that are necessary for employment. There is also on the job training and for employees to learn more there is incumbent worker training. The Board has recently obtained the American Rescue Plan Act Grant to be able to assist businesses with 25 or less employees, as well as the reentry and substance disorder grants. Each of the NCWorks Career Centers has lists of local support service providers. Access to childcare services is still a major challenge because of scheduling, costs, waiting list for services and the lack of employees. Satisfactory alternatives are only available to those clients who have trusted family members or friends in close proximity to their homes or workplaces. The Board acquired in the past an Innovation Grant for Early Childhood Development which helped support this issue in our community for a time until the recent economic issues. Land of Sky Regional Council received another grant for Early Childhood Development to continue to assist in this sector. The focus in this sector is to share more information and training opportunities with our partners and contractors to support more employers and job seekers in early childhood development and healthcare positions. Public transportation services are generally available in the cities of Asheville and Hendersonville. There are extremely limited transportation services for work opportunities available outside of the larger urban areas. Most of the Mountain Area region is rural with small towns and suburban communities, which are not accessible to public transportation services generally. Land of Sky Regional Council along with Mountain Area Workforce Development Board is continuing to work on encouraging large employers that have facilities in close proximity to one another to develop carpools for their employees. Employers can map the routes the employees use for driving to work and the addresses of other employees for possible opportunities for ride sharing. Land of Sky Regional Council is also working on a Vanpool so we may help more in this situation. The project could also be used for helping prospective new hires access transportation to work until they are able to purchase transportation. NCWorks Career Centers are the primary point of entry for adult job seekers that seek training and employment opportunities. NCWorks Online allows for job seekers to register remotely through the online portal in Wagner Peyser and Eligibility Explorer. NCWorks Online includes job postings from many private employment websites to offer the job seeker a more seamless job search opportunity. High school students in career and technical education programs can enter several pathways that usually include progression through the community college curriculum or continuing education programs. For adult job seekers who are considering a career transition or seeking to advance their skills and credentials in their chosen career field, the NCWorks Career Center is a good place to start. Also, there is incumbent worker training available through the Workforce Board for employers who would like to educate their employees in other areas of the business. Career counselors at the NCWorks Career Centers can provide job seekers with in-depth information about the skill requirements and credentials needed for successful entry into the career field. Career counselors will

also be able to provide clients with information on the availability of training courses and activities, appropriate work-based learning opportunities, labor market information about job demand and wages, assessments that will be useful in determining job skill weaknesses and strengths, and local employers who have job opportunities in the field. There is the virtual aspect to the Career Centers also and they can provide chat sessions with staff and virtual meetings along with virtual enrollment into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program.

3. Describe the Local Area WDB's use of each of the following initiatives: incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, layoff aversion, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other employer services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(B)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board plans to competitively procure On-the-Job Training Program for Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers. The size of the On-the-Job Training Program may fluctuate with funding. Starting in 2018, the Board offered a local incumbent worker training program called the Business Accelerator Grant. There was strong interest in this program, which was opened to applications one-two times per program year, depending on funding. In program year 2018, the Board approved 9 grants for a total of approximately \$62,000 and in program year 2019, the Board approved 7 grants for a total of approximately \$62,000. In 2020, there were grants approved but unable to start due to Covid. In 2021, we were able to engage in the Incumbent Worker Training again. In 2022, there were 12 grants approved for local funding awarded. The grants represent businesses in all the Career Pathways and business services. The funding amount can be up to \$10,000 per application and training must be completed within the program year. The Board publishes a Pre-award Questionnaire, Call for Submissions, Application Guidelines, and the Application on www.mountainareaworks.org, landofsky.org and through email communications. The Board in 2023 has obtained the American Rescue Plan Act Grant of \$904,000 for incumbent worker training and on the job training for small businesses. The Board will also receive another Business Service Grant this year for On-the-Job Training. The Board has certified NCWorks Career Pathways in Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Skilled Trades and Construction and Information Technology. Through periodic sector meetings, the Board works to maintain the relationships that were created during the development and implementation of the pathways and to discuss the challenges each sector faces in hiring the talent they need. The Board has implemented virtual platforms. These platforms will continue to be part of the customized training for staff, as we reach out to our businesses and residents in the community. This especially entices the digital literacy customers, disabled and youth customers to communicate and engage more.

4. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB coordinates workforce investment activities – including strategies enhancing services, promoting participation in training programs, and avoiding duplication of

services – carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board values our partnerships with adult basic skills programs and literacy councils in the region. Since three of the NCWorks Career Centers are located on community college campuses, adult basic skills programs are readily available and in proximity. Currently Human Resource Development classes are offered onsite which include the development of the job seeker’s communication skills. If the job seeker needs additional assistance, the individual will be referred to the Adult Literacy services at the nearby community college. The centers coordinate with the local area’s community colleges, various county literacy councils and related entities. Informal and formal referral processes are in place to facilitate this coordination. There is ongoing communication in the Local Area between the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, the Adult Education and Literacy programs at the community colleges, the Title II funded nonprofit organizations that provide literacy training and with the NCWorks Career Centers. The lack of appropriate literacy skills is a significant barrier to employment with Limited English Proficiency individuals, as well as adults who failed to acquire sufficient literacy skills during their educational experience. Services are constantly considered and researched for enhancement through feedback from the community, partners, and individuals. There is no duplication of services due to sharing the NCWorks site with other programs and through co-enrollment. The Board promotes participation in training programs through social media, career centers, meetings, and on our Board site and Council of Government site. We as the Board are committed to assisting in access to all of those in need.

5. Provide a description of (a) cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Local Area WDB and other local entities described in Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of service to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts to include cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108(b)(14)]

All Career Centers are required to provide auxiliary aids and accommodations to clients with disabilities upon request. Vocational Rehabilitation provides technical assistance in these and other areas to the NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area region. Vocational Rehabilitation and Career Center Business Services staff will share information on how to effectively collaborate with employers to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through communication and accessibility. These discussions occur on an ongoing basis and will be included in the memorandum of understanding. Staff are cross-trained so they may provide better service for all individuals. We work with other Boards to share information to assist other communities. Meetings are held periodically and when needed for technical assistance. Business Services work with employers to inform them of our programs, grants, Wagner Peyser, employer, and provider registration on NCWorks and make them aware of the NCCareers.org. The Board collaborates and coordinates with the community, Board members, career centers and partners on job fairs, career events, workshops, programs, and processes. The implementation of virtual platforms has increased the opportunity for individuals with disabilities. This includes the chat session, virtual meetings, and virtual enrollment. We

will continue these platforms and any other access to technology or information that we can to reduce barriers to all individuals so there is more equity, inclusion, diversity. Teamwork makes the dreamwork.

6. Provide a brief description of the actions the Local Area WDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Local Area WDB, consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission. [WIOA Section 108(b)(18)]

The Board bylaws read that members who retire or leave their positions of optimum policy or hiring authority with their businesses will be replaced, at the earlier date of the following, within one year or upon the expiration of their term. Private sector members must represent companies or sectors that hire for jobs that are high quality and jobs that require work relevant training for in demand occupations. Board members have been engaged in the development of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act consistently, regional, and local area strategic planning. This has helped them broaden and strengthen their understanding of the dynamic and diverse local economy, and they will become familiar with the accountability and performance expectations of the Workforce Development System in the region to assist in remaining a high performing Local Board. Board members serve on committees that involve executives and leaders from workforce partners and related organizations that serve both employers and jobseekers in the Local Area. The Board will work at a high level and provide guidance that will focus the workforce system on meeting the skill needs of the sectors they represent. In addition to the standing committees of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, most Board members are serving on one of three committee work groups representing Youth, Business Services and Work Based Learning. Each committee has their own goals each year and this year the main goals are for the Business Service Committee to engage with more employers and register them in NCWorks. The Work Based Learning Committee will work toward more opportunities. The Youth Committee will collaborate with the community to assist with barriers to employment. Board members are bringing their private sector experience in human resources to assist the work groups in developing strategies for each sector to develop the skilled talent needed with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Board members are also utilizing their industry contacts to bring additional business leaders to join in this effort as we develop our Local Area and regional workforce plans. Board members keep the workforce system looking forward and preparing clients for changes in the industry and economy. They provide insight concerning the skills that are required to adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Board members represent employers who are the largest employers in the region in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, energy, and in the process of certification are skilled trades, construction, and information technology. The Workforce Board contributes significantly to and reviews the effectiveness of sector strategies and Career Pathways developed by the staff and workforce partners. We continue to be highly involved with our Board members and economic development partners. We are sharing a series with our Board members beginning soon on barriers and those involved closest to trying to solve these issues along with the economic development partners.

7. Explain the strategic plan for how the region will respond to national emergencies (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) or weather disasters to serve victims (such as aversion activities) and utilize special grants efficiently throughout the recovery period.

All of the NC Works Career Centers have worked with numerous area companies to provide Rapid Response or Dislocated Worker Services, including the Trade Adjustment Act due to facility closings or downsizings. The Career Centers work in cooperation with the NC Division of Workforce Solutions. Rapid Response staff meet with management, listen to the needs of the company and together with company representatives, develop a system of services that can be provided to individuals before a layoff occurs. After a plan is developed with management, the partners meet and create an agenda for meeting with the employees and informing them about the services and support available. Each plan is tailored to the number of employees, their schedules, and their needs. Affected workers can receive the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Services while awaiting determination of eligibility for the Trade Adjustment Act services. Clients are co-enrolled in the Trade Adjustment Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provide the most services to the affected individuals possible. Rapid Response is advertised as one of the Career Centers Business Services, in part because of the work up front with the company to assist them preparing for the layoff or closing. Employment and training services and products are provided to Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification, or otherwise known as WARN, affected employees by the Local Area's NCWorks Career Centers, including registration in NCWorks Online, career planning, guidance and counseling, skill development, workshops, referral to jobs and Workforce training assistance. Mountain Area Workforce Development Board works collaboratively with the Local Area economic development organizations, NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, NC Community Colleges, Jobs for NC Graduates, and others in the region to provide the best services possible to dislocated workers. Aversion activities such as grants for on the job training, and incumbent worker training are maintained by the Business Services staff through the employers in the region to assist the employers in obtaining skilled employees, employee retainment, layoff aversion, and extensive training to better establish the local companies and their competitiveness. The National Dislocated Worker Grant that we obtained in 2020 - March 2023 has allowed the enrollment of many dislocated workers, including those from the closure of Continental. Due to the closing of one of the largest and oldest manufacturing plants, Evergreen, by June 9, 2023, we will receive another National Dislocated Worker Grant, along with the Southwestern region for a two-year period. We will do all we can continually for our region, surrounding regions and anyone we are able to assist.

8. Discuss the increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage individuals with barriers to include dislocated workers, disconnected youth/high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard-to-reach communities, individuals with disabilities to help reconnect the disconnected workforce. More importantly, clarify how success is measured.

The increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage individuals with barriers to help reconnect the disconnected workforce is being implemented with diversity, equity and inclusion training throughout the contractors, career centers and case managers who are cross trained. This will assist in better utilizing the program and its funding by providing much needed information to

individuals who are dislocated workers, disconnected youth, high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard-to-reach communities, individuals with disabilities and those with barriers. The local Disconnected Youth Task Force is a great partner with serving disconnected youth in conjunction with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The National Dislocated Worker Grant has been immensely helpful with addressing layoffs due to Covid and long-term unemployment. MyFutureNC with the P20 Council is collaborating with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in relation to post-secondary credentials. Jobs for NC Graduates is a good partner in assisting in career challenges and changes along with the NC Community College. Success will be measured by more enrollments, more credentials, more measurable skill gains and more employers in our community and region with the number of employees they need. Land of Sky Regional Council is preparing to implement a Vanpool Program in the community to assist with the transportation barrier. The Career Centers have access for the disabled to come into the center or go online for assistance with applying to many programs such as Trade Adjustment, Workforce, and food stamps through the Eligibility Explorer application that will capture individual information for staff to contact and process. The Local Board has applied for many grants and obtained them to serve as many individuals as we can and go out into hard-to-reach communities and reach out and connect to dropouts and homeless, so they are aware of what is offered. We have a long way to go with the lack of interest that individuals have in working now, but we will help all we can by partnering, marketing, job fairs, career center assistance, workshops, career events and anyway we need to reach out to those that need to know the opportunities that exist for them.

9. Provide an overview of how the region partners with NC Community Colleges, UNC institutions, and independent colleges in the local areas to prepare workers to succeed by using skills and education attainment with a focus on equity and inclusion.

The region partners collaborate with NC Community College and Apprenticeships, Jobs for Graduates, ABTech, Blue Ridge Community College along with the Local Area on the Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Job Shadowing and Apprenticeships through employers to better prepare individuals to succeed. The use of job shadowing, on the job training, incumbent worker training, apprenticeships and occupational skills training better equips us to give all individuals training with diversity, equity and inclusion for every specific position and career through the Local Area Certified Career Pathways. MyfutureNC with the P20 Council also works to ensure the information on certifications is shared with all through NCCareers.org, NCWorks.org, and events. The Workforce Case Managers and Career Centers are trained to vet individuals through assessment to assist them in objectives and goals to lead to their career of choice in a career pathway where the choices are many and wages are higher. And with the workshops held in the Career Centers, the participants are better prepared workers heading to success. The better the skills and education attainment, the higher the wages for individuals and the better employee for the employer.

10. Please describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local and regional Economic Developers.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board engages with local and regional economic developers through in person and virtual meetings, job fairs, business services, social media, projects, and funding. The Local Area collaborates with economic developers' hand in hand and has a good working relationship and partnership. Land of Sky Regional Council houses the Economic Development department where the Local Workforce Board has a close working relationship on a daily basis and assists on many projects and expansions in the local area with company relocations and closures, transportation, and housing having a significant impact on the community and its individuals. We apply for grants and make sure all aspects of the employers, job seekers, individuals and businesses are well cared for with any assistance we can give them. Engaging with Economic Development in the region assists with workforce in resource management and production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services to ensure a thriving community. Teamwork makes the dreamwork and makes lives better with skilled employees for employers, higher wages for employees and a better community.

11. How many new/expansions economic development projects has the Local Area WDB engaged in during the previous program year? Please indicate the type/number of services provided.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's most prominent project has been Pratt & Whitney. Not only is it a new project, but also has been a continued expansion with this large and growing company. We provided labor market studies to economic developers prior to the announcement and offered a letter of support with commitment of dislocated worker funding when eligibility requirements were met. Since the announcement we have provided \$100,000 for the Transfr VR virtual reality training software to A-B Tech Community College to help support pre-employment assessments and training for prospective Pratt & Whitney employees. We have implemented job fairs and other recruitment efforts to support Pratt & Whitney in partnership with Asheville Chamber and A-B Tech and will continue to do so. We have supported numerous employers who have relocated to the region and employers who have announced expansion projects in the region. These employers include Thermo Fisher Scientific, Haakon Industries, Jabil Healthcare, Printpack, Raybow Pharmaceuticals and more. We assisted in a large closure with Continental and the same care was given to the employees leaving there as was given to the new employees hired at Pratt & Whitney. We assisted with training for all individuals that needed or required training. Other services we have provided these companies and will provide the upcoming closures are on the job training, occupational skills training, workshops, career events, job search, resume building, EAI-REA, orientation, assessments, online assistance, and referrals. Through the Career Centers we provided 40,000 plus services year to date and 11,000 services provided to employers. There were many case management services that were provided by Workforce Case Managers. We are always eager to help others outside our region if needed no matter what the circumstances. All Boards, communities, regions, individuals, and employers are important to us in any circumstances.

12. Provide a description of how the WDB is employing sector strategies by creating industry-led sector partnerships to facilitate engagement of employers and better coordinate workforce development services, training, and economic development activities. Include a brief example(s) of existing industry sector

initiatives / partnerships or describe the strategy to implement them for evidence-based in-demand industry sectors for the region [WIOA Section 106 (c)(1)(C), Section 107 (d)(4)(D)]

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has created industry led partnerships by engaging with the economic development group in our region and in our office to assist in projects, keeping the economic leaders in each county consistently involved in the Board meetings to share what they are working on and how we can assist, and maintain close relationships with the industry led sector companies to better market and implement hiring and training through incumbent worker training and on the job training. The Business Services team implements incumbent worker training with companies to assist these companies with more training for existing staff to be able to avert layoffs, closure and increase competitiveness. And they implement the on-the-job training to assist employers in need of staff with an opportunity to offset initial training costs to fill skilled positions while building organizational productivity as the employee learns job requirements. The facilitation of engagement with employers and workforce services, training, and economic development keeps us all better informed to be able to do all we can for our community. For example, we are working through the Career Centers to identify interested or qualified individuals for in demand positions for nursing, which is one of the largest issues in the region. We are also identifying issues with companies in the hospitality and tourism sectors to fill their needs. We have been able to assist directly and indirectly the Pratt and Whitney company, with 180 employees so far, at job fairs, career events, training and through meetings to know the needs and assist with them. We have certified career pathways as evidence to in demand sectors, which we share with the region to better assist employers and fill the needs of job seekers. It is all about relationships and partnerships at the end of the day. We have to work together to make more happen for the community.

13. Identify the Career Pathways developed by the Local Area. Complete the chart below.

Pathway Name	Partner WDBs	Year the pathway was developed	Number of trainees (to date) who have utilized the pathway
Healthcare	Mountain Area	2017	323
Hospitality and Tourism	Mountain Area	2017	127
Advanced Manufacturing	Mountain Area	2016	132
Energy	Centralina Charlotte Works Gaston Region C Western Piedmont Mountain Area	2019	32

Skilled Trades and Construction	Mountain Area	2023	147
Information Technology	Mountain Area	2023	152

14. In addition to facilitating the development of career pathways, also describe the review process for in-demand career pathways to determine if new pathways are needed, or if current pathways should be updated or removed based on the needs of the industry.

