

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLAN PY 2024 - 2027

Local Workforce Development Area Name:

First Planning District Workforce Development Board
as part of Region One
Workforce Development Board Partnership

Plan Effective Date: 1/1/2025

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The Combined Plan must include the Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the Region's current economic environment and identifies the Regional/Local's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allows the Regional/Local area to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined Regional/Local Plan core and partner programs, which are included in this plan.

This regional component of the plan must discuss how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information including the local planning requirements. Additionally, the chapter must demonstrate alignment with education and economic development. Regional teams are encouraged to use the labor market information that will provide consistency in the data used for regional analysis throughout the state.

A. Provide an analysis of the:

1. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(i));
 - What are the targeted industries, high-impact industry clusters, and in-demand occupations in the region?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable location quotients?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?
 - What industries and occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?
 - What industries and occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?
 - What industries and occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?
 - What sources of supply and demand data were used to determine the targeted industries, occupations and skills?

Targeted Industries and High-Impact Clusters in the Greater New Orleans Region

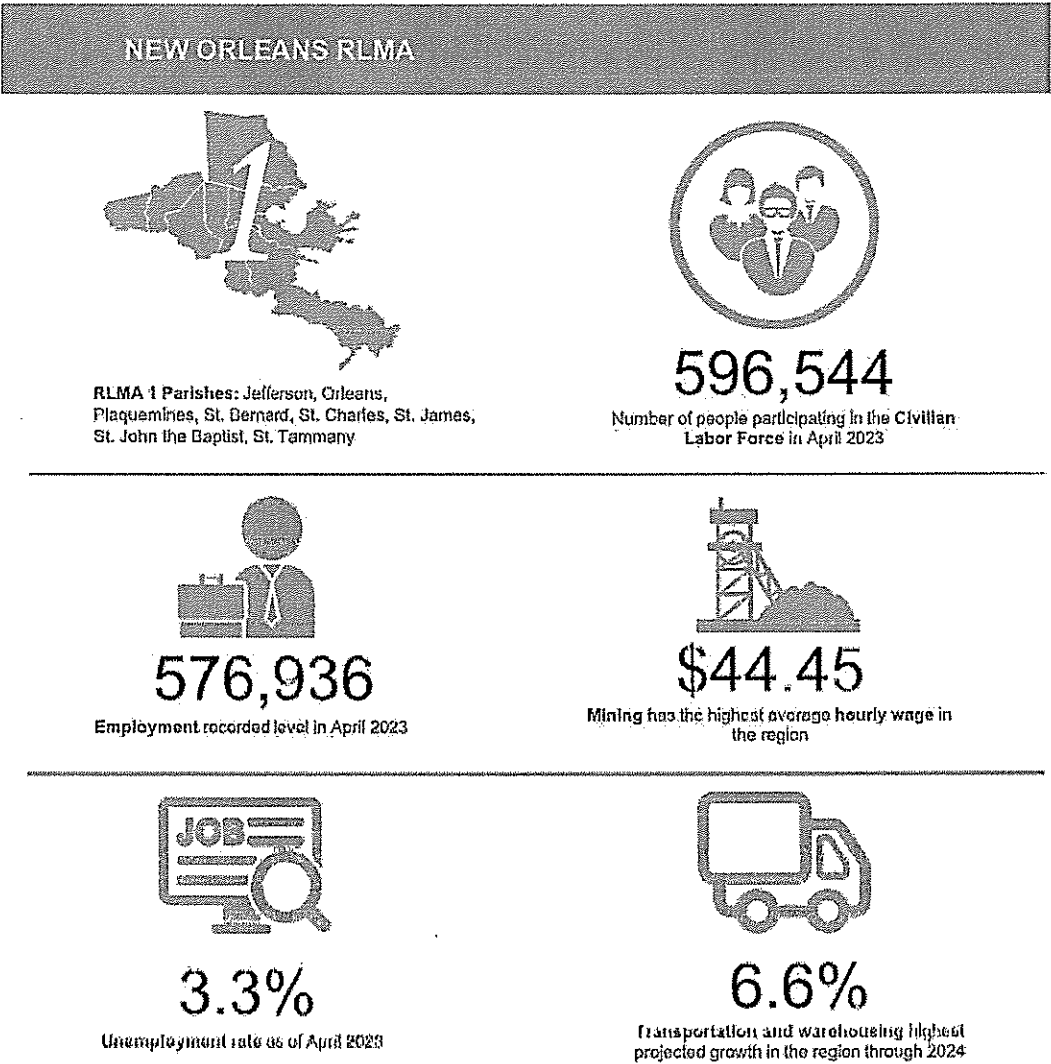
Regional Overview

The Greater New Orleans Region comprises eight parishes in the 1st Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA 1): Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany. Positioned strategically along the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico, this region serves as a vital economic hub for Louisiana. Its natural advantages have historically supported strong industries such as manufacturing, logistics, oil and gas, and more recently, professional services and healthcare.

The region's economy is underpinned by robust infrastructure, including an expansive network of ports, railroads, and highways, which facilitates both domestic and international trade. This

foundation, combined with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, positions the Greater New Orleans Region as a center of innovation and economic resilience.

Overview of Regional Employment (2023)



Industry Projections 2022 to 2024

Industry Forecast: Total, All Industries

Area	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Statewide	1,956,496	2,015,125	58,629	3.0%
New Orleans RLMA	573,952	582,080	8,128	1.4%

Major Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	79,775	81,381	1,606	1.8%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	70,397	70,609	312	0.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	62,912	67,132	4,220	5.0%
Retail Trade	56,385	55,839	-546	-1.0%
Educational Services	44,399	44,336	-63	-0.1%
Government	35,530	34,768	-762	-2.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	33,343	34,797	1,454	4.4%
Administrative and Waste Services	31,918	31,191	-727	-2.3%
Manufacturing	28,712	28,864	152	0.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	26,969	28,749	1,780	6.6%

Growing and Shrinking Industries (2022-2024)

Top 5 Growing Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Accommodation and Food Services	63,912	67,132	3,220	5.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	26,969	28,749	1,780	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	33,343	34,797	1,454	4.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	79,775	81,181	1,406	1.8%
Construction	27,002	28,297	1,295	4.8%

Bottom 5 Shrinking Industries in the New Orleans RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Government	35,530	34,708	-822	-2.3%
Administrative and Waste Services	31,918	31,191	-727	-2.3%
Finance and Insurance	16,383	15,773	-610	-3.7%
Retail Trade	56,385	55,839	-546	-1.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	6,947	6,570	-377	-5.4%

Region One - Sector Selection Criteria

When evaluating which sectors to prioritize for workforce development in Region One, several key criteria guide decision making to ensure maximum economic and social impact. These criteria encompass both workforce dynamics and broader economic considerations. Metrics such as total job share and projected openings due to growth and attrition provide insight into labor market demands. Additionally, the sector's economic influence is assessed through its ability to generate self-sustaining wages, contribute to regional wage totals, and drive industry revenue. The geographic scope of a sector's influence, as well as its potential to address priority occupations, further emphasizes its importance in fostering sustainable regional development. Together, these factors shape a strategic approach to sector selection and investment.