- a. Include plans for new career pathways.
- b. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders' (DPI, community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates.
- c. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board is now completing two career pathways. They are Construction and Skilled Trades and Information Technology. Both of which are in demand and there are higher wages in our region. The research is done, and information shared with partners for completion of the certification.

b. The career pathways in the local area are in alignment with partners, stakeholders, community colleges, MyFutureNC with P20 Council, universities and more to engage individuals in training for post-secondary credentials and better employment with higher wages. Through research and collaboration with partners, there are no duplications.

c. There is no duplication in the certification process due to teamwork, knowledge, and research prior to certification in the collaboration with our educational partners and employers to avoid this. Career Pathways are certified by local workforce development boards and may be subsequently recognized by the NCWorks Commission. The Workforce Innovation Opportunity has greatly improved assistance for jobseekers through the integrated, employer-driven, public workforce development system. The new regulations require workforce centers to collaborate with adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners to establish career pathway programs. These programs are aimed at improving opportunities for job seekers by communicating in a more clear and straightforward way to understand career pathways. Career pathways programs offer job seekers a pathway of education coursework and/or training credentials that are aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. For Career Centers, this involves the need for collaboration with local employers and educators. Through collaboration, Career Centers gain a better understanding of employer's actual needs in addition to understanding the ability of educators. Educators and employers begin collaborating and more effective and efficient career pathways naturally develop for the local community. This process transforms the role of employers from customers to partners. Through the development of intentional connections with employers, educators, and service providers, the entire approach to workforce development becomes more efficient and customer centered. Business Service and Career Centers, other Board partners, educators, employers, and MyFutureNC with P20 Council research the information to qualify a sector as a Certified Career Pathway. Some of the research involves primarily local job demand and other areas such as wages, job openings, job description, opportunities for advancement, required credentials, education, and training requirements. Governor

Cooper has presented the One-Year Impact Report on NCWorks Certified Career Pathways. NCWorks Certified Career Pathways are a key element of NC Job Ready. Having information about career options and access to the training needed to prepare for those careers is critical to being job ready. Certified Career Pathways provide career paths to help job seekers with higher wages and in demand jobs in their community. This is the opportunity to engage the business community, advance education and training and align the workforce development system.

15. Provide a description of Local Area WDB's capacity to provide workforce investment activities to address (a) education attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields (b) strategies for awareness and cultivation efforts to increase access to education and postsecondary credentials and certificates, availability of learn-and-earn opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, summer employment) and (c) supportive services for hard-to-reach communities. (d) Explain strategies that include NextGen, NCCareers.org and any awareness models for success.

a. The Career Pathways are shared with adults, employers, and youth to give them an opportunity to understand the Local Board's goals for the community and individuals, obtain training and education, obtain higher wages and better skilled employees for employers. This process assists with awareness and cultivation efforts to increase access to education, post-secondary credentials, certificates, availability of opportunities such as on the job training, job shadowing, apprenticeships, and paid work experiences which leads to higher wages. Partners support this initiative to be able to provide training for higher wages and better skilled employees.

b. The awareness and cultivation of this need and the program increase access to education and post-secondary credentials and certificates for job seekers to find a better career with apprenticeships, work experience, job shadowing and on the job training along with supportive services to meet the needs of individuals with barriers in their career search and training for a career with higher wages to support themselves and their families. The NextGen program is assisting youth in finding careers earlier in life to have a better start sooner and support their families.

c. The Youth Committee is assisting in addressing apprenticeships with local apprenticeship leaders along with the Local Board, especially reaching out to hard-to-reach communities with training and supportive services. Transportation is the largest barrier in the outlying rural areas, but with companies incorporating carpools and a plan to "vanpool" at our local council of government, it is a start. NC District Export Council and the Board are addressing job shadowing and youth work experience. This allows them to gain experience before choosing so they more than likely make a better career choice.

d. The Local Board is working with MyFutureNC and P20 Council to address credential attainment with students and Case Managers alike, along with NCWorks.gov and NCCareers.gov approved courses for certifications, degrees, and non-degree credentials. The Workforce Case Managers are trained to share the career pathways and NCWorks and NCCareers.org, along with access to education, postsecondary credentials. Certificates, and availability of other opportunities. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding we are not able to consider summer employment and internships but are happy that we can help many with job shadowing, apprenticeships, on the job training and paid work experience.

Land of Sky recently obtained the US Department of Labor Youth grant with Tennessee to assist underserved youth and we are working across stateliness to ensure the success of all our youth.

III. NCWorks Commission

The NCWorks Commission recommends policies and strategies that enable the state's workforce and businesses to compete in the global economy.

The Commission is designated as the state's WDB under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Led by a private sector chair, the 37-member Commission includes representatives from the business community, heads of state workforce agencies, educators, and community leaders. All members are appointed by the Governor.

Mission of the NCWorks Commission: To ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity; and to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.

Employer-led job training programs have the best career outcomes. Employers know best what skills their workers need, and employer involvement is key for workforce development and job readiness. Businesses that invest in developing North Carolina's workforce will benefit from well-trained employees and a more innovative and diverse workplace that better reflects its community.

1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local employers and informs them of the wide array of business services offered. Include how the Local Area WDB (a) ensures collaboration with other employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as (b) Vocational Rehabilitation, (c) Agriculture Services, (d) Foreign Labor, (e) Re-Entry, and (f) Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery.

The Board's Business Services Staff, the NCWorks Career Center Managers and Employer Service Teams make employers aware of the business services offered through printed materials, emailed information, websites, media interviews, phone calls and site visits. Also, Board sponsored events, job fairs, career events, and meetings provide an opportunity to share information about business services. With the partnerships in vocational rehabilitation at the colleges, reentry with grant support, veteran services at the Career Center, agricultural services locally, and foreign labor on site at our local council of government, we can work through processes and procedural information with clarity by sharing efficiently with employer customer service delivery. The Local Board works with the onsite foreign labor department at Land of Sky Regional Council to encourage job creation with employers, enhance competitiveness through incumbent worker training, stimulate and strengthen economic growth, diversify, and enhance infrastructure with economic development. A hybrid of virtual and in person events, meetings, and enrollments will be the normal way we do business moving forward. We also collaborate with Job Corp and Vocational Rehabilitation located at Blue Ridge Community College where many of our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act participants engage in the programs.

Many are served through our Career Centers with services provided to the public such as resume building, 50+ program, training, workshops, interview practice, resume building, career events and job fairs. The Buncombe County Career Center provides many scheduled workshops for the community on an array of subjects. These are advertised on our constant contact website with electronic emails sent to employers to share this along with other information as well.

2. Please provide a brief overview of the business services team within the local area. Please identify the individual staff roles the Local Area WDB utilizes to conduct business services (that is Business Services Representative (Local Area WDB staff), contractor staff, Business Engagement Coordinator, NCWorks Career Center Manager, DWS staff, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, identify who makes regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff, etc.).

The Local Board Business Services team consists of a full-time Business Service Representative, a full-time Youth Business Services Representative, and a part-time Business Service Representative. We have four NCWorks Career Centers with three NCWorks Career Center Managers and each career center has Division of Workforce Solutions staff and a Disabled Veterans Outreach Representative. The referrals to Agricultural Services are made by the Business Services Representative and NCWorks Career Center Managers. The Local Board has a Foreign Trade Zone staff member housed in the Council of Government office that we work with directly. The Board identifies and addresses local challenges through our Business Services Department at the Local Area Board, and they reach out to the businesses to serve, provide, and assist with our programs, grants, on the job training, incumbent worker training, Wagner Peyser registration and registering online as employers and providers. Business Services also utilizes the Career Centers to obtain information and reach out to employers, job seekers and employees for training, the community, partners, and businesses. After Covid, the Healthcare Career Pathway, already one of the most needed sectors in the area in the past, is now even more promising to job seekers with more positions available and higher wages. More employees with specific skills and credentials to support other particular industries are also needed with so many resigning, retiring, regrouping, reorganizing and not returning to work. Many adults may lack basic skills or have other personal challenges at work, such as a lack of affordable childcare or adequate transportation. The local Board offers supportive services through the schools in conjunction with training, as well as working with businesses to provide in house childcare, carpools, support for transportation, and Land of Sky Regional Council is working on a Vanpool program to assist the community. Young people are getting the college, career guidance and professional experience they need to prepare them for success in the workplace through the highly trained Workforce Case Managers at the schools, colleges, and employers. The local Board is committed to the services provided by the workforce. The virtual platform is a main innovative solution to support growth of the local workforce system. This has opened a better avenue to communication and engagement. It has created more remote opportunities which opens more employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. There is an increased need for healthcare staff, early childhood development staff and teachers nationally due to the lack of employees retiring or resigning. Our healthcare career pathway is extraordinarily strong in our local area with one of the largest healthcare employers located here.

3. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB plans to increase NCWorks brand awareness at the local level (consult NCWorks Commission 2021 Strategic Plan).

The Local Workforce Development Board is increasing the NCWorks brand awareness through social media outlets, job fairs, career events, signage, emails, flyers, brochures, name tags, case manager training, career center training, the use of the NCWorks website, constant contact, and knowledge of the brand in discussions at meetings, webinars, and events. The use of the brand on emails is the most used because of the many emails that go out each day from the Board. We implement the brand any chance we get and with continued discussions will continue to do so.

Communities across North Carolina are developing strong local models of workforce development. North Carolina should build on those successes and replicate them in more places to continue building and expanding innovative solutions.

4. Describe how the Local Area WDB and the partners identify, address, and provide new and innovative solutions to support the job growth and business expansions of the local workforce system.

The Local Area Workforce Development Board provides new and innovative solutions to support the local workforce system by sector strategies focused on the following largest sectors in our region with the most availability and higher wages: Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Skilled Trades and Construction, and Information Technology. The Local Area employers in these sectors have led the development of NCWorks Certified Career Pathways through leadership, research, and partnership which is critical, and these pathways have integrated work based learning opportunities, including registered apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, paid work experience, incumbent worker training and on the job training. Employers lead the sector initiatives and direct the training as needed for their in-demand occupations for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Outreach to job seekers is critical and the Local Area has developed “Mountain Area Careers” site, accessible at www.MountainAreaCareers.org to share our region’s career pathways available to job seekers and youth. Outreach with diversity, equity and inclusion is a focus at hiring events, job fairs, career events, school functions focused on K12, community colleges and universities, meetings, webinars, and virtually. The Local Area has a Constant Contact subscription that is utilized to share these opportunities with about 20,000 plus people who are registered as job seekers on NCWorks, as well as employers. Also, the Local Area utilizes social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to share the Career Pathways available in the region. We are looking into other social media outlets as well. All of this information is also shared in our Board Newsletter and through our Board website. Our NCWorks One Stop Career Centers can lead job seekers and employers to many avenues, such as resume building, employment, training, soft skills, advertising, workshops, job search

and interview practices. The NCWorks service delivery model focuses on customer service and is organized around services to customers. It is a system in which Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and the Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers. NCWorks Career Centers will employ integrated staffing and technology to generate an integrated customer pool and flow. This system is focused on offering value added, staff assisted services at Career Centers which are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. NCWorks Career Center staff is organized by function with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Staff are cross trained, so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers in person and virtually and is knowledgeable about all services that the NCWorks Career Centers offer. The Career Center Staff is also cross trained in virtual interaction for better engagement and communication with customers and participants. Virtual activities include Live Chat on NCWorks, and will continue moving forward, due to the convenience and accessibility along with virtual enrollment. This is convenient for many job seekers, for example, who would like to discover a teleworking position and cannot leave their home, due to a physical disability. Our Local Area Board continues to research ways for new and innovative solutions to the workforce system to assist our community to grow with economic development and higher living wages. Land of Sky Regional Council was awarded an Early Childhood Development Grant to help this employee deprived sector. Barriers have always been an issue including transportation. Land of Sky Regional Council is working on a program for Vanpool because transportation is the primary barrier with many rural areas in our region. Communities across North Carolina are developing great local models of workforce development. North Carolina should build on those successes and replicate them in more places to continue building and expanding innovative solutions. The Board has also obtained grants for reentry, substance disorder, and small businesses to grow our community with assisting more individuals. The power of participation can be unfolding and amazing. Communication leads to more access, opportunities, information for job growth and business expansions.

The U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor have jointly identified Recruitment and Hiring; Benefits; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; Empowerment and Representation; Job Security and Working Conditions; Organizational Culture; Pay; and Skills and Career Advancement as the eight key principles of a good job. Refer to Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 07-22 for details.

5. Describe the Local Area WDB's strategy for:

- a. incorporating job quality principles into ongoing workforce development activities, to assist with identifying and creating long-term partnerships with employers offering good jobs.
 - b. creating strategic, flexible career pathways to good jobs that respond to local labor market needs.
- Describe how the Local Area WDB ensures that individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities have equitable access to the services of the workforce system and the jobs created in the economic growth spurred by federal investments.

a. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board incorporates job quality principles into all ongoing workforce activities such as meetings, training, partnerships, relationships, Career Centers, employer engagement, staff orientation, job fairs, and career events to be able to develop long term “workships” (relationships that lead to individuals in the workforce) with employers to assist in acquiring skilled employees that make living wages through our training and job research program that Case Managers and Business Service staff are able to lead individuals to their career of choice in a career pathway for a better wage and life. The Business Service Staff also develop relationships and long-term partnerships with employers offering good jobs when they identify the need through the employer and job seeker.

b. All of our Career Pathways are strategic in that they are the largest sector and highest wages in our region which gives the job seeker flexibility to good jobs or choice of a career and fill the needs in our community as well as the job seekers acquire higher, living wages. These Career Pathways are the largest sectors and companies: Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Skilled Trades and Construction, and Information Technology. The Mountain Area Board ensures diversity, equity, and inclusion through all we do for every individual including the underserved, underrepresented and hard to reach communities. We obtain grants specifically for these individuals such as substance use and reentry. Through virtual assistance for contact, meetings, enrollments, chat sessions, and online applications, we can reach more of our community in these underrepresented areas such as disabled individuals. Career Centers are located in rural areas to be accessible to the underserved. And the staff is trained to be more understanding of the underserved needs and have lists of entities that we partner with for assistance for all individuals and hard to reach communities. We train and cross train all Career Centers, Career Advisors, Career Navigators, and Case Managers so they are able to share this with all they serve. Federal investments have served individuals in meaningful ways through grants to assist in training, supportive services, and job search for dislocated workers due to so many closures after the pandemic, great resignation, and the downturn of the economy.

6. Describe how the Local Area WDB is engaged in work-based learning projects with local employers.

Special grant funding, obtained by the Board, helps support work-based learning positions at A-B Technical Community College and Blue Ridge Community College, as well as work-based learning initiatives of partner organizations. Currently the Board is acting as the convener for the development and implementation of the Partnership for Youth Apprenticeships. Hospitality and Tourism youth pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs that were launched in the Fall of 2020 in the K12 system. The program was branded as H&T 4 Me and will be available across other regions as well to other Boards. The Board Business Service staff interface with the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth contractors to promote the work they are doing with employers in the areas of pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, internships, work experience and job shadowing opportunities. The Board provides Youth Service Providers with a product for Virtual Youth Job Shadowing. Plus, we are working on the expansion of Youth Apprenticeships and Youth Work Experience with the local employers and the local Youth Committee. The Board recently received the American Rescue Plan Act Grant to assist small businesses of 25 or less in the incumbent worker training and on the job training with \$904,000. Land of

Sky Regional Council went outside of state lines and collaborated with the State of Tennessee for the recent obtainment of the grant for underserved youth. We will continue to search out and implement grants as much as possible to assist all we can.

IV. NCWorks Career Centers

North Carolina's workforce system includes multiple agencies, programs, and funders. Collaboration, policy alignment, systemic communication, integration, and modernization of the workforce system will ensure a strong and healthy workforce system that can adapt to a changing economy.

For any documents that are missing or are unnecessary based on the response provided, please state, "No document is loaded and/or it will be loaded by the XX date."

1. Identify PY 2023 NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Tier 1, Tier 2, Affiliate, and Specialized sites; On-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth service provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use the PY 2023 [NCWorks Career Center Chart](#). [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)]

- Name document: *Local Area Name* PY 2023 NCWorks Career Centers. **The Mountain Area's Career Centers Chart is attached in WISE.**

2. Provide the name(s) of the current service provider(s), date, and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to four years and the current year the contract is (e.g., two of three years).

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board released a Request for Proposal for One-Stop Operators, which was integrated in the Request for Proposals for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Adult and Dislocated Worker Services on March 23, 2022. The One Stop Operators are Asheville Buncombe Community College in Buncombe, Blue Ridge Community College in Henderson, Asheville Buncombe Community College in Madison, and Blue Ridge Community College in Transylvania Career Centers. Separately, the Request for Proposal for Youth Services was also released on March 23, 2022. Contracts were awarded June 25, 2022, for program operations beginning July 1, 2022. The contract term is for one year, renewable in one-year increments for up to three years. The current service providers for WIOA Out of School Youth are Goodwill Buncombe, Goodwill Transylvania, Henderson County Public Schools, and In-School Youth- Madison County Public Schools. The program year 2022 Requests for Proposals for Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth were released for competitive procurement on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, and proposals were due by 4:00 pm on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. Due to the fact that the same Contractors responded to the call, they were contracted for another year. The One Stop Operators include Division of Workforce Solutions in Buncombe, Blue Ridge Community College in Henderson, Asheville Buncombe Community College in Madison and Blue Ridge Community College in Transylvania Career Centers and One Stop Operators and for Youth Services for Out of School Youth are Goodwill Buncombe, Goodwill Transylvania and Goodwill Madison, along with Henderson County Public Schools and for In School Youth is Madison County Public Schools.

Our Local Board Competitive Procurement policy ensures a competitive procurement process to select providers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth services, as well as, for the operators of local, certified NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area Region using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Final Regulations and to allow the one-stop operator selection process to align with the Mountain Area competitive procurement process for selection of providers of Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services, which requires the local area to undertake a request for proposal process to competitively procure programs and to contract with Board approved providers for up to three-years, with the initial contract period being one-year, with two extensions of one-year each, based on Board approval.

3. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]

- a. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults.
- b. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers.
- c. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth.

a. The Career and Training Services provided to adults and dislocated workers by Workforce Case Managers work with the NCWorks Career Center and the local partners, such as the STEP Program and others, to serve customers and participants to the best of their ability are provided to adult, dislocated workers, and youth groups when applicable. The Workforce Case Managers and others employed by the NCWorks Career Center are cross trained and assist the customers and participants with computer access and guide them in the direction they need for employment, such as training in the local colleges to lead to better employment with higher wages and a skilled employee for the employers. The Board has implemented virtual avenues to assist the Career Centers in career and training services, such as online training, live chat, virtual enrollment with capture documents, eligibility explorer to better share information within programs and mobile access which has assisted many including individuals with disabilities. The Career Centers also provide scheduled access to workshops for resume building, soft skills, interview practice and many others.

b. The dislocated workers are served potentially by co-enrollment in Trade Adjustment and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs to better serve their needs. Workforce Case Managers also serve them, as well as NCWorks Career Centers and referral partners.

c. Goodwill along with Henderson and Madison County Public Schools provide career and training services to youth along with in house programs at Goodwill and co-enrollment with the adult group to better service their training needs. These students attend local colleges and schools for training and general education diploma along with supportive services to assist with their barriers. We now have the VOS Greeter software in the Career Centers to assist the staff with customers and recording and sharing information vital to the success of the Centers.

4. Describe how Local Area WDBs determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.

The local Workforce Development Board’s Workforce Case Managers determine the need for enrollment in Training Services by an initial interview process with a potential participant to develop the individual employment plan with an objective assessment by discussing their needs and goals to guide them to their future career with Training Services implemented, monthly contact and Follow Up Services applied after exit. The assessment, which may include testing, also provides the Case Manager with the skills and training the potential participant has or may need. A financial analysis obtained from the individual gives the Case Manager the information on provided funding and additional funding costs. Virtual enrollment has been put in place to assist participants in their goals to receive training, which also greatly assists individuals with disabilities. The Case Manager discusses all options and opportunities before enrollment to decide the best situation for the individual. This discussion and information determine the need for enrollment in training services.

5. Describe how follow-up services are provided through the NCWorks Career Centers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)]

The Local Board Workforce Case Managers provide follow up services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth participants for one year after exit. These services are individualized and can be provided in person, virtually, by phone or by email. One highlighted service in the Workforce program is to provide individuals workplace counseling. Some of the other services are contacting the individual to verify employment, help secure better paying jobs, career planning, resolving work related problems, providing information about educational opportunities, job search, referrals to other community services, workshops provided at the Career Centers for the individuals to attend. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting. The follow up is important for employment, median earnings, credentials, and measurable skill gains in the performance measures. Supportive Services are not given in follow-up. This information is entered in NCWorks.

6. Describe how:

- a. New NCWorks Career Center staff (DWS, service providers, and partner staff) are trained in the integrated service delivery system model (include a training timeline).
- b. Long after the initial start date does staff have full access to NCWorks.gov?
- c. The staff development activities reinforce and improve the initial training efforts.
- d. Describe the specific training that staff receive around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

a. The Onboarding process in place for new NCWorks Career Center staff was developed by the NC Superusers and is used in its entirety for training all staff on NCWorks. This includes the integrated service delivery system model in Career Centers. This training can take approximately one week but is individualized. Other online training with The Training Center site is provided for up to one year completion, but information is added to this site for continued training. The NCWorks Career Center staff has training required by the NCWorks Career Center Certification Process which can be done in their own time frame as long as completed by the annual review or certification for the centers.

b. After the Onboarding process, the staff has full access to NCWorks.gov, but additional training is

always provided as needed. The time for the Onboard training process is individualized and can take approximately one week which at the end of the of this process the staff has full access immediately to the NCWorks system with the ongoing training by the Workforce Operations Director.

c. The staff development activities assist in improving the initial training efforts by going over every aspect of the system in detail and reinforce by continued training locally and ongoing with the NCWorks Training Center and Workforce Operations Director.

d. These activities include dashboard, staff account, resources, message center, virtual recruiter, learning center, navigating the system, veteran priority, registration, assist an individual, service tracking, program tabs, Wagner Peyser, Eligibility Explorer, Wizard, resume builder, job search, activities and service codes with case notes, employer search and assistance, document management, confidentiality and redaction. Training for staff in customer service is provided as needed and equal opportunity training is required annually and more often as needed along with shared videos and webinars during the year. The diversity, equity and inclusion training are provided by Land of Sky Regional Council meetings, presentations, shared information, and videos on a monthly basis along with any requested discussion. All training is provided as needed and upon request by the Workforce Operations Director.

7. Briefly explain coordination with the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services. Please include specific details on how case managers for WIOA and TAA programs coordinate to provide seamless services to eligible participants.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board ensures implementation of policy for the Trade Adjustment Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This allows participants in both programs to maximize resources by both sources of funding. The Trade Adjustment Case Managers enroll the individual in Trade Adjustment and collect as much Workforce eligibility documentation as they can. The Workforce Case Manager reviews the eligibility documentation and collects any further and necessary documentation. Once decided if Trade Adjustment will fund the participant, the Workforce Case Manager is contacted to discuss if any Workforce funds are needed. If Trade Adjustment is not used, the participant is reviewed for Workforce funds. Either way, the Trade Adjustment participant is enrolled in the Workforce program for policy compliance and future assistance. All information in NCWorks.gov can be seen by all program operators so there is no duplication of services. Both program Case Managers coordinate with constant communication to provide seamless services to eligible participants. All activities are recorded in NCWorks to be seen by all program managers so they are not duplicated, and program managers can give the best customer service to the participant. Workforce Case Managers follow up after exit for one year to record performance measures and ensure employment or assist with job search.

8. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Centers serve military veterans.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program staff and Local Veteran Employment Representative staff are directly housed in the Buncombe County NCWorks Career Center and Henderson County NCWorks

Career Center. They have regularly scheduled dates for office hours in the smaller NCWorks Career Centers in Transylvania and Madison Counties. Veteran preference is provided as mandated by law in all of our Career Centers as it relates to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds and services. In addition, we collaborate closely with all local Veteran Services organizations in the Local Area to make sure outreach is being accomplished and services and resources are being deployed as needed. All Career Center Staff and Workforce Case Managers are cross trained to be able to serve Veterans and their families as priority.

9. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Center serve persons with disabilities.

The NCWorks Career Center with operators and partners comply with the WIOA Section 188 of nondiscrimination and the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, and services by providing technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including virtual access. The Local Board provides Equal Opportunity Training on an annual basis and more frequently when requested, as well as online information review during the year. The virtual activities implemented by the State, such as Live Chat, Eligibility Explorer, and Capture Documents are helpful in assisting more individuals with disabilities, especially for those that may have difficulty in visiting the office regularly. Many scheduled workshops are provided to persons with disabilities by the Career Centers such as the 50+ program, resume building, counseling, interview practice, and soft skills. All staff are cross trained in equal opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion to better serve the community.

10. Briefly describe the integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers and how the Local Area WDB staff and staff within the NCWorks Career Center coordinate outreach strategies and services to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services.

The NCWorks integrated service delivery model focuses on customer service and is organized around services to customers. It is a system in which Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and the Wagner Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers. NCWorks Career Centers will employ integrated staffing and technology to generate an integrated customer pool and flow with diversity, equity, and inclusion. This system is focused on offering value added, cross-trained staff assisted services at Career Centers which are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. NCWorks Career Center staff is organized by function with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Staff organized by function are cross trained, so that all center staff have the capacity to serve all customers and are knowledgeable about all services that the NCWorks Career Centers offer. Virtual activities that also maximize resources include Live Chat, Eligibility Explorer, Enrollment and Capture Documents on NCWorks. The Staff is trained in the integrated services delivery system model fully in NCWorks by the Onboarding process developed by NC Superusers, which can take approximately one week depending on the new staff. We want them to feel comfortable with the system and the program. Then they are allowed to work in the training system on NCWorks.gov immediately.

At this point of completion, they are given full access to NCWorks.gov. The new staff will work with a seasoned Workforce Case Manager to begin enrollments in the Workforce Program. Once the new staff are on their own, they will receive daily and weekly follow-up training. This training continues for all Workforce Case Managers as needed, daily, weekly, quarterly by email, phone, virtual platforms and in person. The availability of the Local Workforce Operations Director for this kind of timeframe and individualized training has proven to be highly effective with consistency leading to better performing Workforce Case Managers. The NCWorks system allows the Case Managers to see all the programs and activities so none are duplicated. All staff are trained in all activities for better engagement and communication with customers and participants, as well as training in diversity, inclusion, and equity. The Career Centers not only work with job seekers, students and other individuals that need workforce related assistance, but they also collaborate with employers and providers to assist in registering on NCWorks.gov to share careers, fill positions, provide education and training assistance, and hold job fairs at the Centers. The Workforce Operations Director works with providers to assist with registering and updating courses for those already registered. The centers, along with Business Services for the Local Board, contact employers each week to see how they may be of assistance and contact new employers for registration. They then enter the employer and provider activities in the NCWorks system for recording and reporting. All Workforce Case Managers and Career Center staff are cross trained to better serve individuals and job seekers. The Business Service staff and Career Centers work more closely with the employers for registration and recording in NCWorks.

11. Describe Local Area WDB strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between Local Area WDBs and the NCWorks Career Center system and unemployment insurance programs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iv)]

Local area strategies and services used to strengthen linkages between Boards and the NCWorks Career Centers with unemployment insurance programs are through the one-stop partners integrated delivery system identified in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Temporary Assistance, Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, Reentry Employment Opportunities and Second Chance Act Programs. These programs work together with co-enrollment, meetings for updates, referrals, constant communication with shared information to better insure the services to participants such as payment, counseling, job search, training, guidance, career exploration, career services, resume building, and workshops.

12. Attach a flowchart for services – flowchart must include:

- a. initial one-on-one interviews with customers,
- b. NCWorks.gov dual registration,
- c. skills assessments, and
- d. determination of the need for further services.

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name Services Flowchart 2023. **Service Flow Charts for the NCWorks Centers in the Mountain Area Region are attached in WISE.**

13. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. [WIOA Section 121(b) (A (iii))]

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name NCWorks Career Center MOU*. **The Memorandum of Understanding(s) between Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and the NCWorks Career Centers are attached in WISE.**

14. Describe the Local Area WDB's method for providing oversight to include:

- a. the review process and the frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service; and
- b. the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)] [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

The Workforce Development Board facilitates access to services and programs through NCWorks Career Centers by one-stop partners identified in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Job Corps, Youth Build, Indian and Native American Program, National Farm Worker Jobs programs, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker programs, Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program, Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Services program, Title IV Rehabilitation Act, Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Trade Adjustment Act program, Unemployment Compensation program, Reentry Employment Opportunities, Second Chance Act programs. The NCWorks Centers are reviewed and certified. The Division of Workforce Solutions staff review the centers each year and certify them every three years. These certifications and reviews require training such as customer service and equal opportunity. The Board provides any required training as policy states and requested training as needed such as equal opportunity, program, customer service, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Local Workforce Board has many partners with the same goals. INspire and MyFutureNC with P20 Council collaborate with the Local Workforce Board on disconnected youth and justice involved youth to be able to assist them in training and careers. NCCareers.org will help the youth with a variety of choices in their careers that do not require degrees and help the youth work as soon as possible since some of them have to work to support their family. The Local Board also works closely with the Economic and Development Representatives in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties on assisting employers to find better trained employees and be able to turn the economy around locally as well as many other projects as they arise. The Local Board also partners with other Boards to work on community engagement to be able to assist employers and job seekers alike. For example, the INspire grant was one that Mountain Area and Southwestern are working on together and it covers 11 counties. Proposed elements for WNC Recovery to Career focus on building collaboration and resource sharing across the two regions, assuring participants are job ready and securing employment. These elements meet participant and business needs including increased service coordination across counties and communities, increased access to direct service recovery resources, addressing resource needs for wrap around services, building relationships with employers and expanding resources available to the

recovery ecosystem. MyFutureNC allows partnerships with the Local Colleges to counsel students on barriers and training. Along with the Belk Endowment which assists the Local Board and Colleges to increase postsecondary credential attainment. The Early Childhood Development Project was one that allowed a partnership with the Buncombe and Henderson Family Resource Centers to assist in the shortage of daycare teachers. Land of Sky Regional Council has obtained another Early Childhood Development grant to assist in this sector. The Local Board also obtained a Business Accelerator Grant which gave them the opportunity and partnership to work with 12 employers in the area to employ Incumbent Workers in training. The Board has obtained another Business Accelerator Grant for on-the-job training and a Small Business Grant of \$904,000 to assist Incumbent Workers. The Local Board also partners with the Asheville Chamber to hold job fairs and invite surrounding counties. With the partnership at the Justice Center, Food Stamp Office, Unemployment Office and Trade Adjustment Office, the staff there send referrals to us for enrollment in the Workforce program. The Mountain Area Board has recently partnered with the local Disconnected Youth Task Force overseen by the Henderson County Commissioner and Chairwoman Rebecca McCall, which allows the Workforce Case Managers to engage with the Task Force to be able to better serve disconnected youth, as well as share information on the youth barriers that they see every day. The Local Board is continuously engaging in partnerships with many roles that affect all involved and lead to a better community.

15. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using virtual technology to provide integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information systems for programs carried out under WIOA including youth programs, and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. What software are NCWorks Career Centers using? [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]

The NCWorks Career Centers are using virtual technology to provide integrated and virtual enrollment services for all individuals including youth with the Live Chat session, Eligibility Explorer, and Capture Documents to give and obtain information. The virtual enrollment allows the potential participant to upload eligibility documents to the NCWorks system at their convenience through Capture Documents and fill out an application for possible enrollment in applicable programs. There is also a mobile application in place. The Case Managers are able to implement the Workforce policy and guidelines in person or virtually starting with the collection of eligibility documents. All case notes are provided on the case management system in the process to better serve an array of public assistance programs to the unemployed, employed, and career seekers. After the Sapphire update, the Eligibility Explorer application was added to NCWorks to allow information submitted to other programs to be moved to the Workforce application as prompted. The update also provides a more informative outline to job seekers and a more user-friendly system to employers and providers. Additionally, NCWorks Buncombe County Career Center provides the following services virtually, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments, which includes an initial one-on-one assessment of a claimant's continuing unemployment eligibility, confirming employment status and a review of the claimant's work search activities. After two weeks, they conduct a follow-through RESEA appointment to track claimant's progress. Employability Assessment Interview provides concentrated reemployment services to claimants receiving unemployment benefits. The EAI program is mandatory for persons receiving unemployment benefits. EAI claimants must be scheduled within four weeks of their first payment of

unemployment benefits for program services. Other services are orientation to NCWorks Career Center services, register customer in NCWorks.gov, set up a personal profile for job seeker, conduct a job search and giving referrals to open positions as requested, set up Virtual Recruiter, create a new resume or update an existing one, upload into NCWorks.gov profile, set up email account, discuss Workforce training opportunities, refer to training providers, career assessment and guidance, job market information, interview practice and preparation, referral to community agencies for child care, transportation, housing, and virtual job fairs for job seekers and employers, case management, explain unemployment process and provide direction to Division of Employment Security for assistance, job seeking skills workshops, Finding the Fit with the Myers-Briggs, identifying career interests, interviewing practice, job search for experienced workers, LinkedIn, Networking in the Virtual World, Mastering Online Applications, Networking – The Most Effective Way to Find a Job, Virtual Interviewing, Write a Winning Resume, computer labs with microphones and cameras for private, virtual interviews between job seekers and employers. The NCWorks Career Centers rely heavily on online services to serve customers with disabilities and many more. The Virtual Job Shadow tool is used to assist in career exploration, job shadowing, as well as job search and resume assistance. Additionally, NCWorks.gov is utilized as the main data management tool. This platform is used for job search, virtual job recruiter, resume assistance, labor market information, as well as usage as the intensive case management tool for Workforce enrolled individuals. Business customers also use NCWorks.gov to post positions, set up virtual recruiters as well as advertise upcoming job fairs and career expos. These NCWorks Centers also use ACT WorkKeys Curriculum to assess, and gain needed workplace skills. ACT WorkKeys Curriculum is supported by the Local Board as support for the NCWorks System in the region. All of the above are offered online and conducted remotely. Finally, customers are assisted by providing wireless internet, and a video camera for needed access to video cameras for job interviews. NCWorks Career Centers have the ability to utilize virtual meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams to meet with customers and partners when needed. Virtual meetings and meetings by phone are options that are offered to clients who are interested in job search or other resources if they do not want to visit the NCWorks office in person. Job seekers are assisted in preparing for virtual interviews with employers by scheduling practice interviews with them in the Career Centers so they can be more comfortable with the technology. Job seekers who do not have reliable technology access can use the Career Center's technology resources such as internet, computer, camera, and microphone for virtual interviews. Workforce Case Managers and clients have the ability to sign documents electronically. Clients have the ability to upload eligibility documents to their own NCWorks.gov account for consideration without having to bring them to the office in person. Eligibility Explorer allows individuals to fill out an application for programs without coming into the Career Centers. Phones, email, and text messaging are utilized to stay in contact with customers and distribute information with personal information always taken into consideration per policy. On a regional level, Constant Contact is utilized to send out bi-weekly newsletters to the Mountain Area Region of upcoming events and jobs in the area. NCWorks Career Centers use Constant Contact to promote specific events, trainings, workshops, and jobs that may be of interest to clients. They continue to connect with job seekers and the community through Facebook by sharing relevant articles on employment issues, promoting training and educational opportunities at AB Tech, and promoting local job opportunities. The Mountain Area site shares local information about our programs. And finally,

the VOS Greeter software was recently installed in the Career Centers which assist staff and individuals with a seamless visit.

16. How does the Local Area WDB use data to monitor and track performance measures for serving individuals and business? Be specific about what systems are used, how regularly the Local Area WDB looks at these sources, and how the Local Area WDB might change the strategies based on the data.

The Local Area Workforce Development Board reviews data to monitor and track performance measures for serving individuals and businesses and then shares this on a weekly basis with Career Centers and Workforce Case Managers and shares on a monthly basis with Board Members. The reporting systems in NCWorks, FutureWorks and now Salesforce are extensively used as sources of information to determine a needed strategy depending on performance measures collected. NCWorks reports are used to collect information on employer codes and employers registered then shared monthly and discussed with Business Services and Career Centers on ideas of how more employers can be contacted more often along with contacting the employers not registered to collaborate with them on registering in NCWorks. We explain to the employers how the NCWorks system can help them in many ways such as advertising job openings. FutureWorks reports are used to collect information on employment, median earnings, credentials, and measurable skill gains among other information then shared monthly and discussed with the Workforce Case Managers to implement ideas on more enrollments, employment, credentials, measurable skill gains and higher wages for their participants. The Salesforce system in conjunction with the NCWorks system will be used for data entry for on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and employer codes. These discussions lead to many ideas of how to work together, serve the participants better and marketing ideas with diversity, equity, and inclusion.