Region One – Targeted Sector Selection Criteria

- Total job share for a sector
- Total projected number of openings due to growth
- Total projected number of openings due to attrition
- Economic impact
 - Occupations that offer self-sustaining wages
 - Overall total wage impact on the regional economy
 - Overall revenue impact for industry on the region
 - Impact of sector on multiple geographical areas within a region
- Ability to impact priority occupations within a sector

Targeted Industries and Clusters

The economic fabric of the Greater New Orleans Region is woven with industries that reflect a strategic alignment with its natural resources, geographic advantages, and demographic trends. These industries, both traditional and emerging, are not only pillars of economic growth but also provide a foundation for sustainable development. Collaborative efforts among economic stakeholders have ensured that the identification of these industries aligns with long-term regional goals, addressing workforce challenges and leveraging opportunities for expansion and innovation. This targeted approach positions the region to thrive in a competitive and rapidly evolving global economy.

Manufacturing, Including Oil and Gas Cluster

- **Economic Impact:** Manufacturing remains the largest contributor to the Gross Regional Product (GRP), representing 25% of the total and generating an impressive \$10.6 billion annually.
- **Job Share:** Employs 33,324 workers across 1,340 establishments, offering stable, high-paying positions that are crucial to the regional economy.
- **Wages and Workforce Challenges:** While the sector supports self-sustaining jobs, it faces an ongoing shortage of skilled workers, highlighting the need for workforce development initiatives.

- **Regional Significance:** This industry benefits from proximity to the Mississippi River and an established industrial infrastructure, making it a cornerstone of the regional economy. It also drives upstream industries like logistics and trade, amplifying its economic impact.
- **NAICS Codes:** 32–33 (Primary Manufacturing), 21 (Oil & Gas Extraction and Support Activities).

Healthcare Cluster

- **Economic Impact:** Healthcare is a cornerstone industry, contributing \$7.3 billion to the regional GRP.
- **Job Share and Growth Potential:** With 71,142 employees and projected growth of 8%, healthcare is a rapidly expanding sector fueled by rising demand for medical services and technological advancements.
- **Wages and Key Occupations:** Offers significant opportunities in roles such as nursing, medical assistants, and healthcare administration, providing sustainable wages and career pathways.
- **Regional Impact:** With the aging population and increasing healthcare needs, this sector plays a critical role in both economic development and quality of life.
- **NAICS Codes:** 621 (Ambulatory Healthcare Services), 622 (Hospitals), 623 (Nursing Facilities), 902622 & 903622 (State and Local Hospitals).

Transportation and Logistics, Including Wholesale Trade

- **Economic Impact:** Contributing \$10.1 billion to the GRP, this sector serves as the backbone of regional and international trade.
- **Job Share:** Employs 43,139 workers in freight movement, storage, and distribution, making it one of the region's most critical industries.
- **Strategic Importance:** The region's location along the Mississippi River and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico make it a vital hub for domestic and international trade. Upcoming infrastructure projects, such as major port expansions, will further solidify its position as a logistics powerhouse.
- **NAICS Codes:** 4811–4842, 4861–4869, 4881–4889, 4931, 5324, 42.

Construction Sector

- **Economic Impact:** Construction remains a critical driver of infrastructure development, especially with large-scale projects like the expansion of the region's port systems.
- **Transition from Recovery:** Once driven by Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts, the construction sector is now focused on forward-looking infrastructure projects that are key to regional competitiveness.
- **Job Share:** Employs nearly 30,000 workers, supporting a wide range of trades, including electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers.

- **Strategic Importance:** Port expansions and other infrastructure projects require sustained labor demand, creating significant opportunities for skilled trades and supporting industries like manufacturing and logistics.
- **NAICS Codes:** 23 (Construction).

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (Emerging Sector)

- **Emerging Sector:** This sector represents a cross-cutting group of occupations that drive innovation and operational efficiency across industries, employing more than 33,000 workers, of which nearly 20,000 are technical (engineering, computer, scientific) in nature.
- **Job Share and Growth:** Encompasses roles like business operations specialists, accountants, and environmental scientists, which are essential to industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics.
- **Wages and Regional Impact:** These positions often provide competitive wages and opportunities for career advancement, making the sector a key focus for economic development. The nearly 20,000 technical jobs boast an average wage of \$107,194.
- **NAICS Codes:** 54.

Information Technology (IT) as a Cross-cutting Occupation Group

- **Emerging Priority:** IT occupations are increasingly critical, supporting the digital infrastructure required by industries such as healthcare, logistics, and energy.
- **Key Roles:** Includes jobs such as computer systems analysts, cybersecurity specialists, and network administrators, which are in high demand as businesses prioritize digital transformation. Some of the highest growth occupations include Data Scientists, Software Q&A Analysts, and Software Developers.
- **Cross-Sector Impact:** IT serves as a foundational sector, enhancing productivity and innovation across all other targeted industries.
- **Occupation Group:** 15-200

Emerging Infrastructure Projects and Their Workforce Impact

The Greater New Orleans Region is poised for significant economic growth, driven by transformative infrastructure projects that will generate substantial job opportunities and enhance the region's competitiveness. These projects align closely with the region's targeted industries, particularly transportation, logistics, construction, and hospitality, and are anticipated to create thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly.