V. Employer Services

1. Please briefly describe the efforts of the Business Services Representative and/or Employer Services staff in the following areas:
 - a. Utilizing regional and local employer data to inform priorities.
 - b. Making regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor, and Veteran Services.
 - c. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].
 - d. Including Historically Underutilized Businesses.

a. The employer services team at the NCWorks Centers take job orders from employers. If the employer is not registered in NCWorks, the Center staff assist in registering the employer. All job orders are verified before being made public, first to veterans and then to the general public. Job orders are reviewed daily by career center staff and publicized internally and externally to staff, job seekers, and workforce partners via email, social media, whiteboards, newsletters, and announcements. Business service representatives also take job orders or refer the employer to an NCWorks staff person. The NCWorks staff and Board's Business Services Representatives make every effort to be flexible with an employer's time and resources and will visit their worksite on request to assist with creating an NCWorks.gov account, posting job openings and recruitment of applicants. The Workforce Operations Director assists employers and providers as needed and when necessary, assists Business Services and entering employer codes to utilize the system for reporting all initiative taken with all employers. The Business Service staff visit many employers that are registered in NCWorks on a weekly basis to see how they can be of assistance and share information such as available grants. They also visit employers who are not registered to explain how they can be of assistance, how to register, and share information such as available grants. This information is entered in NCWorks and now Salesforce via employer codes.

b. The Business Services Representatives assist agricultural businesses by referring businesses to the NC Commerce, Agricultural Services Representative for the Western NC Region. The Agriculture Representative assists business with recruitment and hiring of seasonal and migrant workers, H2A Visas, training, regulations and compliance, safety, and migrant housing. The Business Services Representatives are not involved with foreign labor staffing. Land of Sky Regional Council implemented the Foreign Trade Zone in house by hiring a staff person to oversee Foreign Labor. The NCWorks Centers also make referrals to the Agriculture Representative and assist with job postings.

c. The Board has developed many partnerships with education, economic development, and employers both within and outside the local area. Asheville Buncombe Technical College and Blue Ridge Community College are the Board's Dislocated Worker and Adult contractors. The Board has a contract with each college for delivery of services for short and long-term education and training. The Board always makes a concerted effort to acquire additional grants for funding such as the Early Childhood Education Program, and staff support for Work based Learning, On the Job Training, Pratt and Whitney assistance, and now assistance to the Evergreen closure with another National Dislocated Worker Grant in addition to the past National Dislocated Worker Grant for Covid. The Board

maintains a wonderful working relationship with the Buncombe County, Madison County, Henderson County and Transylvania County Chambers of Commerce. The Board's Director and Workforce staff meet monthly as part of the Asheville Chamber's Advocate's Group. Over the past year the Board's staff have attended more chamber meetings and events in the four-county area in an effort to be more informed and to build partnerships. In addition, the Board's Director and Workforce staff communicate constantly with the Madison County Economic Development Authority, the Asheville-Buncombe County Area Economic Development Coalition, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, and the Transylvania Economic Alliance. The Asheville Chamber's economic region includes Haywood County, and our Board works closely with the Southwestern Commission's Workforce Development Department. These relationships foster regional collaboration with many projects, grants, and best practices. The National Dislocated Worker Grant for the Evergreen closure will be another coordinated effort with the Southwestern Workforce Board.

d. The efforts of the Business Services Representative have been to utilize the programs, grants and NCWorks to better assist underutilized and small businesses in their marketing, training, and efforts to introduce job seekers to businesses historically unnoticed but necessary for the community. Business Services as well as the Career Centers reach out to businesses each week to introduce themselves and how the NCWorks system can help their sector along with offering to assist in registration, give detailed information on the programs, and grants available. The Business Services staff are also enrolling many incumbent workers for small businesses to assist in their success and the local economy with the new Small Business Work Based Learning Grant with \$904,000.

2. Please describe the efforts of the Local Area WDB staff, Employer services staff and career center staff have made to deliver business services on a regional basis in the following areas:
- a. Utilizing regional and local economic data to inform priorities [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)].
 - b. Collaborating with employer-facing partners such as Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services to meet employer needs and jobseeker recruitment efforts.
 - c. Providing local and regional Rapid Response services, including identifying struggling and at-risk businesses, and providing services to help avert layoffs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(8)]
 - d. Coordinating with DWS TAA and Business Services staff to provide Rapid Response assistance and appropriate career and training services to workers for whom a petition has been filed. (20 CFR 618.816)

a. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, Business Service staff and NCWorks Career Centers in conjunction with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, holds two largescale job fairs, WNC Career Expos are in the spring and fall of each year for the local area and adjacent counties. The Expos typically register 100 employers. The Board and Chamber publicize the Expos on radio, in print, and on social media and through the NCWorks System using Constant Contact. Last year, the Board and Chamber began experimenting with a separate time for high school students to visit the Expos as part of career awareness. The Board and Chamber have begun alternating the location, using the Harrah's Cherokee Center in downtown Asheville and the WNC Agriculture Center in south Asheville for convenience and to draw diverse audiences. In addition to the WNC Career Expos, each NCWorks

Center hosts several job fairs each year and NCWorks Buncombe hosts two Veterans job fairs each year. Many employers host their own job fairs, and the Board assists in publicizing their events and in some cases board staff attend and assist with the job fairs. The Buncombe County Career Center holds and assists in many job fairs with local companies including the Post Office. In an effort to serve the experienced worker population, NCWorks Buncombe, the Mountain Area Board, ABTech and AARP host a job fair for experienced workers also. The Experienced Worker Initiative is a collaboration between NCWorks, the Mountain Area Board, and AARP to provide training and support for older workers navigating the current world of job search. Cohorts of experienced workers receive advice and support that equips them to conduct successful job searches. This age group is expected to remain in the workforce much longer than their parents did. They will be an important source of talent for regional employers given the numbers of people that have and will retire in WNC. In conjunction with the economic and development partners in utilizing regional and local, data collected from reporting, surveys, and studies is shared to better target and assist areas and companies hard hit by lack of employment and training better employees.

b. Business Service staff and Career Center staff introduce many individuals to programs and collaborate with employer facing partners such as Foreign Labor, agriculture services and veteran services to meet the employer needs and job seeker recruitment needs through job fairs and career events. They reach out and work with these areas often to keep informed on the ongoing issues to be able to assist in a timely manner.

c. In reference to Rapid Response the Local Area has a plan in place where the Business Service Representative along with the Regional Director and Local State Analyst work together to assist and work through companies in possible need of closings and layoffs with meetings to share information to employers and their employees. The Workforce Operations Director works closely with this group and the Case Managers along with their participants to be able to better inform and serve their needs with co-enrollment in Trade Adjustment and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Business Services stays informed on struggling and at-risk businesses in the community by reaching out on a regular basis and identifying issues to avert layoffs.

d. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment and opportunity activities which are carried out in the Local Area with statewide Rapid Response and the Trade Adjustment Act activities in two different ways: The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, WARN notices may be filed by employers directly with the Governor's Rapid Response Team and/or with the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions Dislocated Worker Unit. These two units share WARN information at the state level; the Division of Workforce Solutions Dislocated Worker Unit then notifies the affected Local Area Director with the WARN information. Employers may contact NCWorks Career Center Managers and the Local Area Director in their area with questions regarding the WARN process or with a WARN notice. In this case the NCWorks Career Center Manager and the Local Area Director would share information and coordinate services with the employer's permission, inform the state level WARN Unit of the business closing or layoff. The affected employer and employee is also given information regarding the Trade Adjustment Act and the Workforce program for co-enrollment and employment and training services and products offered through the Career Center in the Local Area. In either case, employment and training services and products are provided to WARN affected workers by the Local Area's NCWorks Career Center, including registration in NCWorks Online, career planning and/or counseling, skill

development, referral to jobs and Workforce training assistance. Mountain Area Workforce Board works collaboratively with the Local Area economic development organizations, NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, NC Community Colleges, Jobs for NC Graduates, and others in the region to provide the best services possible to dislocated workers and employers for Rapid Response and the Trade Adjustment Act. Duplicative services are prevented by being able to see activities and case notes of all programs implemented in NCWorks, as well as Trade Adjustment Case Managers and Workforce Case Managers work closely together at the Career Centers.

3. Please describe employer-focused partnership efforts in the areas of education and training and economic development in the following areas:
- a. Enhancing the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.
 - b. Coordinating and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(5)]
 - c. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

a. **ABTech and Blue Ridge Community College are the Board's Dislocated Worker and Adult contractors. The Board has a contract with each college for delivery of services for short and long-term education and training. The Board made a concerted effort to acquire additional grants for funding the Early Childhood Education Program, Work Based Learning, On the Job Training, Apprenticeships, Incumbent Worker Training, Continental's closure, and the upcoming Evergreen closure. Land of Sky Regional Council obtained an Early Childhood Development grant. The Workforce Board obtained the Business Accelerator grant for On-the-Job Training and American Rescue Plan grant for small businesses. Land of Sky Regional Council obtained a youth grant, reentry grant and substance disorder grant. The Workforce Board is working with the State on another National Dislocated Worker grant for the Evergreen closure. The Board maintains a good relationship with Buncombe County, Madison County, Henderson County and Transylvania County Chambers of Commerce along with local educators and employers to implement more access and enhance Youth On the Job Training, Youth Job Shadowing, and Youth Apprenticeships by sharing more information with employers and young job seekers for a better understanding to lead to better employment and higher wages to better support themselves and their families. The Board's Director and Workforce staff meet monthly as part of the Asheville Chamber's Advocate's Leadership group.**

b. **The Board staff have attended more chamber meetings and events in the four-county area in an effort to be more informed and to build partnerships. In addition, the Board's Director and Workforce staff communicate with the Madison County Economic Development Authority, the Asheville Buncombe County Area Economic Development Coalition, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, and the Transylvania Economic Alliance to coordinate entrepreneurial business and microenterprise and entrepreneurial services. The Asheville Chamber's economic region includes Haywood County, and our Board collaborates closely with Southwestern Workforce**

Development Board and Region C Workforce Development Board. We are working with the State on a National Dislocated Worker grant for the Evergreen closure. These relationships foster regional collaboration. The On-the-Job training for Adult and Youth has been an addition to the support for the regional economy and individual's career advancement. The Incumbent Worker Training has been a success this year with many companies involved in selecting individuals to enroll in this opportunity for a better career and higher wages. We now have another grant for small businesses and will continue more incumbent worker training, which has been a huge opportunity for companies in the region to train existing staff to avert layoffs or streamline efficiency. The Local Area is accessing more opportunities and ways to address Youth Apprenticeships and Job Shadowing to be able to start young individuals on their way to a successful career with higher wages to better support themselves and their families.

c. The Local Area is participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with education partners and economic developers in the local and regional area to increase knowledge of the programs to assist in finding individuals the training they need for their career, better employment for job seekers, better trained employees for employers and overall success for the entire community for a better life.

VI. Performance

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has the following WIOA Performance Indicators:

- Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (system-wide measure, not program specific)

1. Examine the Local Area WDB’s current Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance for PY 2021 and prior Program Years. (Reports available via Future Works)

- a. What are some of the factors in the Local Area WDB that impact performance levels both positively and negatively? Be sure to consider factors such as the unemployment rate, factory closures/openings, economic development recruitment, retention and expansion efforts, regional industry growth priorities, and weather events and natural disasters that may have impacted the area, as well as internal operational factors that may impact the Local Area WDB’s performance. *

** Provide at least two examples of positive factors and two examples of negative factors that have impacted the performance levels in your Local Area WDB, with an explanation of each.*

- b. Discuss whether or not participants that have been served and/or enrolled as a result of COVID-19 differ in characteristics as compared to participants who have historically been served by the Local Area WDB. If so, how do these differences impact service delivery and performance?
- c. Discuss how your Local Area WDB’s industries and business sector have been impacted by COVID-19. **

***Include which industries and businesses have been permanently affected, which are recovering or perhaps are expected to recover, and how these industry changes may impact how the Local Area approaches serving its participants.*

a.Mountain Area Workforce Development Board is committed to meeting or exceeding federal performance measures. Performance measures are impacted by many varied factors, some of which are sometimes beyond the control of the Local Area such as dislocated workers. When unemployment decreases, the greater share of the number of job seekers with barriers to employment increases since most other individuals are already employed. The local job market impacts performance in many different ways since the availability and quality of employment opportunities are impacted by the economy. When the number of individuals in the performance pool is relatively low, for example dislocated workers, then a slight change by a few individuals can have a significant impact on the

performance measures in a positive or negative way. The positive impacts on performance levels for our Local Workforce Development Board have been co-enrollment with Adult and Youth and Trade Adjustment and Workforce co-enrollment. Also, the National Dislocated Worker grant for Covid provided more assistance to dislocated workers. This has increased the enrollment numbers, funding opportunities, credentials, measurable skill gains, wages, and employment. The virtual opportunity for possible participants has also improved the interest, engagement, and enrollments. The closure of Continental increased the number of dislocated workers also. The negative impacts on performance are still barriers such as childcare, transportation, and housing which prevents individuals from employment. There may be a future impact on performance with a large layoff in the area by the Evergreen closure in June of 2023. The economy had a negative impact as well.

b. The participants that are served and enrolled differ since Covid19 with the characteristics historically being that the job seekers that were in search of assistance are more desperate when they are unable to obtain assistance. Also, there are more searching for a position with a salary increase, seeking a more stable position than in the past, more are searching for a change in careers, more want a position that was declared as “essential” for the pandemic in case it happens again, and many want a remote position. Teleworking and entrepreneurship are especially of interest to most due to a flexible schedule which studies show that individuals would rather have higher wages. This is due to the pandemic individuals learned to live with less. Surveys also show younger people are working less and over 50 are working more, plus older people are working longer instead of retiring. The service providers serve more potential participants and customers online with the virtual additions to the NCWorks systems, such as Live Chat, Eligibility Explorer and uploading documents in Capture Documents for qualification in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program. The virtual aspect assists in service delivery to more people and easier access which is creating performance increase.

c. The local industries and businesses that have been impacted by Covid are restaurants, hotels, hospitality and tourism, and small businesses. Most of the restaurants and small businesses that did not receive assistance have closed permanently. There have been several retail stores closed and a few businesses that were going to open that did not. The largest company in the local area, the hospital, has been impacted, as well, due to losses by change in careers due to Covid, deaths and relocation due to finances with the excessive cost of living in this region. The hospital is reaching out to traveling nurses and anyone just out of school and training to fill positions. The Healthcare and Hospitality and Tourism sectors are our largest Career Pathways along with the Commercial Driver’s License. We have enrolled many individuals recently for their Commercial Driver’s License. Our Workforce Case Managers counsel individuals on the importance of the area’s career pathways and how they can be a pathway for them to training, a better career, higher wages, and a better life. The businesses that have been permanently affected in our local area are Restaurants and Retail. There are many that have closed permanently, and some are filing for bankruptcy. Most restaurants and retail stores that remain open do not have the staff to run the store consistently, so they cut their hours and days, sometimes inconsistently. The fast-food restaurants will be able to recover, as their drive-through has kept them afloat. The Retail Industry has been affected in an extreme way due to the lack of income to make unnecessary purchases. The online sales and diversity of products such as groceries has kept some retail stores in business, such as Walmart. During initial layoffs due to Covid, the Business Services staff made phone calls and onsite visits to companies designated as “at risk” by NC Commerce. Some of

these companies closed and others provided referral services for assistance. Companies raised wages to entice job seekers to work, but it did not seem to help, and it raised the prices of merchandise at the same time, so they were paying more for purchases. Prices are up due to inflation 6-12% and gas prices have risen due to Russia invading Ukraine and inflation. This will not help to get job seekers back on their feet who already suffer from barriers in transportation and childcare and now inflation. Land of Sky Regional Council is working on a Vanpool program to assist with transportation in the community. Also, Land of Sky was awarded a grant for Early Childhood Development to be able to assist the community in this sector. The Workforce Board was awarded a small business grant and Land of Sky was also awarded a youth grant, reentry, substance disorder and several others. We are determined to bring back our communities, job seekers, and businesses with diversity, equity, and inclusion with the many grants that we have obtained and are applying to obtain.

2. What strategies and methods are in place to maintain or improve performance?

The ability of Mountain Area Workforce Development Board to meet all Federal and State Adult and Dislocated Worker, as well as Youth performance outcomes and training expenditure requirements begins with the Request for Proposal process. There will always be circumstances beyond the control of the Board in the Local Area that will have a material impact on performance in the Local Area. Workforce Service Providers and NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area are monitored on a monthly basis, by the Workforce Operations Director, to determine compliance with all relevant regulations, policies, and guidelines. Board staff and Workforce service providers meet on a quarterly basis as well as weekly when needed for training, to review performance, share best practices and to develop strategies to improve performance. This is also done virtually and individually when needed. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews participant's files to determine compliance with eligibility, that all documents are uploaded into NCWorks system and that case notes are comprehensive and appropriately detailed with matching dates, redaction is done to protect individual's personal identification information and that all other compliance, policy and guidelines are met for NCWorks government system and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews performance reports on a weekly and monthly basis with discussions occurring continually on possible opportunities to improve performance outcomes individually and to meet training expenditure requirements. Daily information is shared with the service providers from NCWorks and FutureWorks Reporting to better serve the community and to improve file information and performance as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion and how it affects performance positively when information is shared and negatively when barriers are in place. FutureWorks Dashboards and Equal Opportunity Reporting are shared with the Board Members. Credential Reporting from the Roster in FutureWorks, as well as NCWorks is used to follow up on credential completion and data entry to NCWorks for performance measures. Performance is shared among the Board and Stakeholders in each of the board packets for the Local Area Board Meetings. Performance is shared with Workforce Case Managers on an ongoing basis along with Adult Priority of Service and Data Integrity Measures. Contractors are encouraged to take initiative-taking steps to improve performance and contracts demand that the Local Area meet or exceed all relevant performance measures, including federal performance measures. Follow-up services are critical in achieving performance measures and contractors are expected to provide follow up services. The employment, median earnings, credentials, and measurable skills gains are recorded in the 2nd and 4th quarters by the State, which impact performance numbers. Our regional contractors have done well in their performance measures, including the newest of these being measurable skills gains, which the Workforce Operations Director required two years before the State set goals. All Workforce Case Managers are expected to make improvements in necessary areas on a quarterly basis. The Board is required to meet the 20% Youth Work Experience each year to ensure that youth use this tool to prepare for their workforce career. We have very much improved this number this program year. The primary importance of the performance measures is employment which the Local Board maintains our goal to assist in serving all individuals with equity, diversity, and inclusion in our community to ensure them training and employment with higher wages for a better life and to assist employers with skilled staff to improve their company and our community.

Note: Include information about tracking performance, ensuring accountability of positive performance outcomes, and training. Consider including the following information: Who is responsible for tracking performance? Which reports are reviewed? Are Future Works reports used? If so, how often? How are staff held accountable? How often is training provided to staff.

3. In the event the Local Area WDB is not on track to meet yearly performance indicator goals, please discuss what corrective actions/steps would be undertaken to address this situation.

The Local Area Board maintains constant tracking of all performance measures to meet annual goals and to improve performance that may not be on track to meet. This happens through the following process to establish sharing efforts leading to goals met and discussion to better improve performance where goals might not be met. The Local Area reviews performance on an ongoing basis through NCWorks and FutureWorks Reporting and Rosters. Workforce Case managers are notified on a regular basis of any issues with performance. The Local Area holds quarterly case managers' meetings, and weekly if needed, where performance is reviewed and information is shared on how to improve performance, along with training. The Local Board is dedicated to meeting and exceeding goals set for all performance. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews the individuals in the performance pool and emphasizes to the Case Managers the importance of follow up, especially in the 2nd and 4th quarter, where the State pulls the Performance Measures for employment, median earnings, credentials, and measurable skills gains. Individuals are offered follow-up services and are provided with other opportunities to maintain employment, earn a post-secondary credential and to increase their wages. Workforce Service Providers and NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area are monitored on a daily basis to determine compliance with all relevant regulations and policies. Board staff and Workforce service providers meet on a quarterly basis for training, to review performance, share best practices and to develop strategies to improve performance. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews participant's files to determine compliance with eligibility, that all documents are uploaded into NCWorks system and that case notes are comprehensive and appropriately detailed. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board reviews performance reports on a monthly basis and discussion occurs continually on possible opportunities to improve performance outcomes and to meet training expenditure requirements. Daily information is shared with the service providers from NCWorks and FutureWorks to better serve the community and to improve file information and performance. FutureWorks Dashboards and Equal Opportunity Reporting are shared with the Board Members, as well as the Credential Reporting is used to follow up on credential completion and data entry to NCWorks. Performance is shared among the Board and Stakeholders in each of the board packets for the Local Area Board Meetings. Performance is shared with Workforce Case Managers on an ongoing basis. Contractors are encouraged to take proactive steps to improve performance and contracts demand that the Local Area meet or exceed all relevant performance measures including federal performance measures. Follow-up services are critical in achieving performance measures and contractors are expected to provide follow up services. The employment is recorded in the 2nd and 4th quarters, which impacts performance numbers. Circumstances can also control performance measures due to less dislocated workers because of no company closures and low unemployment because everyone that wants to work is working. If the performance numbers are impacted negatively, the Case Managers are expected to improve

performance within the next two quarters. If there is no improvement at that point, a letter will be sent to the Supervisor to inform them of the issue and if continued a Request for Proposal may be sent out.

Note: This question is intended to be hypothetical and is seeking what plan the Local Area WDB has in place to address failing performance if it were to occur. Answers should address how the Local Area WDB monitors performance, communicates with staff, strategies for training and/or addressing potential issues, and follow-up accountability measures.

4. How is performance information shared throughout the hierarchy of staff? Please detail how the Local Area WDB addresses performance data in its relationship with its service provider(s) and how case managers are using performance data to drive Local Area WDB performance.

Performance is shared among the Board and Stakeholders in each of the board packets for the Local Area Board Meetings. Performance is shared with Workforce Case Managers on an ongoing basis by email, reporting, in person and virtual meetings, print outs and phone conversations. Contractors are encouraged to take proactive steps to improve performance and contracts demand that the Local Area meet or exceed all relevant performance measures including federal performance measures. The Local Board is dedicated to the goals we have set with the State. Different counties have different performance measures such as rural counties have a transportation barrier due to the fact of less public transportation so this can decrease the performance measures. Follow up services are critical in achieving performance measures and contractors are expected to provide follow up services, which the employment, median earnings, and measurable skill gains are recorded in the 2nd and 4th quarters and impact performance numbers positively with employment. The Local Area reviews performance on an ongoing basis through NCWorks and FutureWorks. Case managers are notified on a regular basis of any issues with performance, weekly and monthly. The Local Area holds quarterly case managers meetings where performance is reviewed and information is shared on how to improve performance, along with program training. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews the individuals in the performance pool and emphasizes to the Case Managers the importance of follow up, especially in the 2nd and 4th quarter. Individuals are offered follow-up services and are provided with other opportunities to maintain employment, earn a post-secondary credential and to increase their wages. Circumstances beyond the control of the Board in the Local Area will have a material impact on performance in the Local Area. Service Providers and NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area are monitored on a daily basis to determine compliance with all relevant regulations and policies. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Workforce Operations Director reviews participant's files to determine compliance with eligibility, that all documents are uploaded into NCWorks system and that case notes are comprehensive and appropriately detailed. The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board reviews performance reports on a monthly basis and discussion occurs continually on possible opportunities to improve performance outcomes and to meet training expenditure requirements. Daily information is shared with the service providers from NCWorks and FutureWorks to better serve the community and to improve file information and performance with diversity, equity, and inclusion. FutureWorks Dashboards and Equal Opportunity Reporting are shared with the Board Members, as well as the Credential Reporting

is used to follow up on credential completion and insertion to NCWorks. The recorded employment impacts performance numbers and develops various levels of staff in an outreach to meet their assigned goals. These increased performance measures also show that many individuals are assisted in better opportunities.

Note: Include information about tracking performance, ensuring accountability of positive performance outcomes, and training. Consider including the following information: Who is responsible for tracking performance? Which reports are reviewed? Are Future Works reports used? If so, how often? How are staff held accountable? How often is training provided to staff?

5. The Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) measure is a real-time indicator denoting participants who are making demonstrable progress on a track toward Credential Attainment. Please describe how the Local Area WDB makes use of the information the MSG measure provides as a means of ensuring the Local Area WDB achieves its Credential Attainment indicator goal.

The Local Area Workforce Operations Director constantly monitors the Board's performance measures on a daily and weekly basis, including the Measurable Skills Gain to meet the Credential Attainment and reviews opportunities to increase measurable skill gains for participants with direct communication to remind the Case Managers to enter a Measurable Skill Gains with documentation when applicable. The NCWorks and FutureWorks system reporting with roster for credentials and measurable skill gains is utilized to follow up on the insertion and comparison of these items for each participant. The Workforce Operations Director is responsible for training on Performance Measures and started the Measurable Skills Gains implementation two years before it was necessary for State goals to be at a more proficient measure at this time. The Case Managers have an exceptionally good understanding of how this works and why it is monitored. They pay close attention to the credential and skill gains to ensure the participant follows through with the training and career originally discussed. The Case Managers vet the individual from the beginning with assessment, training, testing, and discussion of their goal for their career. They also sometimes reach out to the Specialist to check on the performance before meetings. Our local team cares about the individual and the case management details. Anytime there is a concern about a participant completing training, the Case Manager reaches out to the Specialist, and it is discussed on what steps can be taken to ensure completion which this is individualized depending on the circumstances.

Note: For this question, describe the methods and/or strategies in using the MSG measure as a means of tracking Credential Attainment. Who is responsible for tracking the MSG performance indicator? Are the Roster Reports in FutureWorks utilized? If so, how? Who is this information provided to, and then used by, career advisors, the Local Area WDB, or other staff?

6. When selecting an eligible training provider from the State Eligible Training Provider List to certify for local use, what is the review process your local area uses to make this decision? How are customers informed that they have options in choosing their provider?

Eligible training providers have been reviewed in the past when they registered, yearly additions and every two years for detailed updates. The State now approves the providers and their courses based off of required documentation from the company and success of the programs or provider. Once approved by the State, the Local Board looks at local approval based off of the system information with cost, local questionnaire provided to the provider and determines if it is a local career pathway that is needed and offering in demand occupational skills training. If approved at this point, the Workforce Operations Director certifies the program and provider. The customers are provided with a list of the providers by the Workforce Case Manager during the initial assessment to determine the goal of the customer and assist in career advancement. The NCWorks system is also shared with the individual for approved programs, along with the NCCareers.org and Wagner Peyser registration with the Eligibility Explorer application.

7. Define what “significant number of competent providers” means in the Local Area WDB. Include whether the Local Area WDB uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board’s Eligible Training Providers Policy dictates the procedures regarding the selection and approval of training providers. While the state has responsibility for the determination of the list of eligible training providers, Local Boards must work in conjunction with the State to establish criteria and information requirements in addition to those requirements established by the Governor and to make participants and employers aware of Consumer Choice. After the prospective training provider has completed the NCWorks training service provider’s registration online and been approved by the state for the list of approved training providers, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board requires that applicants seeking to be approved as training providers within the region also submit their information by responding to a questionnaire. The Local Board looks at local approval based off of the system information with cost, local questionnaire provided to the provider and determines if it is a local career pathway that is needed and offering in demand occupational skills training. The questionnaire is included in the Board Policy Regarding the Approval of Training Providers Policy and requires information regarding the potential training provider, including their financial stability and their occupational training programs.

- Attach if a separate policy.
 - Name Document: *Local Area WDB Name ETPL Policy*. **A copy of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board’s Eligible Training Providers Policy is attached in WISE.**

VII. Equal Opportunity

1. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. [WIOA Section 188]

The process to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin is through continual equal opportunity training, reporting and reviews with diversity, equity, and inclusion training as well as customer service training when requested. The training process is scheduled on an annual basis and more frequent when necessary. There are equal opportunity and diversity, equity and inclusion meetings and webinars assigned during the year and some on a monthly basis. Individual meetings are also held with Workforce Case Managers if necessary to ensure fairness for all. Access to centers and their services are provided for persons with disabilities. There is also more virtual access for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act enrollment with capture documents and the Eligibility Explorer application. NCWorks.org and NCCareers.org are extremely helpful sites for a career search. FutureWorks and NCWorks Reporting provides the reports for the Workforce Operations Director to share the individual breakdown of various areas with each Case Manager to better train on equal opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion so each individual can be assisted fairly. The Local Board has not had any reports of discrimination of any kind due to the training provided. If this were to happen, the Board would follow the Equal Opportunity Policy Attached to address any issues with individuals and staff.

2. Attach the Local Area WDB's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR 38.35].

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name EO Complaint Grievance Procedure*. **The Mountain Area Equal Opportunity Complaint Grievance Procedure is attached in WISE.**

3. Describe the methods used to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated.

The Workforce Operations Director ensures that Local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated by visiting the Contractors and Career Centers on an annual basis to verify materials and services are in place and files are monitored on daily basis for Equal Opportunity procedures and documentation with discussion among the Case Managers and Career Centers on equal opportunity and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The State provides training on an annual basis. Local Board training is provided as needed, along with online training during the year. The use of NCWorks and FutureWorks allows for the breakdown of individuals for monitoring ethnicity as well. Circumstances and location can control this due to the individual needs and rural areas. The Local Board is dedicated to serving any and all individuals through equal opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

VIII. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

1. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services.
 - a. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers.
 - b. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]

a. The Mountain Area's vision for serving the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers includes excellent customer service training and diversity, equity and inclusion training and equal opportunity training all when needed, high level goals in performance and measurable skills gains areas, continual training in NCWorks and Workforce, expanded dislocated worker vision with stop gap and 13 consecutive weeks unemployed, justice involved or training and daily discussions with Workforce Case Managers on files improvements, corrections, ideas and accomplishments. These objectives will increase and improve employment outcomes in this population due to more knowledgeable staff and increase in service with completion of training and employment opportunities. This will better serve the employer's need for a well-trained employee and higher wages for this employee. The importance of excellent customer service is shared with the providers to increase communication with the public to better service individuals and employers. Business Services contacts the local employers on a regular basis and provides a list of existing employment needs online as well as training needs. They also keep the employers and providers well versed on the registration process in NCWorks. The services provided are individualized but accessible to all per policy. The capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce are determined by each individual assessment for the program, the individual goals, and employers needs through career pathways for the most needed positions for the largest sectors and higher wages for skilled employees for the employers. Barriers are still a weakness for training services which we address with supportive services per policy the best we can. We will continue to serve our region's employers and individuals to lead to a better community and better life for all.

b. The Local Business Services communicate with employers and providers to address any weakness identified to serve all involved and provide the information and tools to succeed. We offer Incumbent Worker Training to avert layoffs, on the job training for better skilled employees for career aggression with higher wages, and job fairs and career events for marketing,

2. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs that ensures an arm's-length relationship between the Local Area WDB and service delivery.
 - a. Identify any service provider contract extensions.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board released a Request for Proposals for One-Stop Operators, which was integrated in the Request for Proposals for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Dislocated Worker Services on March 23, 2022. Contracts were awarded at the Board meeting held on June 25, 2022, for program operations to begin July 1, 2022. The contract term is for one year, renewable in one-year increments for up to three years. The process begins with the Notice of Solicitation published in a regional newspaper, print and online, announcing the

Workforce funding opportunity to operate Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Once the notice is published, the Request for Proposal is distributed via the Bidder's List and posted to www.mountainareaworks.org on the resource tab and www.landofsky.org websites on the opportunities tab. After the Bidder's Conference is scheduled, questions are accepted and answered. All questions and answers are sent to the Bidder's List. Potential Bidders are required to submit a Letter of Intent to bid. Bidders' proposals must be received by the established due date. Once received, Board members and staff review the proposals and make recommendations to the full Board for selection of contractors to operate the upcoming program year's Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The One Stop Operator selection is included in the Adult and Dislocated Worker Request for Proposal with no funding available to support that designation. Selection of program operators is through competitive procurement and the Board assure an arm's length relationship between the Local Board and service delivery by requiring that contractors who are current Workforce Board members abstain from the selection process, do not participate in discussion regarding selection of program operators and do not move, second or vote to approve contractors for the upcoming program year. As a small region with limited funding, the Local Board does not allow profit from the Workforce contracts. This limits the bidders who are interested in submitting proposals to operate programs. Our Local Board Competitive Procurement policy ensures a competitive procurement process to select providers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth services, as well as, for the operators of local, certified NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area Region using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Final Regulations and to allow the one-stop operator selection process to align with the Mountain Area competitive procurement process for selection of providers of Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services, which requires the local area to undertake a request for proposal process to competitively procure programs and to contract with Board-approved providers for up to three-years, with the initial contract period being one-year, with two extensions of one-year each, based on Board approval.

Note: While Final Regulations Section 679.410 (b) and (c) provide exceptions to the competitive procurement process, Local Area WDBs must have an arm's-length relationship to the delivery of services.

3. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract (one-four years) and the current year of the contract (e.g., Year one of possible three).

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board released a Request for Proposal for One-Stop Operators, which was integrated in the Request for Proposals for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Adult and Dislocated Worker Services on March 23, 2022. The One Stop Operators are Asheville Buncombe Community College in Buncombe, Blue Ridge Community College in Henderson, Asheville Buncombe Community College in Madison, and Blue Ridge Community College in Transylvania Career Centers. Separately, the Request for Proposal for Youth Services was also released on March 23, 2022. Contracts were awarded June 25, 2022, for program operations beginning July 1, 2022. The contract term is for one year, renewable in one-year increments for up to three years. We will be sending out Requests for Proposals again in March 2022. The current service providers for

WIOA In school and Out of School Youth are Goodwill Buncombe, Goodwill Transylvania, Henderson County Public School, and Madison County Public School. The program year 2022 Requests for Proposals for Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth were released for competitive procurement on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, and proposals were due by 4:00 pm on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. Due to the fact that the same Contractors responded to the call, they were contracted for another year. The One Stop Operators are Asheville Buncombe Community College in Buncombe, Blue Ridge Community College in Henderson, Asheville Buncombe Community College in Madison and Blue Ridge Community College in Transylvania Career Centers and One Stop Operators and for Youth Services for Out of School Youth are Goodwill Buncombe, Goodwill Transylvania and Goodwill Madison, along with Henderson County Public School and for In School Youth is Madison County Public School.

Our Local Board Competitive Procurement policy ensures a competitive procurement process to select providers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth services, as well as, for the operators of local, certified NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area Region using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Final Regulations and to allow the one-stop operator selection process to align with the Mountain Area competitive procurement process for selection of providers of Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services, which requires the local area to undertake a request for proposal process to competitively procure programs and to contract with Board approved providers for up to three-years, with the initial contract period being one-year, with two extensions of one-year each, based on Board approval.

4. Attach the Local Area WDB's Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider list effective July 1, 2023, using the PY 2023 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List provided.

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name PY 2023 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List*. **The Mountain Area Local WDB Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List is attached in WISE.**

5. Describe the Local Area WDB's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include (a) high level goals, (b) outreach strategies, (c) services delivery, and (d) expected outcomes.