Louisiana International Terminal (LIT)

The \$1.8 billion Louisiana International Terminal in St. Bernard Parish is a landmark project that will elevate Louisiana's import and export capabilities. This public-private partnership between the

State of Louisiana, the Port of New Orleans, Ports America, and Terminal Investment Limited is expected to create over 17,000 new jobs statewide by 2050. The facility will support logistics professionals, supply chain managers, and port operators, driving demand across the transportation and logistics sectors.

St. Bernard Transportation Corridor

Complementing the LIT, the \$230.5 million St. Bernard Transportation Corridor will connect the terminal to the interstate system, facilitating efficient cargo movement. This infrastructure investment will support job creation in construction, logistics, and related industries, further solidifying the region's position as a hub for trade and transportation.

TCI Tank Logistics Rail Line Expansion

In October 2024, TCI Tank Logistics announced plans to expand its rail line at the Port of New Orleans. This project is expected to generate 40 direct new jobs with an average annual salary of \$60,000 and retain 41 existing jobs in Orleans Parish. Additionally, 94 indirect jobs are anticipated, for a total of 134 potential new jobs supporting manufacturing and logistics.

New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Enhancements

Significant enhancements to the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, including the Transloading Industrial Park and Claiborne Yard expansion, aim to improve freight movement efficiency and stimulate economic growth. These projects will bolster the logistics sector, supporting skilled rail operators and freight handlers, and contribute to broader regional economic development.

Bayou Phoenix Development

The Bayou Phoenix Development in New Orleans East will transform the long-abandoned Six Flags site into a multi-use entertainment complex, featuring hotels, sports facilities, retail outlets, a movie studio, and an amphitheater. Slated for completion by 2027, this redevelopment project will generate numerous construction jobs and create long-term opportunities in the hospitality and tourism industries, revitalizing the local economy.

Gulf Coast Corridor Improvement Project

The Gulf Coast Corridor Improvement Project aims to restore the rail route between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama, which has been inactive since Hurricane Katrina. Supported by funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this project is expected to be completed by 2025 and will create jobs in transportation, infrastructure, and tourism, connecting regional economies and enhancing accessibility.

Projected Workforce Impact

These infrastructure projects collectively represent a significant investment in the region's economy. Combined, they are anticipated to create:

- **Direct Jobs:** Over 17,000 jobs from the Louisiana International Terminal and hundreds more from projects like the TCI Tank Logistics Rail Line Expansion and Bayou Phoenix Development.
- **Indirect Jobs:** Additional opportunities in supporting industries such as construction, logistics, and retail.
- **Broader Economic Benefits:** Enhanced regional connectivity, increased trade capacity, and revitalized local economies.

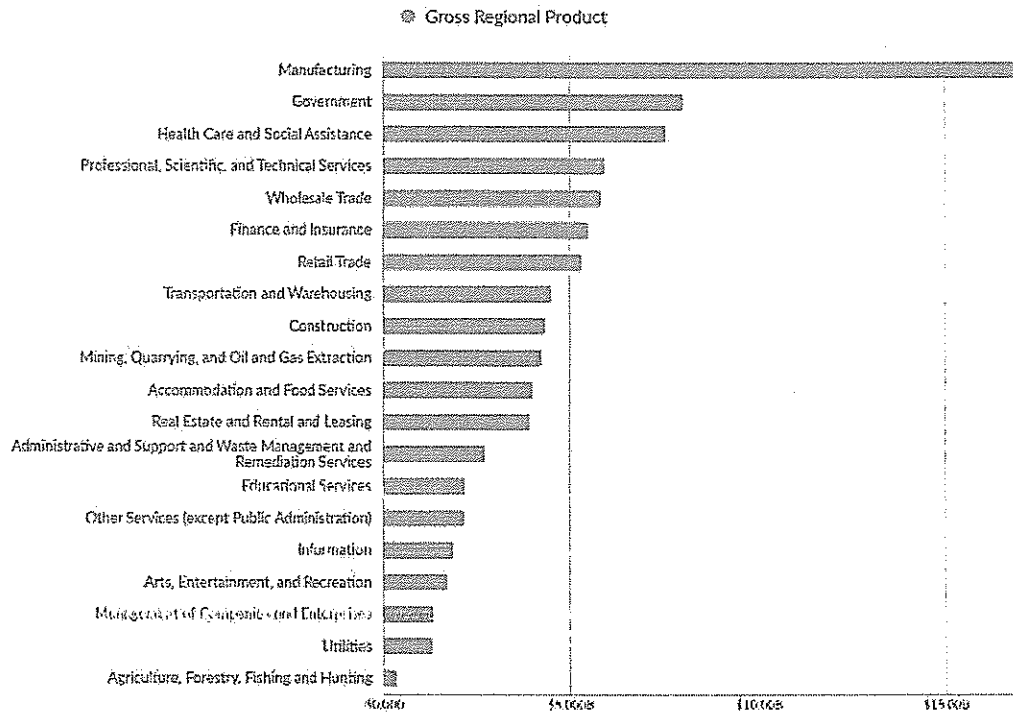
By aligning workforce development strategies with these projects, the Greater New Orleans Region can ensure a prepared and competitive workforce to meet the growing demands of these transformative initiatives.

The Greater New Orleans Region's **diverse economic portfolio**, anchored by traditional sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and logistics, and bolstered by emerging industries such as IT and professional services, showcases its adaptability to shifting economic trends. Strategic investments in these targeted industries and clusters are essential to ensuring the region's resilience and competitiveness in the years ahead. By addressing workforce challenges, fostering innovation, and maximizing the impact of infrastructure projects, the region is positioned to achieve sustained economic vitality. This forward-looking approach capitalizes on current strengths while preparing for future demands, ensuring that the Greater New Orleans Region remains a vibrant hub of economic activity.

The **Gross Regional Product (GRP) chart** below highlights manufacturing as the leading economic contributor in the Greater New Orleans Region, generating the highest GRP across industries, followed by Government and Healthcare. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, along with Wholesale Trade, also play significant roles, underscoring the **diverse economic base**. This diversity highlights the region's capacity for sustainable growth by combining traditional industries with emerging sectors like professional services. Such a balanced economic portfolio not only drives current success but also positions the region for future resilience and innovation.