The Local Area has seen many individuals who are unemployed, per the most recent data available from the NC Department of Commerce, Labor, and Economic Analysis Division. The Local Board is focused on using alternative definitions, already in progress, of Dislocated Workers including Stop Gap employment and those who have not been employed for thirteen consecutive weeks due to unemployment, justice involved, substance use disorder recovery or continuous training. There is a decline in Dislocated Workers due to the fact that fewer individuals are willing to enter training and to seek additional education when they are laid off because of their need to work immediately to support their family. There are several company closures that we will assist with in the extremely near future along with obtaining the National Dislocated Worker Grant. The Local Area Career Centers regularly contact those registered on NCWorks receiving unemployment insurance. The Business Services

department for the Local Board is reaching out to employers to serve with on-the-job training, apprenticeships, work-based learning, incumbent worker training and job shadowing. They are also working with the local Career Centers to assist with Dislocated Workers and Adults who seek training, education, and employment. We cross training all staff to assist with more knowledge in sharing opportunities and branding with NCWorks, so all individuals know where to look for their career. The Workforce Case Managers are trained frequently and consistently on updates, policies and guidelines, equal opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion to better assist possible participants in the program. The virtual aspect of NCWorks is user friendly to assist job seekers, customers and participants in job search, programs, workshops, and enrollment. The Early Childhood Development Grant has assisted the daycare and pre-school sector by enrolling many in training, after losing so many due to Covid. The previous National Dislocated Worker Grant for Covid assisted the Workforce and Trade Adjustment program in co-enrollments to give individuals more opportunities. The new training for a commercial driver's license provided by one of the local colleges has increased the number of Adult and Dislocated Worker enrollments. The Career Centers reach out to individuals with many workshops held regularly and this gives them the opportunity to address training, education, and careers in local career pathways. This will assist the employers in their hiring and retainment of better trained individuals. Our goals are to increase our dislocated worker numbers, increase our adult priority of service and credential attainment with measurable skill gains and as always assist in the youth group with barriers. The expected outcome is that we help individuals in many ways with many opportunities for a better life and better community.

6. Describe the Local Area WDB's method for ensuring that a sufficient number of adults receiving individualized career and training services in the Local Area are from one of the following priority of services categories: public assistance, low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. [134(c)(3)(E), 3(24)]

Adult Priority of Service is necessary for Mountain Area Local Workforce Development Board due to the assistance needed by individuals in our community and the policy goal of 75% adult priority of service that must be met. There are a sufficient number of adults receiving individualized career and training services by our well-trained Workforce Case Managers in the Local Area and they are usually from one of the priority of services categories such as public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient. But the primary one for our Local Area is public assistance with low income. The Workforce Operations Director trains the Case Managers to co-enroll whenever possible and applicable. This co-enrollment with Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth and the required co-enrollment with Trade Adjustment assists in the assurance that a sufficient number of adults will receive training services and supportive services if applicable. The community assists in referrals from participants sharing Workforce Case Manager's names to the Local Task Force for Disconnected Youth. The Local Board receives referrals from the Justice Center, Food Stamp office, Trade Adjustment Case Managers, the unemployment office, students, employers that have participated in Incumbent Worker Training and On the Job Training, as well as the partnerships we have with economic development representatives, MyFutureNC, INspire, other Boards and partners. The referral system is a wonderful opportunity to assist many in the community, which leads to better trained employees for the employers and satisfied employers, both send referrals to our Board. Referrals also lead to more assisted justice involved and substance use reentry individuals and on the job training.

7. Describe follow-up services provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The Workforce Operations Director for the Mountain Area Workforce Board monitors the follow up services provided to adults and dislocated workers for individual assistance and performance measures. Follow-up services must be provided for the 12 months following exit. Staff must evaluate and determine the level of intensity to best suit the needs of the individual. These services may consist of verifying employment and wages, discussing work related issues, providing education opportunities, referral to other community services, sharing job search, and labor market information. This follow up is recorded in NCWorks.

Per Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16 and Section 134(C)(2)(A), funds described shall be used to provide career services, which shall be available to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the one-stop delivery system and shall, at a minimum, include - (xiii) follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce investment activities authorized under this subtitle who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.

8. Please describe the process for monitoring the service provider(s) in the Local Area WDB. Include details such as how it is conducted, who is involved, and how often.

The Workforce Operations Director for the Mountain Area Workforce Board monitors the service providers in the Local Area on a weekly basis. The service provider is monitored on each new enrollment with eligibility documentation including redaction, rotation and grey scale, data validation, self-attestation usage, case notes and activities provided and dated correctly. The Specialist conducts monitoring on the file when work experience, on the job training, and other training is provided to ensure contracts and documents with a follow up for timesheets and attendance sheets for programs. The Specialist conducts monitoring when a participant is ready to exit for applicable documents with redaction, rotation and grey scale, credentials, closed Plan, closed activities and exit case note. A monthly contact monitoring is conducted every month to ensure contact between the Case Manager and their participants. A follow-up monitoring is conducted every quarter to ensure follow-up is being provided and every two months the Adult Priority of Service with Data Integrity Measures report and Performance Measures are shared with the Case Managers. A self-attestation monitoring is performed once per year to ensure documentation results. Work experience and on the job training monitoring are completed halfway through each participant's timeframe with on-the-job training and 10% of the work experience participants are monitored.

IX. Youth Services

USDOL provides funds to states who in turn provide local workforce areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting out-of-school youth and in-school youth with one or more barriers to employment prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. USDOL and North Carolina's priorities are:

- *Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – A minimum of 75% of the Youth funds allocated to Local Area WDBs, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide services to OSY;*

Note: USDOL has granted North Carolina a waiver for Program Years 2022 and 2023, which reduces the minimum Title I Youth expenditure rate requirement for OSY from 75% to 50% and allows the maximum expenditure rate for in-school youth (ISY) to be increased from 25% to 50%.

- *Work Experience – Not less than 20% of Youth funds allocated to the Local Area WDB, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide paid and unpaid work experiences; and a*
- *Focus on Partnering – Co-enrollment encouraged where appropriate with Title II and IV.*

1. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area WDB, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities being used and/or planned. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(9)]

Youth Workforce Activity	For Persons with Disabilities?	Brief Assessment/Model Used	Success Rating
Youth Paid Work Experience	Yes	Veterinarian position	Successful but did not follow through on a permanent position due to transportation
Youth and Adult Co-enrollment	Yes	Co-enrollment gives more opportunity and funding for more individualized training	Very Successful and still in operation.
Youth On the Job Training	Yes	Plumber and Electrician position	Very Successful 3D Training added due to success further training for Fall Semester

Youth Job Shadowing	Yes	Administrative position	Very Successful
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2. Describe how the Local Area WDB’s broad Young Adult (NextGen) Program design is unique to include:

- a. providing objective assessments.
- b. supportive services needed; and
- c. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)]

a. The Local Area NextGen Program design includes a review of basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability potential, and developmental needs. Assessments must also consider a youth's strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement. TABE testing is used to assist in assessments to better establish a career goal for the individual early in life to be able to find a career with living wages for a family. This assists the Case Manager in finding the strengths and weaknesses to better engage the individual with a career that they will enjoy and will be successful.

b. Support Services should be reasonable and necessary to enable a participant to take part in training related to their Individual Service Strategy. A Support Service should not duplicate a service a participant could receive from another program in the community.

c. Developmental needs are presented when testing and developing the individual service strategy with objective assessment in workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce investment systems that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation, as well as support a family. The local career pathways are shared and explained to the participants so they understand a better position and better wage can be achieved in these sectors. Youth and Adult co-enrollments give the individual youth more opportunity and access to funding and training. Along with the Youth on the Job Training, Youth Job Shadowing and Youth Apprenticeships which increase the opportunity for skilled training and a better career with higher wages.

3. How does the Local Area WDB ensure the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) identifies appropriate services based on the objective assessment and is linked to youth performance indicators, career pathways, and program elements? [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(B)] How does the provider ensure the ISS is unique to the individual?

Each youth has a comprehensive Individual Service Strategy based on their career goals and career pathways are shared and explained during intake. The objective assessment will help the youth reach their career goals by obtaining their Diploma or High School Equivalency, earning a post-secondary credential, and entering a rewarding career pathway. NCWorks NextGen Youth Case Managers work closely with the youth and employers to help the youth find the right career pathway for each individual specifically. The fundamentals of the NCWorks NextGen Youth Program are Intake, Objective Assessment, Individual Service Strategy and Information and Referrals along with Career Pathways. Based on individual needs identified through the Objective Assessment and Individualized Service Strategy, youth and young adults are served through an array of Workforce Development services that fall within the fourteen required program elements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The focus on serving youth and young adults is education, career pathways, career experience, career exploration, leadership development and wrap around services. Youth performance indicators for post-secondary credential attainment, employment and earnings will be met or exceeded by following this framework. Work experience is a fundamental part of the NCWorks NextGen Youth Program since it allows youth and young adults to explore career options and to determine what occupations they like and what roles are not a good fit for them. Work experience, job shadowing, on the job training and apprenticeships also provide employers an opportunity to see the youth and young adults perform in real life jobs to determine if the youth and young adults could be offered full time, unsubsidized employment. Work experience along with on-the-job training and apprenticeships is the most effective training tool available and increasing the work-based learning opportunities available to youth and young adults will help the Local Area more effectively meet performance measures as well as connect them with rewarding career pathways. The co-enrollment of adult and youth groups gives youth more opportunity in training to prepare for their career. We as a Local Board are committed to the assistance of youth and all other individuals with equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion, and equity to support our community, as well as assist our partners, employers, other Boards, and economic development sector.

4. Describe the Local Area WDB's strategy to ensure Youth (NextGen) Program activities lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent or a recognized post-secondary credential and post-secondary education and training opportunities. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)]

The strategy to ensure the Youth NextGen Program activities lead to a high school diploma or equivalent is to make sure each youth has a comprehensive Individual Service Strategy based on their career goals. The objective assessment will help the youth reach their career goals by obtaining their diploma or high school equivalency, earning a postsecondary credential, and entering into a rewarding career pathway along with work experience, job shadowing, and apprenticeships. NCWorks NextGen Youth Case Mangers work closely with the youth and employers to help the youth find the right career pathway for them and experience work-based learning. They also stay in contact with them on a

monthly basis and sometimes weekly, which develops a relationship and respect for the Case Manager to be more influential in leading the participant to the completion of training. The fundamentals of the NCWorks NextGen Youth Program are Intake, Objective Assessment, Individual Service Strategy and Information and Referrals and work-based learning. Based on individual needs identified through the Objective Assessment and Individualized Service Strategy, youth and young adults are served through an array of Workforce Development services that fall within the fourteen required program elements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The focus on serving youth and young adults is education, career pathways, career experience, leadership development and wrap around services. Work experience along with youth on the job training, youth apprenticeships, job shadowing is a fundamental part of the NCWorks NextGen Youth Program since it allows youth and young adults to explore career options and to determine what occupations they like and what roles that are not a good fit for them. This leads them to a better career with higher wages.

5. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for (NextGen) youth.

The Mountain Area's Youth Program Operators provide follow up services for NextGen Youth who have completed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act short term or long-term training and are seeking employment or have entered employment, as well as training for their general education diploma. Staff conduct these follow-ups in person, by telephone or by email. Follow up services continue for a minimum of 12 months after exit from the program. When the participant exits from the program, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board places significant emphasis on providing follow up, since we recognize most of our clients have many barriers to employment. Collaborating with the clients proactively can help the individual remain employed and make progress on their self-selected career pathway. These services provided are career counseling, job search, discussion of work-related issues, referrals to community services, labor market information, and education information. This is recorded in NCWorks.

Note: All youth participants must receive some form of follow-up for a minimum duration of 12 months.

6. Where does the Local Area WDB plan to serve the young adults (NextGen): NCWorks Career Centers Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized Centers, Services Provider Offices, or Hybrid situations? Explain if it is both NCWorks Career Centers and Provider Offices or some other option.

The local area serves the NextGen young adults through the public schools and Goodwill contractors offices. This will be hybrid, online or in person depending on what best benefits the individual. The Youth Committee was established to address any programs, sites, functions, and technology to increase the opportunity to serve NextGen customers such as on the job training, job shadowing, apprenticeships along with paid work experience. The NextGen Youth attend the Asheville Buncombe Technical College and Blue Ridge Community College for training when appropriate. They are also co-enrolled in adult and youth groups for more opportunity for funding and training. The Career Centers hold scheduled workshops to benefit all individuals. We at the Mountain Area Workforce Board do all we can to assist

all individuals in our region with equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion and equity in training and employment that leads to higher wages for a better life.

7. Attach the Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider's chart, effective July 1, 2023, using the PY 2023 Youth Service Provider List provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided.

- Name of the document: *PY 2023 Local Area WDB Name Youth Service Provider List*. **A copy of the Mountain Area Youth Service Provider List is attached in WISE.**

8. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs was completed, to include any contract extensions and the current year of the contract (e.g., first of possible three years).

The Request for Proposal process begins with the publication of a Notice of Solicitation, after which the Request for Proposal packets are distributed to the Youth Bidders' List and upon request. A Bidders' Conference was held, and questions answered, which were distributed to all Bidders. A Letter of Intent to Bid was also required from potential Bidders. Proposals were due by the date established in the request and were received from the current Youth Program Operators. The program year 2022 Requests for Proposals for Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth were released for competitive procurement on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, and proposals were due by 4:00 pm on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. Due to the fact that the same Contractors responded to the call, they were contracted for another year. They are the Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Career Centers and for Youth Services for Out of School Youth are Goodwill Buncombe, Goodwill Transylvania, and Madison, along with Henderson County Public School and for In School Youth is Madison County Public School. Our Local Board Competitive Procurement policy ensures a competitive procurement process to select providers of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth services, as well as, for the operators of local, certified NCWorks Career Centers in the Mountain Area Region using the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Final Regulations and to allow the one-stop operator selection process to align with the Mountain Area competitive procurement process for selection of providers of Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services, which requires the local area to undertake a request for proposal process to competitively procure programs and to contract with Board approved providers for up to three years, with the initial contract period being one year, with two extensions of one year each, based on Board approval.

USDOL has granted North Carolina a waiver for Program Years 2022 and 2023, which reduces the minimum Title I Youth expenditure rate requirement for OSY from 75% to 50% and allows the maximum expenditure rate for in-school youth (ISY) to be increased from 25% to 50%.

9. Provide the Local Area WDB's approach to meeting the required 75% minimum (NextGen) youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design. *If the WDB is choosing to implement the WIOA Title I Youth 75% expenditure requirement waiver for PY 2023, please state N/A for this question and respond appropriately to all questions listed below.*

Did the Local Area WDB implement the WIOA Title I Youth 75% expenditure requirement waiver for PY 2022?

Local Area WDBs choosing to implement the WIOA Title I Youth 75% expenditure requirement waiver for PY 2023 must respond to each item listed below. *If the WDB does not desire to implement the waiver, please state N/A for questions a, b, and c and respond to the questions listed above.*

- a) State how the WDB will achieve the 50% OSY expenditure rate and describe the steps that will be taken to comply with the WDB's programmatic goals and outcomes.
- b) Describe why there is a need to serve additional ISY in the local area region and state how the WDB will achieve the 50% ISY expenditure rate.
- c) Describe how the local area region will be able to meet the demand for youth services by using the waiver.

[WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)] (CPS 09-2021) (OG 07-2022)

The Mountain Area Workforce Board is contracted with three youth service providers and two serve only Out of School Youth, so we are choosing not to implement the 50% waiver. Both of these program operators provide career counseling and planning services for eligible youth, and they provide work-based learning opportunities for eligible youth participants. They will also refer clients for short and long-term training opportunities and on-the-job training funded by the Local Workforce Board when possible. These participants will also be provided with registered apprenticeship opportunities when arrangements with employers can be made, along with possible job shadowing opportunities. The career readiness coaches work with youth and help them determine their best option to improve their skills and employment opportunities. In some cases, the youth may choose not to re-enroll in the public school system and will work to obtain their high school equivalency diploma. All of the programs emphasize work experience, short term skills training focusing on earning an industry recognized post-secondary occupational skills credential and on the job training, when funding is available, to assist with placement into unsubsidized employment as well as apprenticeships and job shadowing when available. The Youth Program Operators in the region are working to eliminate barriers between the Title II Adult Education providers at the community colleges and area literacy councils by working with the Local County Disconnected Youth Task Force and Jobs for NC Graduates. Improving collaboration will help reach more Out of School Youth and provide them many different career pathways with self-sufficient wages.

***Questions a, b, c not applicable**

10. How does the Local Area WDB ensure that the minimum of 20% of funds is spent on work experience and is the Local Area WDB expending the 20% minimum on work experience to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth? If the Local Area WDB has not been meeting the minimum of 20% of funds, please explain additional measures to be taken this year. [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)] (CPS 09-2021)

The Local Area is committed to meeting the federally mandated 20% requirement of all Youth funds to be spent on work experience. It is the intent of the Local Area to maximize youth work experience to the greatest extent possible. The NCWorks NextGen Youth Program Case Managers are always connecting with the Local Area business services team to increase opportunities to expand work experience with on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and job shadowing. Board staff monitors youth work experience spending on a monthly basis to determine if the Local Area is on target to meet the 20% work experience mandate. If youth contractors are not reporting sufficient youth work experience, staff will meet with contractors to determine strategy needed to increase their youth work experience through apprenticeships, job shadowing, on the job training and paid work experience. Also, the Local Area financial reports are shared with the Board at each regularly scheduled board meeting and the Board is informed about the progress being made to meet the 20% work experience mandate which the Youth Committee collaborates on. New policy measures have been taken to ensure the mandate will be met with staff time and more work experience funding.

11. Does the Local Area WDB have a dedicated full-time Youth Business Services Representative (or similar title) at the Local Area WDB level or at the Provider level, and if so, state which level and how many?

The Mountain Area Workforce Board has recently hired one dedicated full-time Youth Business Services Representative on our Board staff.

12. Does the Local Area WDB have special programs for young adults that are Justice-Involved or have a substance use disorder? If yes, please briefly describe them.

The Local Board ensures the assistance of justice involved and substance use disorder individuals in our program. We recently obtained, along with Land of Sky Regional Council, two grants from the American Rescue Plan Act. These grants are for reentry and substance use disorder. The Board is dedicated to serving all individuals with equal opportunity, equity, inclusion, and diversity. Land of Sky Regional Council also has another INspire grant that assists with this also. It has been a goal of the Workforce Board for many years to do the best we can to assist these in need with enrollment, funding for occupational skills training, job search, on the job training, and supportive services.

13. Describe how the Local Area WDB partners, aligns, and leverages, as appropriate with:

- a. Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies.
- b. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies.

- c. Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as Local Area WDB's and the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]

a. **The Local Area's NCWorks Career Centers and Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs work closely together through a process of informal and formal referral processes. In all four counties in the Local Area, the community college is a provider of Adult Education and Literacy. The advantage in three of the four counties is that the NCWorks Career Center is located on the community college campus and often within walking distance of the Adult Education and Literacy provider. In the case of the Buncombe NCWorks Career Center, the community college and the center are on the same public transportation bus line and in relatively close proximity. Based on the initial screening at the NCWorks Career Center, it is determined whether the individual needs additional literacy skills. A referral is then made to the Adult Education and Literacy provider along with additional guidance for the individual. There is a follow up to determine if the individual accessed the literacy services.**

b. **Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation staff is out posted on a weekly basis at the Buncombe NCWorks Career Center. At the other three NCWorks Career Centers in the region, there is a process of informal and formal referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. The Vocational Rehabilitation office is served by limited public transportation access and our posting staff allows for more accessibility for career services for individuals with disabilities.**

c. **Adult education, occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as well as career pathways for youth, are often linked. The NCWorks Career Centers in the Local Area have an integrated service design, which provides services to many different populations in a seamless manner. All centers have staff trained to work with job seekers with barriers to employment, which includes former offender specialists. There is close collaboration with agencies providing public assistance and services to homeless individuals with each of the NCWorks Career Centers. Since messaging and marketing can be used for different populations, the career pathways available to youth are the same career pathways available to other populations. These Career Pathways are Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, and in the process of certification are Information Technology and Skilled Trades and Construction. A career pathway offers many on ramp and off ramp opportunities depending on that individual's preferences and life circumstances. Regardless of the age of the individual or their relevant skill level, the career pathways can be made available to all these populations through co-enrollment and other avenues.**

14. Specify if the Local Area WDB plans to offer incentives for (NextGen) youth.

If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include:

- a. criteria to be used to award incentives.
- b. type(s) of incentive awards to be made available.
- c. whether WIOA funds will be used; and
- d. the Local Area WDB's internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards.

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Incentive Policy. **The Mountain Area does not have a Youth Incentives Policy, nor does it provide Youth participants with incentives.**

15. If the Local Area WDB does not offer incentives for (NextGen) youth, please explain why.

The Board has made significant cuts to our youth contractors' budgets, including reducing youth contractors by two contractors, while still maintaining services in each county in the region. We do not have the funding to offer incentives and therefore do not have a policy.

16. Describe the local strategy to prepare the youth (NextGen) for unsubsidized employment, including with small employers, specifically those that include in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and/or regional labor markets. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)(v)]

The Local Area is focused on the NCWorks NextGen Youth Program with the target sector career pathways of Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Energy, and in the process of certification are Information Technology and Skilled Trades and Construction. The Board has determined that these sectors are the source of high demand and high wage jobs in the Local Area. As a result, with employer leadership the Local Area has developed career pathways for these sectors. These career pathways are focused on diverse populations including youth, justice involved, substance use disorder and persons with disabilities. Helping connect with these career pathways will lead to careers that offer self-sufficient wages, unsubsidized employment including in small employers, specifically in demand industry sectors and occupations to local and regional labor markets.

17. Please complete the Youth Program Elements chart provided to demonstrate how the Local Area WDB ensures each of the 14 youth program elements is made available to youth participants. Be certain to complete both columns to demonstrate partnerships and potential use of shared funding. Please specify partners. [WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(A)]

- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Youth Program Elements Chart*. **The Mountain Area's Youth Program Elements is attached in WISE.**

18. Does the Local Area WDB have a standing committee to provide information to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

a. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.

Not Applicable.

b. If yes, please provide a response to the following

- a) Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

Yes, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has a standing Youth Committee that provides information and assists with planning, operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to NextGen young adults. The Youth Committee is comprised of Board members, employers, educators, and representatives of community organizations that serve NextGen youth and young adults. The Youth Committee’s purpose is to establish and maintain better education and careers for the youth and young adults, so they are able to have a better life and support a family. The committee’s vision in this is to collaborate with partners and economic development to assist with barriers in transportation, childcare and housing, which holds most youth and young adults back and more work-based learning opportunities.

b) Provide the youth committee’s top three goals or objectives for PY 2023.

Locate more opportunities in work experience to lead to unsubsidized jobs for youth.

Collaborate more with partners and economic development on barriers for youth.

Learn more about broadband development to receive more access for youth.

c) Provide a list of youth committee members to include members’ agencies/organization, one of which must be a community-based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. Provide the Committee’s Chair information in the first block (*who must be a Local Area WDB member*).

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Committee Members [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]
The Mountain Area’s Youth Committee Members List is attached in WISE.

c. Complete the following chart for the PY 2023 Youth Committee’s planned meeting schedule to include dates, time, and location. (Expand form as needed or mark Not Applicable.)

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
April 25, 2023	1:00 pm	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting
June 21, 2023	1:00	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting
August 16, 2023	1:00 pm	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting
October 18, 2023	1:00 pm	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting
December	12:00 pm	TBD (not a regular meeting)

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
March 20, 2024	1:00 pm	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting
May 22, 2024	1:00 pm	Virtual Meeting 339 New Leicester Highway, Asheville, NC 28806 Link will be shared prior to meeting

X. Local Area WDB Innovations

1. List additional funding received by the Local Area WDB to include special grants (Youth Initiative), NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants, National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) (disaster), Youth Build, Foundations, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), NCWorks Commission, and outside funding to include a brief description of the source and the amount received.

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
ARC INspire Grant	Recovery to career	July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024	Dogwood Health Trust and Appalachian Regional Commission \$1.1 million 3 years	Southwestern 11 counties
National Dislocated Worker Grant	Pandemic recovery	July 1, 2020 - March 31, 2023	Division of Workforce \$350,000 3 years	Mountain Area
NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grant	Governor Cooper’s initiative for higher wages	July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023	Division of Workforce \$50,000	Mountain Area
ARC Power Grant	Early Childhood Development initiative	July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024	Dogwood Health Trust and Appalachian Regional Commission \$1.1 million 3 years	Southwestern 11 counties
John M. Belk Endowment	myFutureNC- Credential Attainment	July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023	John Belk \$285,000	Mountain Area
Business Accelerator Grant	On the Job Training	July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	Division of Workforce \$25,000	Mountain Area
American Rescue Plan Act Grant	Small Businesses Reentry Substance Use	March 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026	Division of Workforce Solutions	Mountain Area

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
National Dislocated Worker Grant	Evergreen Closure June 9, 2023	pending	\$500,000	Mountain Area
Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities	Facilitate alignment of workforce and economic development strategies	February 1, 2023 – \$1.4 million	USDOL	Mountain Area
GOPLACES WIOA Youth Demonstration Grant	Provides services to at-risk, justice involved Youth in two census tracks in Asheville, NC and in Knoxville and Cooke County, TN and surrounding area.	April 1, 2023 \$3.9 Million	USDOL	Eastern Tennessee Development District

2. Describe one of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising Adult/Dislocated Worker program practices that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the best and most viable adult and dislocated worker program practices is that case managers help the participant in the beginning to narrow down training to the best option for employment, training to better qualify them for a permanent position and better prepare them for employers, so they can make the highest wages possible. Also, the co-enrollment of Workforce and Trade Adjustment programs is a practice that not only has assisted individuals with more opportunities but has also increased the enrollment numbers for the programs. Due to the scheduled closure of a large manufacturing facility Continental, a WARN notice was issued in February 2020 for a closure date of March 2023. In an effort to assist affected workers who met dislocated worker eligibility, the Board offered financial support for online training and certifications to upskill these individuals. This allows them to obtain training and certifications that will be critical to their next job. Another company will close June 9, 2023, Evergreen; and we will receive another National Dislocated Worker Grant of \$500,000 to assist these employees along with the Southwestern Board. Evidence is collected from NCWorks and FutureWorks that shows the increase in enrollments which increased performance measures. This was not only from this situation but also due to the increased numbers in training for commercial driver’s licenses. These numbers are still not pre-pandemic numbers, but our goal at the Local Board is to assist anyone in need that we can, such as individuals seeking training or employment for increased wages and employers seeking skilled employees in our regional communities, response to

other Boards in need, such as in the Evergreen closure with the South Western Board, and collaborate with other States for grants to assist our communities, such as in the USDOL grant we received with Tennessee. Evidence is collected from NCWorks that shows the increase in activities.

3. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's best or promising Youth program practices that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the best youth practices is to co-enroll youth and adult, which gives students access to more training. There is a lack in funding for youth, since there is no other way to obtain funding other than from the State, so this gives the youth the extra funding they need to obtain more training. Also, the incorporation of work experience, on the job training, job shadowing and apprenticeships give the youth a better start to a career and higher wages to support themselves and their families. Being able to enroll youth in work experience shows impressive results and better career choices with higher wages. Evidence is collected from NCWorks and FutureWorks that shows the increase in enrollments which increased performance measures. Enrollments doubled this program year as did the work experience.

4. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's best or promising regional strategies that has yielded positive results and describe how the WDB informs other local WDBs of the best or promising regional workforce practices. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the best regional strategies that has yielded positive results is co-enrollment in Trade Adjustment and Workforce to be able to help the participants more and increase the Mountain Area's Performance Measures. There has been an increase in enrollments since the implementation of the Trade and Workforce co-enrollments policy as shown in NCWorks and FutureWorks, which increases performance measures. Also, adult priority of service has increased since the co-enrollment of youth and adults for opportunities for youth to access training to be better skilled for higher wages. Evidence is collected from NCWorks that shows the increase in activities.

5. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's innovative business services strategies. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the best strategies for business services as a whole is to share policy and guideline information with the employers, so they can better assist the participant in the explanation of the program and collection of documentation as well as a better experience for the employer and job seeker altogether. And this can also lead to more registrations in NCWorks with employers and providers because they better understand what we have to offer and how much more it can help them now and futuristically. There is evidence of this as we have more registrations locally with employer codes increasing every day. We now have implemented the Salesforce system to be able to increase employer code data entry.

6. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's best or promising virtual services strategies that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

The Mountain Area Workforce Board's best virtual service strategy that has yielded positive results is virtual enrollment due to the fact that the best way to communicate is virtually now more than ever for various individual reasoning. When the Case Manager is contacted, they let the individual know what documentation they will be required to present for possible qualification of enrollment to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program. The individual can register in Wagner Peyser, apply with Eligibility Explorer, and upload their documentation. After review by the Case Manager, an online meeting can be set up for enrollment with electronic signatures. The evidence that this practice works is the increase in enrollments in our local area in NCWorks and FutureWorks. Of course, our Local Area Case Managers will always collaborate with the individual for the best outcome for the individual virtually or in person.

7. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's business engagement practices that demonstrated employers taking charge and driving the agenda.

The Local Board's best engagement practice demonstrates employers taking charge and driving the agenda at job fairs and career events. We let them take the lead and they always outperform. The most recent being Construction Career Day on March 28 and 29, 2023 with assistance of board staff. The employers went out and raised on their own \$30,000 to fund the event. Then they took the day on, set up, motivated, demonstrated, provided, informed, explained and cleaned up. There were approximately 800 individuals and students in attendance and approximately 100 employers. They were amazing and we appreciate all our local employers and all they do. The Local Business Service Staff with the Board staff collaborate closely with the local employers, local chambers from each county, and economic development representatives from each county. These groups attend the Board meetings, give presentations with updates, and we communicate as much as possible to be able to assist the region together in all we can do for the success of our community.

XI. Program Year 2023 Local Area WDB Plan Required Policy Attachments

1. The following policies are *required* to be attached as separate documents in WISE as part of the PY 2023 Local Area Plan. The Local Area Plan is not complete without these documents.

- Name Each Document: Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name.

- In the first column, state if the policy is attached or why it is missing and when it can be expected. If two of the policies have been combined, please make a notation.
- In the second column mark “Yes” *only* if the policy has been changed/revised for the PY 2023 Plan and requires a review for PY 2023 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
- Do not add an empty document in WISE as a “placeholder.”

Required Local Area WDB Policies	Attached (Yes/No). If no, why?	Revised for PY 2023 (Yes/No) and needs review
1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy	Yes	No
2. Competitive Procurement Policy	Yes	No
3. Conflict of Interest Policy	Yes	No
4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures	Yes	No
5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I	Yes	No
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	Yes	No
7. On-the-Job Training Policy	Yes	No
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	Yes	No
9. Priority of Service Policy	Yes	No
10. Youth Work Experience Policy	Yes	No
11. Supportive Services Policy	Yes	No
12. Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy	Yes	Yes

2. Designate whether the following local *Optional Policy* is included and used at the Local Area WDB and is included in the Local Area Plan or write “N/A” implying “Not Applicable” if the Local Area WDB does not have this policy and therefore, does not use these services.

In the second column mark “Yes” *only* if the policy has been changed for PY 2023 and requires a review for PY 2023 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.

- Do not add a blank document in WISE as a “placeholder.”
- These policies are required to operate/offer these services.
- If “Yes” load the policy as a separate document.
- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name*. (Example: IWT Policy – Yes. Attached as *Board Name IWT Policy*.)

Optional Local Area WDB Policies	Yes- the Local Area WDB has a policy or N/A (Not Applicable)	Revised for PY 2023 (Add Yes or N/A for this column)
1. Local Area WDB Guidance for Local Incumbent Worker Grants	Yes	Yes
2. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy	No	No
3. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy	Yes	No
4. Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy	No	No

3. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are required [Regulations Section 680.300] to pay the cost of training provided with Adult and Dislocated Worker funds and limitations on duration and amount may be included [Regulations Section 680.320]. Please provide the following ITA elements in summary:

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Dollar Amounts	\$1,750 per semester \$3,500 per year \$7,000 per two years
Time Limits	Up to Two Years for an associate degree. One-year for Diploma or Certificate credential. An additional \$1,000 will be allowed if necessary to complete the training up to a maximum of \$8,000, on a case-by-case basis, per case manager request.
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor, other)	Associate degree, Diploma, and Certificates are allowed. A bachelor’s degree is allowed when indicated by the long-term

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
	training participant's Individual Employment Plan and the training could be completed within the time frame and dollar limits of the ITA.
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	Case Managers have the ability to request waivers to funding and time limits based on individual participant circumstances.
Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short-term, etc.)	Each Semester an ITA is issued for Participants in long-term training.
Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.)	Items which are integral to training, including required uniforms, tools, exams such as nursing.
Other	N/A

4. Please specify the supportive services provided by the Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy. List specific items under Supplies, Emergency, and Other, as identified in the Local Area WDB policy. (Expand form as needed.)

Transportation	Childcare	Supplies (include examples)	Emergency (include examples)	Other (include examples)
Transportation to employment	Childcare to support a working parent no late fees	Supplies required for employment uniform, shoes, tools	Utility bill no late fees	Rent no late fees
Transportation to training	Dependent care no late fees	Supplies required for training such as uniform, shoes, tools	Medical bill no late fees	Educational testing not in ITA
Vehicle repair with 3 estimates	Disability accommodations	Eyeglasses	Dentist no late fees	Training material not in ITA

Note: The Local Area WDB must adequately safeguard all forms of supportive services payments (i.e., gas cards, cash, gift cards, etc.) and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes. The Supportive Services Policy must include the Local Area WDB's internal controls to safeguard supportive services. The internal controls must address issuance, storage, and reconciliation of supportive services throughout the area and be clearly stated within the policy.

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

Please confirm all attachments are loaded in WISE. If not, provide an expected date of arrival for required documents.

Confirmed

- Local Area WDB Signed copy of Consortium Agreement (if applicable)
- Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Organizational Chart
- Local Area WDB Board Members (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB By-Laws
- Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements Crosswalk (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Organizational Chart
- Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Certification Regarding Debarment* (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Workforce Development Area Signatory Form* (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB NCWorks Career Centers (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Eligible Training Provider Policy
- Local Area WDB 14 Youth Program Elements Chart (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Committee Meeting Schedule (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Committee Members (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider (*form provided*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy (*optional*)*N/A*
- Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy (*required*)
- Local Area Adult/Dislocated Worker Work Experience Policy
- Competitive Procurement Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures
- Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I
- Local Area WDB Individualized Training Account Policy
- On-the-Job Training Policy
- Local Area WDB Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool, and Schedule
- Priority of Service Policy
- Youth Work Experience Policy
- Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy
- Local Area WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy (*optional*)*N/A*

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

- Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy (*optional*)*N/A*
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Customer Flow Chart

*Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned DWS Planner at

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

DocuSign® (or similar) signature pages may be uploaded in WISE.

Appendices

NC Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements	Appendix A
By-Laws Guidance	Appendix B
Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means	Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements	Appendix D

NC Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements

At a minimum, the Local Area WDB by-laws must include the following items for DWS approval. When submitting the Local Area WDB by-laws, please specify the section (provide a clear crosswalk) where the following required elements are located within the submitted by-laws.

Elements 1-7 are the *required* elements designated at WIOA Final Rule 679.310(g).

1. The nomination process is used by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) to elect the Local Area Board Chair and members.
2. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year.
3. The process to notify the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) of a Board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee within ninety (90) days of the vacancy.
4. The proxy and alternative designee process will be used when a Board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements of 20 CFR 679.110(d)(4).
5. The use of technology such as phone and web-based meetings, which will be used to promote Board member participation (20 CFR 679.110(d)(5)).
6. The process to ensure Board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationship with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities.
7. A description of any other conditions governing appointment or membership on the Board as deemed appropriate by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs); (20 CFR 679.310(g) (1-7)).

North Carolina specific requirements that must be specified within the by-laws:

1. The adopted generally accepted parliamentary procedure, such as Robert's Rules of Order, chosen by the Board.
2. Whether an appointee filling a vacancy will serve the remainder of the unexpired term or be appointed for a new full term.
3. The Board's policy assuring attendance and participation of its members.
4. Quorum requirements to be not less than 51% constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions.
5. Any standing committees the Board has established shall be included in the by-laws.
6. The Board's conflict of interest policy, which may not be any less stringent than the requirements of the DWS's Policy, shall be referenced in the by-laws.
7. The process the Board will take when expedient action is warranted between Board meetings, such as calling a special meeting or allowing the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Board.
8. Board meetings will be held in accessible facilities with accessible materials available upon prior request.
9. The Board will meet no less than four times per program year.