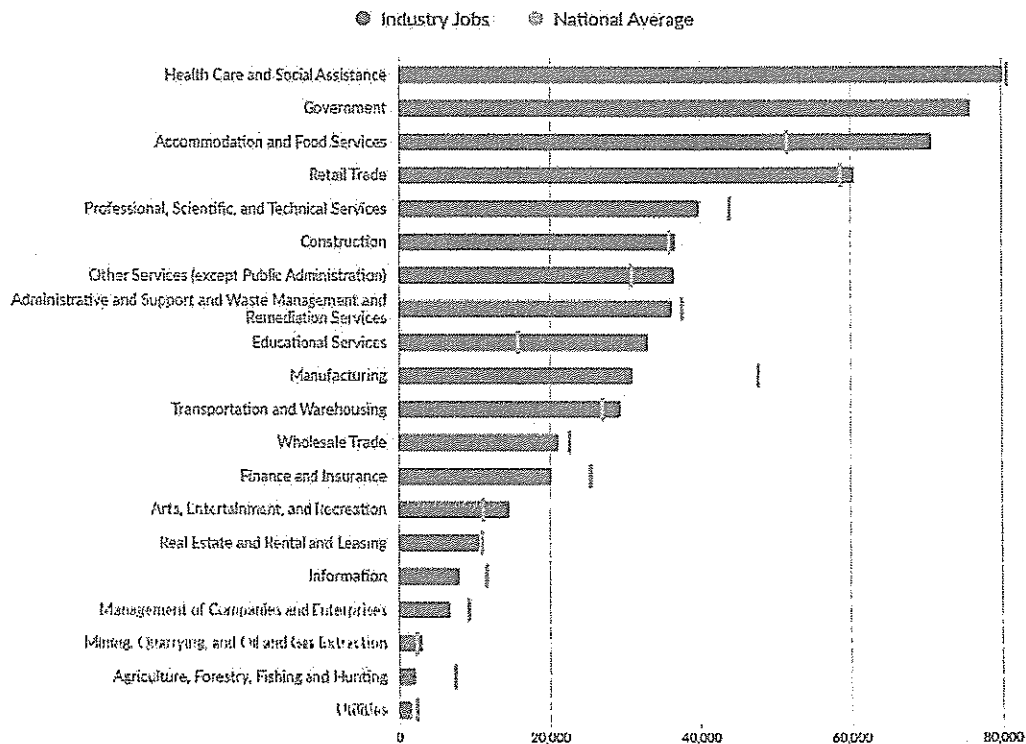
Top Industry GRP

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The chart below illustrates the largest occupational sectors in the Greater New Orleans Region, highlighting industries by the number of jobs compared to the national average. While sectors like Healthcare and Social Assistance, Government, and Accommodation and Food Services dominate in terms of employment, it is important to note that these may not directly align with the region's targeted high-impact sectors. Instead, this chart provides valuable context for understanding the broader labor market dynamics and the significance of supporting industries that drive workforce participation and economic stability.

Largest Industries



High Demand Occupations

The Greater New Orleans Region is projected to have over 211,525 job openings across all occupations in the coming years. Notably, more than 62% of these positions (131,849) offer a median self-sustaining wage of \$14.48 per hour, equivalent to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Among occupations requiring education beyond a high school diploma but not exceeding a Bachelor's degree, the top 20 high demand roles account for 43,130 anticipated openings between 2024 and 2027. These openings include opportunities for both net new job growth and replacement needs due to workforce transitions and retirements. These roles play a critical role in the region's economic vitality, offering individuals pathways to rewarding careers while driving the expansion of key industries. To meet this demand, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local workforce development boards and centers prioritize these occupations, aligning training programs with high-demand roles to prepare residents for sustainable, high-growth careers.

Top 20 Occupation Projections for 2024 – 2027

(Requiring greater than high school diploma, but less than or equal to bachelor's degree)

SOC	Description	2024 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2024 - 2027 Change	2024 - 2027 Replacement Jobs	2024 - 2027 Openings	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
062653-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	8,036	8,183	147	3,882	4,040	\$15.54	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	14,402	14,581	179	3,430	3,658	\$50.25	Bachelor's degree
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	10,762	10,394	(369)	3,542	3,543	\$18.44	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	8,356	8,355	(1)	3,362	3,451	\$17.88	High school diploma or equivalent
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	6,081	6,227	147	2,688	2,853	\$17.56	High school diploma or equivalent
29-1141	Registered Nurses	10,749	11,317	567	1,775	2,348	\$38.90	Bachelor's degree
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	4,481	4,642	161	1,934	2,107	\$16.13	Postsecondary nondegree award
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	5,732	5,643	(89)	1,985	2,015	\$21.22	Some college, no degree
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	6,639	6,764	124	1,806	1,942	\$19.23	High school diploma or equivalent
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	4,484	4,614	130	1,809	1,939	\$15.04	High school diploma or equivalent
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,711	5,820	109	1,795	1,933	\$23.66	Postsecondary nondegree award
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	6,187	6,143	(45)	1,760	1,795	\$26.41	High school diploma or equivalent
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	4,461	4,505	44	1,558	1,625	\$14.85	Some college, no degree
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	5,393	5,385	(7)	1,424	1,515	\$32.02	High school diploma or equivalent
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	5,592	5,620	28	1,429	1,483	\$30.67	Bachelor's degree
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	4,234	4,361	126	1,336	1,479	\$18.60	High school diploma or equivalent
31-9092	Medical Assistants	3,074	3,331	256	1,206	1,463	\$17.30	Postsecondary nondegree award

25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	6,677	6,702	25	1,324	1,409	\$26.08	Bachelor's degree
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4,664	4,613	(51)	1,366	1,379	\$21.16	High school diploma or equivalent
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	4,663	4,734	71	1,070	1,153	\$35.63	Bachelor's degree
		130,380	131,933	1,553	40,478	43,130		

Key Occupations and Their Role in Targeted Industry Sectors

Manufacturing and Oil & Gas

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 projected openings and a median wage of \$50.25, these managers are crucial to improving operational efficiency and productivity across manufacturing and energy sectors.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): Supporting supply chains vital to manufacturing and oil and gas industries, these drivers are projected to have 1,933 openings, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021): While not in the top 20 occupations, is essential to the transportation of goods and resources for the energy sector, these professionals are expected to have 773 openings, with a median wage of \$49.70.