By-Laws Guidance

This template is provided for guidance purposes only. It contains sample language that may be used in by-laws development. It is not required that Boards utilize this template or language within. This template reflects multiple counties within a Consortium. Single-county Boards and non-Consortia will need to adjust their by-laws accordingly.

Article 1

Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the **Click Here to Enter WDB Name. Board** (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”).

Section 2. Purpose and Responsibilities

The purpose for which the Board is organized is to perform all functions of a WDB and Local Workforce Development Area as set forth in the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (“WIOA”), or the corresponding provision of any applicable federal or state laws of related purpose and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, and Section 143B-438.11 of the North Carolina General Statutes and to perform such functions with the **Click Here to Enter WDB Name. WDB.**

The Board services area shall encompass the counties of **Click Here to Enter WDB Name..**

The Board responsibilities shall include:

1. Develop and submit Local Area Plan annually to the Governor, a comprehensive 4-year Local Area Plan, in partnership with the Chief Local Elected Official.
2. Perform workforce research and regional market analysis.
3. Convene local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the Local Area Plan and identify non-federal expertise and resources to leverage support for workforce development activities.
4. Lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and with entities in the region involved.
5. Lead efforts with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs in the Local Area to develop and implement career pathways within the Local Area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers.

By-Laws Guidance

6. Lead efforts in the Local Area to identify proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, and workers and jobseekers in the local workforce system, and to identify and disseminate information on promising practices carried out in other local areas.
7. Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, workers, and jobseekers.
8. Conduct program oversight.
9. Negotiate and reach agreement on local performance accountability measures.
10. Designate or certify one-stop operators, contractors, and service providers and, in appropriate circumstances, terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators.
11. Coordinate activities with education and training providers in the local area.
12. Develop a budget for the activities of the Local Area WDB consistent with the Local Area Plan and the duties of the Local Area Board and subject to the approval of the Chief Local Elected Official.
13. Annually review the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of all one-stop centers, as well as locations for contractors and service providers, in the local area, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Article 2

Board Members

Section 1. Appointment

There shall be a Board of no more than **Click Here to Enter Number**. Board members. Members of this organization shall be appointed by the following procedure: The Chief Local Elected Official (of the **Click Here to Enter Name**. County Board of Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as the CLEO) shall appoint members based on nominations from the following: local business organizations; local education agencies; vocational education institutions, community-based organizations, and higher educational institutions; and private and proprietary schools; state or local labor organizations and other interested organizations.

The number of business sector nominees shall be at least 51% of the number of individuals to be appointed and are appointed from amongst individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations. The nominated candidate or company must be a member of the nominating organization. A majority of the Members shall be representatives of businesses in the local area (including small businesses or organizations representing businesses that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area) and are owners, chief executives or

By-Laws Guidance

operating officers, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. The members of the local Board shall represent diverse geographic areas within the local area.

Section 2. Composition

Organized Labor and Community Based Organizations: Not less than 20% of the Members shall be representatives of the workforce within the local area, who:

- i. shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by local labor federations, or other representatives of employees.
- ii. shall include a representative, who shall be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such program exists in the area, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the area, if such a program exists.
- iii. may include representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and
- iv. may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.

Education and training activities: The Board shall include representatives of entities administering education and training activities in the local area, who:

- i. shall include a representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II of the WIOA.
- ii. shall include a representative of institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities (including community colleges)
- iii. may include representatives of local educational agencies, and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to training.

The Board shall include representatives of governmental and economic and community development entities serving the local area, who:

- i. shall include a representative of economic and community development entities.
- ii. shall include an appropriate representative from the State Employment Service Office under the Wagner-Peyser Act serving the local area.
- iii. shall include an appropriate representative of the programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, serving the local area.

By-Laws Guidance

- iv. may include representatives of agencies or entities administering programs serving the local area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance, and
- v. may include representatives of philanthropic organizations serving the local area; and

This Board may include such other individuals or representatives of entities as the Chief Local Elected Official determines appropriate.

Section 3. Tenure

All appointments will be for a two-year term to expire on June 30 of each respective term. No member shall serve more than three consecutive terms (6 years) or a total of five terms (10 years) in any one appointed position. An individual whose initial appointment is to fill an unexpired term or an initial staggered term of less than two years, shall be eligible to serve the number of full-length terms other members are eligible to serve, unless, prior to the time for reappointment that individual has already served six consecutive years. Members may be re-appointed at the discretion of the Chief Local Elected Official subject to the term limitations outlined in this section.

Terms shall be staggered to ensure that at any given time a percentage of the members are experienced in WDB functions.

The Board shall advise the Consortium Counties of potential Board member vacancies prior to the end of the term. In the case of a midterm vacancy, an immediate replacement shall be requested of the Consortium County represented by the departing Board member. The appointed Board member shall fill the remaining term of office.

The Board shall not compensate Board Members for their services, but by resolution of the Board, a fixed sum and expenses, if any, may be allowed for attendance at each regular or special meetings of the Board.

Section 4. Termination for Cause

By two-thirds majority vote of the membership or by action of the Chief Local Elected Official, a member may be removed for cause from the Board. Cause would be for such actions as malfeasance, misconduct, or any action which would be deemed not in the best interest of the Board; or three unexcused absences from regular scheduled meetings within the preceding twelve calendar months. Notice that a removal vote that may be taken for cause must be included on the agenda of said meeting. The Chair shall send a precautionary letter to the said Board member upon two unexcused absences within the preceding twelve calendar months prior to the next meeting.

Section 5. Resignation

Letters of resignation must be submitted to the [Click Here to Enter WDB Name](#). Chair. Three consecutive absences without justification and no response to the above referenced letter from the chair will be considered acceptable terms for resignation. Justification must be submitted in writing. The Board Chair has the authority to accept or deny justification.

By-Laws Guidance

Section 6. Vacancies

Upon vacancy of any position on this Board, the procedure in Article II, Section 1, will be followed to provide replacement representation to complete the remainder of that term of appointment.

Article 3 Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Board shall meet at a public location at such time and place as determined by the Chairperson. All meetings must be held in an accessible facility, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. All materials must be in an accessible format (i.e., large print, Braille, interpreter, etc.), as needed or indicated.

The Board will meet no less than four times per program year. Regular Board meetings are face to face; however, Board members may attend meetings via conference call, video communications and other alternative methods.

Five working days' notice shall be delivered to each member stating a reasonable time, date and place of the meeting and the meeting's purpose unless deemed an emergency by the Chair or Executive Committee calling for said special meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The Chair of the Board and Committee Chair may, when deemed necessary, call a special meeting of the Board via conference call, video communications, or alternative media sources for transacting any business designated in the call.

Section 3. Quorum

At all meetings (regular or special) of the Board, a majority of the Board members present constitutes a quorum for transacting business. A quorum shall require the participation of Board members constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions. Proxy representatives who are unable to cast votes shall not count toward meeting the quorum requirement. Votes may be cast via electronic medium for remote attendees. The act of the majority of the Board members presents at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. However, two-thirds of the vote of those present shall be required to amend any provision of these by-laws.

Section 4. Conduct of Meetings

All meetings of this Board shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

By-Laws Guidance

Section 5. Open Meetings

Local Area Board Conducts Business Openly: The Local Area Board must conduct its business in an open manner as required by WIOA sec. 107(e), by making available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information about the activities of the local Board. (20 CFR 679.390) This includes:

- a. Information about the Local Area Plan, or modification to the Local Area Plan, before submission of the Local Area Plan.
- b. List and affiliation of Local Area WDB members.
- c. Selection of one-stop operators.
- d. Award of grants or contracts to eligible training providers of workforce investment activities including providers of youth workforce investment activities.
- e. Minutes of formal meetings of the Local Area Board; and
- f. Local Area Board by-laws, consistent with § 679.310(g).

Section 6. Proxy Representation and Voting

A member may designate a representative to attend a meeting of the Board in his/her absence. The proxy must meet the membership criteria for the member's affiliation type. The proxy will count toward the appointed member's attendance. The representative may participate in discussions and may vote so long as the member provides written voting instructions to the Chair allowing his/her proxy representative to cast votes in accordance with the written voting instructions.

Each Board member present shall be entitled to one vote on each matter for which a vote is taken. Votes may be cast telephonically or via electronic medium.

Section 7. Conflict of Interest and Voting

No WDB member (whether compensated or not) shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award or administration of a sub-grant or contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

- i. The individual,
- ii. any member of the individual 's immediate family,
- iii. the individual's partner, or
- iv. an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the above, has a financial interest in the firm or organization selected for the award.

No WDB member, member of his/her immediate family, officers, employees, or agents of the WDB member's agency or business, shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub agreements.

By-Laws Guidance

A WDB member shall not cast a vote on, or participate in, any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such member (or any organization which that member directly represents), nor on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to that member.

No WDB members shall participate in a governmental decision including voting on a matter (including recommendations, appointments, obligating or committing the WDB to a course of action) when such action influences a decision or exercises judgement in making a decision. Any member with a potential or actual conflict of interest shall comply with requirements for public disclosure and recusal.

Article 4 Organization

Section 1. Officers

The officers of this Board shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.

Section 2. Election of Officers

Officers of this Board shall be elected in June for two-year terms. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from among the members who are representatives of the business sector. The secretary will be elected from among all members.

The Chair shall appoint a nominating committee to recommend officers who shall be elected from the Board's business sector membership and shall begin their term at the beginning of the new program year effective July 1. These officers shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified or until they are no longer Board members. If an officer is unable to complete his/her term the Board shall elect a successor to complete the remaining portion of the original term. The Vice-Chair shall not be required to succeed the Chair at the end of the Chair's term of office.

Section 3. Chair

The Chair shall preside at Board meetings, designate standing and ad hoc committees deemed appropriate and appoint their Chair and members. The Chair shall not vote except in the case of a tie, in which event he/she shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 4. Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall assume all duties and responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence from meetings. In the event that the office of Chair is vacated before the end of the term, the Vice-Chair shall assume the office in an acting capacity until such time as the Board elects a new Chair.

By-Laws Guidance

Section 5. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for proper notification of meetings, review, and submission of the minutes to the Board, and shall carry out any other duties deemed appropriate by the Chair. Local Area staff will serve as support personnel in performing these duties.

Section 6. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary (from a sector other than business), and the previous Chair or Vice-Chair. As determined by the Chair of the Board, chairs of Board committees will attend Executive Committee meetings. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee are as follows: make standing committee assignments and coordination among committees, prepare recommendations to Board on state and national issues, act as needed between regularly scheduled Board meetings, and develop immediate and long-range goals for Board concurrence.

Section 7. Vacancy

If an office becomes vacant, the Board shall elect a successor at its next meeting.

Article 5 Committees

Section 1.

The Chair of the Board shall have the power, except as otherwise provided in this Article, to appoint the members of any Committee for a term of two (2) years. No Committee, except as elsewhere provided in this Article, shall take any action or position on behalf of the Board, bind the Board, or exercise the authority of the Board in the management of the Corporation. The Chair of all the Committees shall be members of the Board. The Executive Committee of the Board shall meet at the call of the Chair of the Board or the written request of any two (2) members of the committee. The Board's other Committees shall meet at the call of their respective Chair or the Chair of the Board.

Section 2.

Electronic meetings shall be permissible in lieu of face-to-face committee meetings at the discretion of the Committee Chair. An electronic meeting of the Committee occurs when Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through audio, video, or both. All votes taken during an electronic meeting shall be by roll call. All scheduled electronic meetings shall be held in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time. When speaking, each member will be asked to clearly identify himself, so that proper recognition is given and recorded. All Board policies, administrative practices, and by-laws shall apply equally to electronic meetings.

By-Laws Guidance

Section 3.

The Local Area WDB may establish standing committees to provide information and assist the Board in carrying out its responsibilities (20 CFR 679.360).

Article 6 Amendments

Section 1. Amendment Procedure

Board by-laws can be amended at any regular Board meeting provided the proposed amendment(s) have been submitted in writing to the Board members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Vote Needed

The by-laws shall be amended upon affirmative vote by a two-thirds majority of the Board.

Article 7 Severability

In the event that any of the rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions of these by-laws are held to be partially or wholly invalid or unenforceable for any reason, such holding shall not affect, alter, modify, or impair in any manner any of the other terms, provisions, rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions contained herein.

Adopted This NUMBER DATE Day of MONTH, YEAR.

Board Director, Printed Name and Signature

Date

Chief Local Elected Official Printed Name and Signature

Date

Board Chair, Printed Name and Signature

Date

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

All public WDB meetings and Committee meetings will be held at specified times and places which are convenient and open to the public.

The Board believes it is in the best interests of its members, systems, and customers that the fullest participation and attendance in all meetings be achieved whenever possible. Furthermore, it recognizes that the use of electronic, audio or video conferencing for meeting attendance and voting requirements is permissible so long as the meeting is conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Provision.

The Board in all of its regular and special, standing committee, and ad hoc committee meetings complies with and intends to comply with the provisions of the Sunshine Provision. Therefore, the Board hereby adopts this policy, to be used when needed, to make use of the capabilities for conferencing by electronic means or any other type of audio or video conferencing for its meetings *or* any of the standing committee and ad hoc committee meetings as set forth and adopted according to the following rules as applicable:

- A. All pertinent provisions of the Sunshine Provision must be complied with, including specifically the proper notice of any regular or special meeting, the proper record keeping or minutes of each meeting, the appropriate agenda preparation for each meeting, which in addition shall be posted along with the notice of the meeting; and, in particular, any use of closed sessions shall be in compliance with the provisions of WIOA.
- B. All Board and Committee members attending meetings by electronic conferencing shall be entitled to vote as if they were personally and physically present at the meeting site so long as a quorum is, in total, present and accounted for, and their votes shall be recorded by the Board Director.
- C. A Board or Committee member who attends a meeting by electronic, video, or audio conference must provide notice to the Board Director at least 24 hours prior to the meeting unless such advance notice is impracticable.
- D. The location of the meeting included on the notice shall be equipped with a suitable transmission system (e.g., a speakerphone) in order that the public audience, the members in attendance and any staff in attendance will be able to hear any input, vote, or discussion of the conference and that the member attending by electronic means shall have a similar capability of hearing and participating in such input, vote, or discussion.
- E. As the Board or its committees begin each new matter of business, the Chair will check with all remote locations(s) where members are to ensure that each such connection is active.

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

- F. When a motion is made, and seconded, and discussion regarding the motion begins, the Chair will check that the connection with remote location(s) where members are present is active. Prior to closing discussion and taking any vote, the Chair will ask all remote location(s) where member(s) is(are) present whether there are any additional comments, questions, or information to be added to the discussion.

- G. All decisions will be made using majority rule except when a higher vote is required. There will be no muting of any connections with remote location(s) where members are present at any time. There will be no sidebar discussions.

- H. The procedures outlined above shall also apply to each Board and its Committee members.

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

Representative of Business (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A))

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

The majority of the members of the Local Area WDB must be representatives of private sector business in the local area. At a minimum, two members must represent small business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Business representatives serving on Local Area WDBs may also serve on the State Board. Each business representative must meet the following criteria:

- be an owner, chief executive officer, chief operating officer, or other individual with optimum policy making and hiring authority.
- provide employment opportunities in **in-demand** industry sectors or occupations, as those terms are defined in WIOA section 3(23); and provide high-quality, work-relevant training and development opportunities to its workforce or the workforce of others (in the case of organizations representing business as per WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(A)(ii); and
- are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations.

In North Carolina, examples of allowable business organizations may include chambers of commerce, trade organizations, large non-profit organizations, such as Rex Hospital, and for-profit organizations, such as Duke Hospital, depending on the specific circumstances. Examples of unallowable business organizations include the N.C. Department of Public Safety or other state or municipal agencies.

Representative of Workforce (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(B))

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

No less than 20% of the members of the Local Area WDB **must** be workforce representatives. These representatives:

- **must include two or more representatives of labor organizations**, where such organizations exist in the local area. Where labor organizations do not exist, representatives must be selected from other employee representatives.

Employee representatives must come from organizations that advocate, enhance, or protect the rights of a group of employees. In North Carolina, such examples include the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC), and the National Guard Association). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is an example of an organization that is not allowable as a labor organization.

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

- **must include one or more representatives of a joint labor management, or union affiliated, registered apprenticeship** program within the area who must be a training director or a member of a labor organization. If no union affiliated registered apprenticeship programs exist in the area, a representative of a registered apprenticeship program with no union affiliation must be appointed, if one exists.

In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Local Area WDB **may** include the following to contribute to the 20% requirement:

- one or more representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and

In North Carolina, examples of allowable community-based organizations include organizations such as Goodwill and community action agencies.

- one or more representatives of organizations that demonstrated experience or expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs or eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.

Community College representatives would not be appropriate for this category.

Representatives of Education and Training (WIOA Section 107(b) (2)(C))

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

The balance of Local Area WDB membership **must include:**

- **At least one** eligible provider administering **adult education and literacy** activities under WIOA Title II.
- **At least one** representative from an **institution of higher education** providing workforce investments activities, including community colleges; and
- **At least one representative** from each of the following governmental and economic and community development entities:
 - **Economic and community development** entities.
 - The **State Employment Service Office** under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S. C. 49 et seq.) serving the local area; and
 - The programs were carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than Sec. 112 or part C of that title.

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) **may** appoint other appropriate entities in the local area, including:

- Entities administering education and training activities who represent local educational agencies or community-based organizations with demonstrated expertise in addressing the education and training needs for individuals with barriers to employment.
- Governmental and economic and community development entities who represent transportation, housing, and public assistance programs.
- Philanthropic organizations serving the local area.
- and Other appropriate individuals as determined by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO).
- The board chair shall be elected from among the business representatives.

The Division of Workforce Solutions may request additional information from Local Area WDBs on representatives and the organizations they represent at any time in order to determine compliance with these requirements. The final determination on whether requirements are met is made by the Division of Workforce Solutions.