Healthcare

Registered Nurses (29-1141): Among the most in demand roles, registered nurses are projected to have 2,348 openings with a median wage of \$38.90. They are vital to delivering quality patient care and addressing the region's growing healthcare needs.

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061): In the near top 20, Projected to have 939 openings, these healthcare providers play an essential role in patient care, with a median wage of \$26.34.

Medical Assistants (31-9092): With 1,463 projected openings, these workers support clinical and administrative healthcare needs, earning a median wage of \$17.30.

Transportation and Logistics

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these roles are indispensable for sustaining regional supply chains and ensuring connectivity across industries.

Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021): Supporting international trade and waterborne logistics, these positions are critical to the transportation sector, with 773 projected openings.

Construction

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 openings, operations managers play a vital leadership role in large-scale infrastructure projects, such as port expansions, earning a median wage of \$50.25.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these drivers are critical to the transportation of materials and supplies necessary for construction projects, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Carpenters and Skilled Trades (Various SOC Codes): While not explicitly listed, construction trades are key to completing large-scale infrastructure projects, creating sustained demand for electricians, equipment operators, and other skilled workers.

Managers, All Other (11-9199): Also, while in the near top 20, with 907 projected openings, these managers oversee specialized aspects of construction projects, ensuring alignment with timelines and budgets, earning a median wage of \$50.32.

Summary

The top 20 high-demand occupations and other key occupations near the top 20, driven by total openings from net new growth and workforce replacements, are critical to the Greater New Orleans Region's economic success. These roles directly support the four targeted sectors—Manufacturing and Oil & Gas, Healthcare, Transportation and Logistics, and Construction. By focusing on these key occupations, workforce development initiatives can align with regional priorities, ensuring a resilient and competitive economy capable of meeting current and future labor market demands.

Industries and Occupations with Favorable Location Quotients

The Greater New Orleans Region exhibits strong location quotients (LQ) in several key industries and occupations, highlighting their high concentration and economic significance compared to the national average. Among industries, Educational Services and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction stand out with particularly favorable LQs. The leadership of Educational Services reflects the region's emphasis on higher education and specialized training institutions, which play a critical role in workforce development and economic stability. Similarly, the prominence of Oil and Gas Extraction underscores the region's strategic advantage in energy production, bolstered by its access to abundant natural resources and well-established infrastructure.

From an occupational perspective, sectors such as Legal, Food Preparation and Serving, and Protective Services display notable employment concentrations. The Legal sector thrives due to the region's robust civic and business environment, while Food Preparation and Serving underscores the cultural richness and tourism-driven economy of the region. Protective Services are essential in addressing the region's unique challenges, including public safety and emergency management, particularly in a geographic area prone to natural disasters. These occupational concentrations illustrate the region's specialized workforce strengths, which underpin both economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

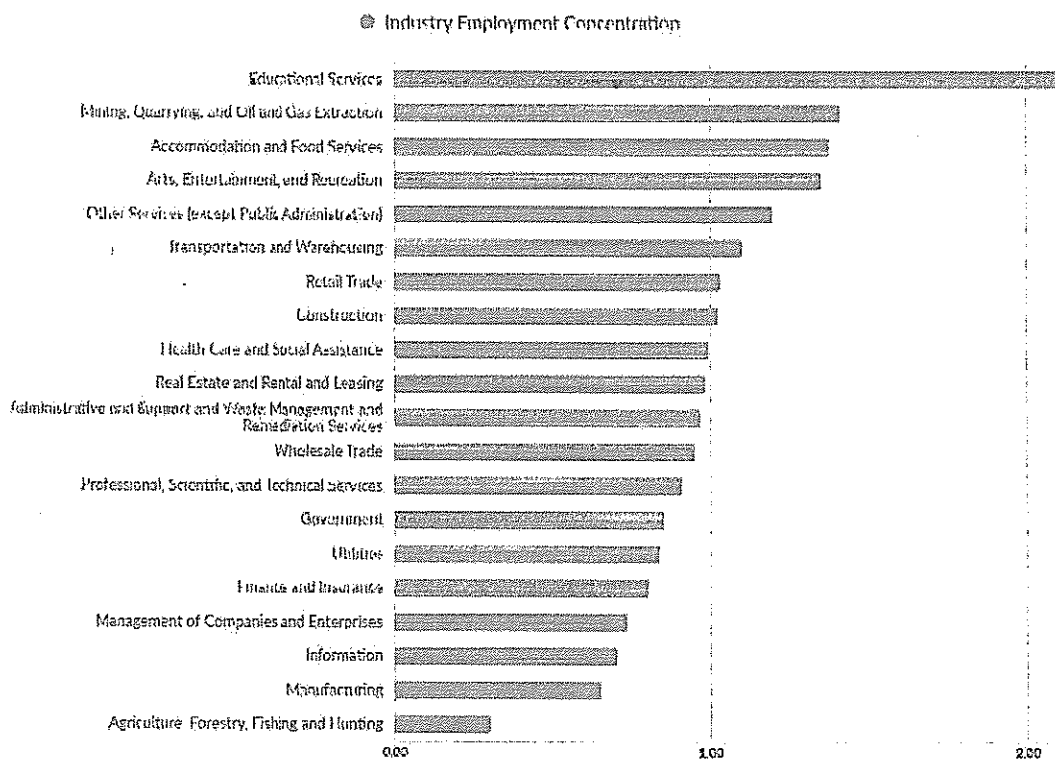
Moreover, industries and occupations with favorable location quotients align seamlessly with the region's targeted sectors and key roles, emphasizing their critical importance to the Greater New

Orleans economy. **Manufacturing and Oil & Gas** leverage the region's proximity to the Mississippi River and industrial infrastructure, driving high employment concentrations in industrial production, logistics, and energy. These sectors depend on a skilled workforce to sustain energy output and industrial growth, further highlighting their strategic importance.

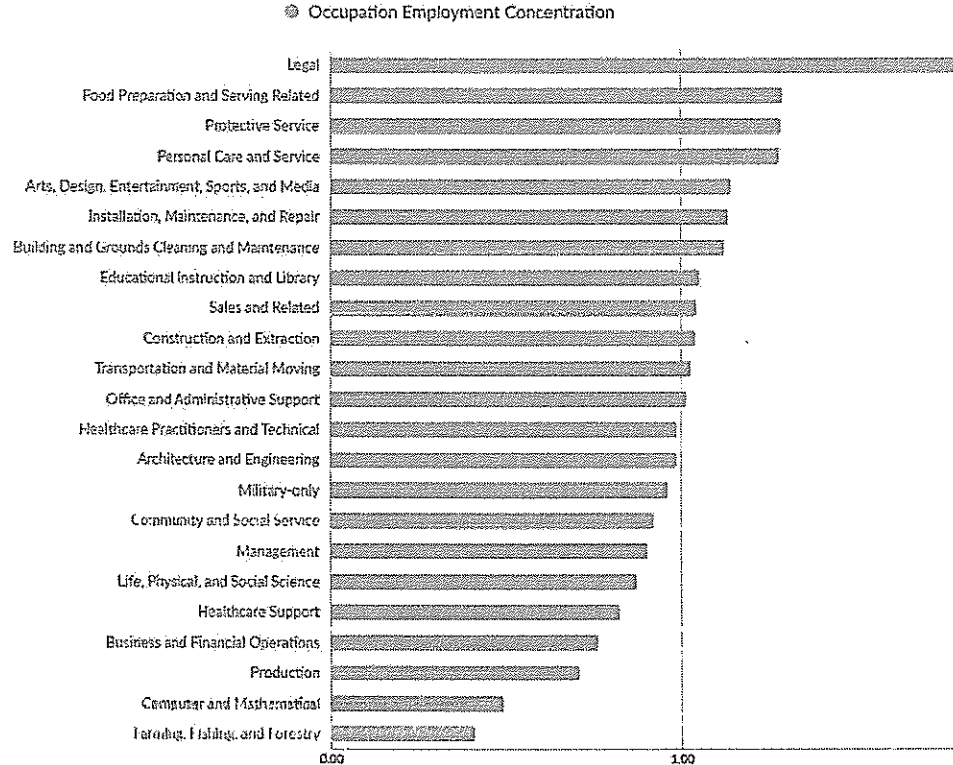
Healthcare, as a cornerstone of the regional economy, reflects strong demand for essential occupations such as registered nurses, medical assistants, and licensed vocational nurses. These roles are indispensable for addressing the healthcare needs of an aging population and expanding access to care. Similarly, **Transportation and Logistics** serve as vital connectors for regional industries to national and international markets, with occupations like heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and captains of water vessels ensuring supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

Lastly, the **Construction** sector plays a pivotal role in regional growth, fueled by infrastructure projects such as port expansions. This sector generates demand for skilled trades, including electricians and project managers, which are essential for advancing the region's physical and economic development. Together, these industries and occupations with high location quotients reinforce the alignment of the region's economic strengths with its targeted sectors, ensuring sustained growth and competitive advantage

Top Industry Employment Concentration



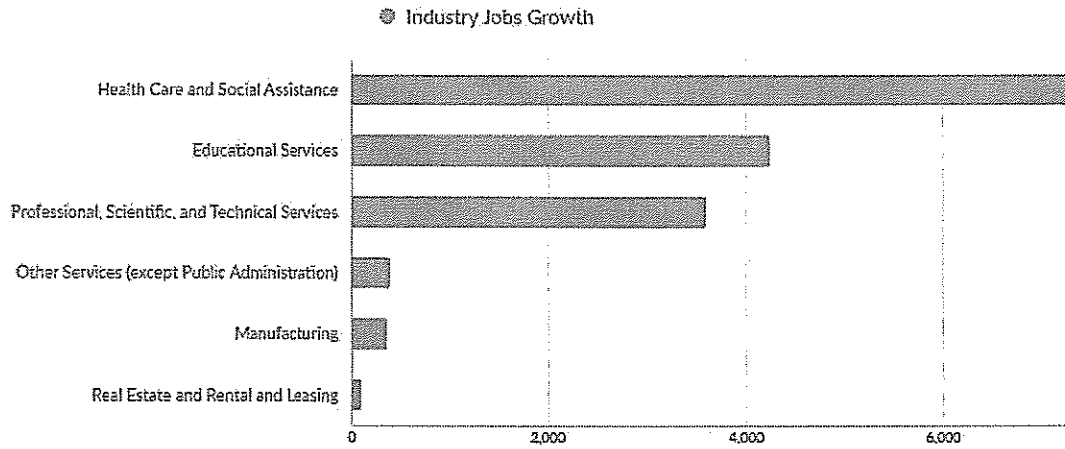
Top Occupation Employment Concentration



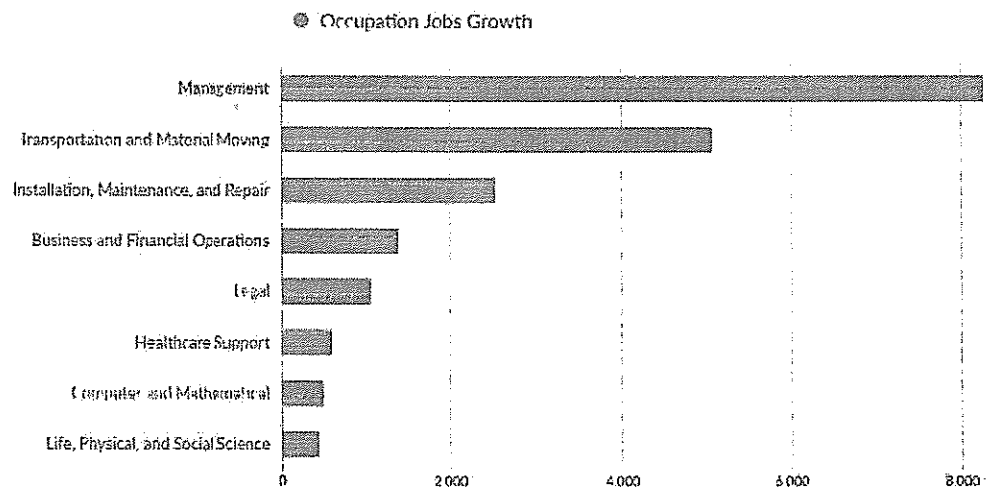
Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth

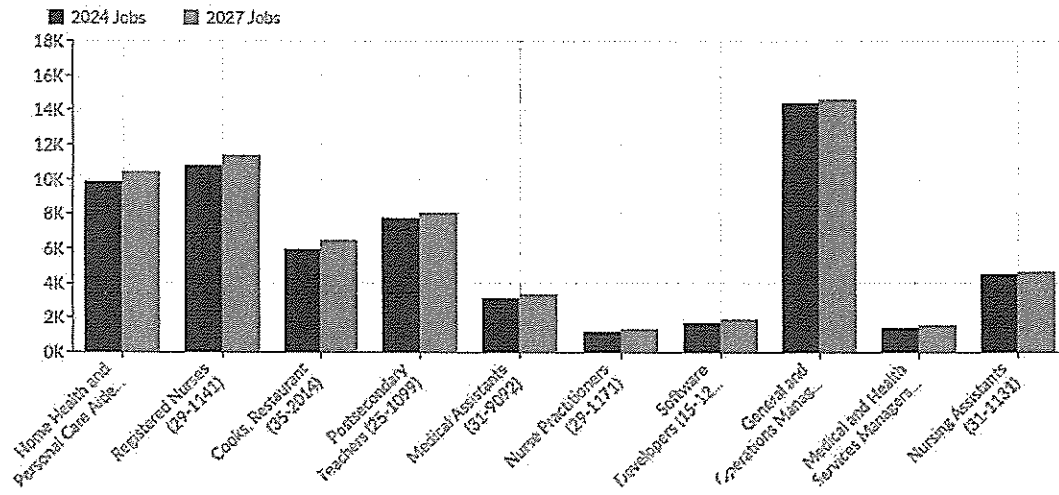
When evaluating workforce opportunities, it is important to distinguish between net growth and total job demand. Net growth represents an expanding industry, highlighting sectors that are increasing their overall workforce rather than simply replacing workers due to exits or transfers. Industries with strong net growth indicate areas of emerging economic opportunity, which can guide workforce development strategies and career planning.

Top Growing Industries



Top Growing Occupations





In the Greater New Orleans Region, several industries demonstrate favorable growth projections:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance** leads with the highest net job growth, adding over 4,000 jobs by 2027. This growth reflects the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population needs and regional efforts to expand access. High-demand occupations in this sector include **Registered Nurses**, **Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses**, and **Medical Assistants**, all of which align with growing healthcare needs and provide sustainable career opportunities.
- **Educational Services** is also experiencing significant growth, adding nearly 2,000 jobs. This industry is essential for preparing the workforce for future challenges and includes occupations such as **Elementary and Secondary School Teachers**. These roles provide stable, well-paying careers while supporting workforce development across other sectors.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** shows robust growth, with an increase of nearly 1,000 jobs. This sector drives innovation and technical advancements, with key occupations such as **Business Operations Specialists**, **Accountants and Auditors**, and **Human Resources Specialists** leading demand. These roles are essential for businesses seeking to remain competitive and align with the region's strategic priorities.
- **Manufacturing** demonstrates positive growth of nearly 800 jobs, reflecting the region's investment in industrial capacity and energy production. Occupations like **General and Operations Managers**, **Industrial Mechanics**, and **Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers** are critical to this sector's ongoing expansion.
- **Construction**, while not currently reflected in the net growth data, is poised to experience significant demand due to upcoming infrastructure projects related to the expansion of the region's port systems. These large-scale developments will create sustained demand for skilled construction workers, such as electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers, positioning construction as a key growth sector in the coming years.

The distinction between net growth and total job demand is essential for understanding the dynamics of regional employment. While industries with high total demand (including

replacements) indicate where the greatest number of job openings exist, industries with net growth point to areas of economic expansion and innovation. These growing industries, coupled with high-demand occupations, represent key opportunities for workforce development initiatives to strengthen the local economy and provide residents with long-term career pathways.

By strategically aligning workforce efforts with these sectors, the Greater New Orleans Region can ensure it remains competitive, resilient, and prepared to meet the demands of a shifting economy.

Jobs with the Highest Number of Replacement Jobs

Replacement jobs, created when workers leave their positions due to retirement, career changes, or other reasons, represent a crucial component of the Greater New Orleans Region's labor market. These roles often reflect occupations with large existing workforces and consistent demand, making them vital to sustaining the region's economy. Replacement opportunities are particularly abundant in two distinct groups: occupations requiring no formal education and those requiring a high school diploma with wages at or above \$15 per hour. These roles support both traditional and emerging sectors while offering critical opportunities for job seekers.

Top 5 Occupations Requiring No Formal Education

1. **Fast Food and Counter Workers (SOC 35-3023):** With 8,562 replacement jobs, fast food and counter workers play an integral role in the hospitality and service industries. These positions, while often entry-level, are essential to supporting the region's tourism economy and food service infrastructure, which are vital to New Orleans' cultural identity and economic vibrancy.
2. **Cashiers (SOC 41-2011):** Cashiers, with 8,234 replacement jobs, reflect the continued importance of retail in the local economy, even as the sector faces challenges from automation and e-commerce. Their presence in grocery stores, small businesses, and larger retail establishments ensures community access to essential goods and services.
3. **Waiters and Waitresses (SOC 35-3031):** Waitstaff are essential to the hospitality and tourism sectors, contributing 7,661 replacement jobs. With New Orleans being a globally recognized destination for food and culture, these roles are critical for maintaining the high-quality dining experiences that attract millions of visitors annually.
4. **Retail Salespersons (SOC 41-2031):** Generating 6,521 replacement jobs, retail sales roles remain a cornerstone of the retail trade sector. These positions support the local economy by providing customer service and driving sales, even as the industry adapts to shifting consumer behaviors.
5. **Food Preparation Workers (SOC 35-2021):** With 4,601 replacement jobs, food preparation workers are critical behind the scenes contributors to the region's food service industry. From casual eateries to high-end restaurants, these roles ensure efficiency and quality, supporting the vibrant culinary culture for which New Orleans is renowned.

Top 5 Occupations Requiring a High School Diploma with Wages at or Above \$14.48 Per Hour

1. **Stockers and Order Fillers (SOC 53-7065):** Stockers and order fillers, with 3,882 replacement

jobs, are critical to the **Transportation and Logistics** sector. These roles ensure efficient inventory management and the smooth movement of goods, supporting industries like retail, manufacturing, and construction.

2. **Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (SOC 43-6014):** These professionals, with 3,542 replacement jobs, provide vital administrative support across industries, including **Construction**, where managing the logistics of large-scale projects like port expansions requires precise organization and communication.
3. **General and Operations Managers (SOC 11-1021):** With 3,430 replacement jobs, general and operations managers are pivotal to the success of sectors such as **Construction** and **Manufacturing**. These leaders oversee complex operations, manage resources, and drive efficiency, making them indispensable to the region's economic infrastructure.
4. **Customer Service Representatives (SOC 43-4051):** Generating 3,362 replacement jobs, customer service representatives are key to maintaining relationships with clients and consumers across industries. From healthcare to logistics, these roles ensure seamless operations and enhance customer satisfaction.
5. **First-line Supervisors of Food Preparation Workers (SOC 35-1012):** Contributing 2,688 replacement jobs, supervisors across all industries are critical, but most often need replacement in the food industry. Their work ensures that food operations run smoothly and efficiently.

First-Line Supervisors are needed in all industries. By 2027 there will be a need to fill more than 10,000 first-line supervisor openings across all industries. There exists a higher-than-average rate and transferable of skills which often leads to better opportunities.

Connection to Targeted Industries

Replacement jobs in these occupations highlight their importance in maintaining the strength of the Greater New Orleans Region's targeted industries:

- **Transportation and Logistics** relies heavily on stockers, order fillers, and truck drivers to ensure goods flow efficiently through the region's robust supply chain infrastructure.
- **Construction** benefits from administrative assistants and operations managers who coordinate the complex logistics of infrastructure projects like the port expansions, which are set to drive the region's growth in the coming years.
- **Hospitality and Retail** depend on roles such as cashiers, retail salespersons, waitstaff, and food preparation workers to support the vibrant service economy that is central to New Orleans' global reputation.

The abundance of replacement jobs across these occupations reflects the region's economic diversity and resilience. These opportunities not only provide career pathways for workers but also ensure that critical industries remain well-staffed and capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic and evolving economy. By aligning workforce development initiatives with these replacement needs, the region can sustain its economic vitality while creating accessible opportunities for its residents.

Mature but Still Important Industries and Occupations

Despite showing modest or flat growth, some industries remain vital economic drivers in the Greater New Orleans Region, contributing significantly to the local economy and providing essential services. These industries play key roles in community stability, workforce development, and maintaining a robust economic foundation, even as they face challenges and evolve with changing market dynamics.

- **Retail Trade:** Employing over **57,000 workers**, the retail trade sector remains a critical pillar of the regional economy. While net growth is modest or even slightly negative in some areas, such as retail salespersons and cashiers, the sector continues to generate a substantial number of replacement jobs, ensuring consistent workforce demand. This resilience underscores its importance in providing goods and services to the community and supporting other economic activities. Retail managers, who play a vital leadership role, are essential for ensuring operational efficiency and adapting to challenges like e-commerce competition and shifting consumer preferences.
- **Public and Private Educational Services:** With a steady upward trend and employing approximately **58,000 workers**, this industry is indispensable for workforce development and long-term economic growth. Educational services not only prepare individuals for high-demand occupations but also foster regional innovation by enhancing skills and knowledge. Roles like elementary and secondary school educators are particularly vital, supporting the next generation of workers and ensuring community stability. Growth in this sector reflects increasing investments in education and the region's commitment to equipping its workforce for future opportunities.

While the **Retail Trade** sector adapts to evolving consumer behaviors and technological advancements, and the **Educational Services** sector responds to growing workforce demands, both industries remain critical drivers of the Greater New Orleans economy. Their enduring relevance, even in the face of modest or flat net growth, highlights the importance of these industries in providing employment, community services, and economic stability. Occupations such as retail managers and educators exemplify their contribution, ensuring that these sectors continue to support the regional economy and adapt to future challenges.

Louisiana Star Rated Occupations

Major Occupations in the New Orleans RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change	Star Rating
Retail Salespersons	41-2031	15,565	15,439	-126	-0.81%	
Cashiers	41-2011	15,327	15,119	-208	-1.36%	★
Registered Nurses	29-1141	14,942	15,299	357	2.39%	★★★★★
Waiters and Waitresses	35-3031	11,430	11,856	426	3.73%	★
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	11,126	11,350	224	2.01%	★★★★★
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	37-2011	9,985	9,869	-116	-1.16%	★
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	53-7062	9,623	9,939	316	3.28%	★★
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	43-6014	9,434	9,225	-209	-2.22%	★★★
Office Clerks, General	43-9061	8,967	8,931	-36	-0.4%	★★
Fast Food and Counter Workers	35-3023	8,001	8,247	246	3.07%	★

Major 5 Star Occupations in the New Orleans RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change
Registered Nurses	29-1141	14942	15299	357	2.39%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	11126	11350	224	2.01%
Lawyers	23-1011	4663	4819	156	3.35%
Accountants and Auditors	13-2011	4613	4690	77	1.67%
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	17-1011	2707	2826	119	4.41%
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	53-5021	2510	2648	138	5.5%
Financial Managers	11-3031	2291	2325	34	1.48%
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	49-1011	2284	2309	25	1.09%
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	51-1011	2089	2094	5	0.24%
Medical and Health Services Managers	11-9111	1893	2005	112	5.92%

The Region's Economic Evolution and Emerging Sectors

The Greater New Orleans Region's economy is undergoing a significant transformation, with the rise of emerging sectors that complement its traditional industries. This evolution is driven by technological advancements, an increased emphasis on innovation, and a strategic focus on building a more diversified and resilient economic foundation.

- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** Employing 33,761 individuals, this sector is at the forefront of the region's economic growth. The increasing demand for technical expertise and innovative solutions has positioned this industry as a critical driver of progress. From business operations specialists and environmental science technicians to accountants and auditors, the sector supports a wide range of occupations that enhance efficiency and sustainability across multiple industries. Its contributions are especially impactful in areas like **construction** and **healthcare**, where technical innovation is key to improving processes and outcomes.
- **Information Technology (IT):** Expanding rapidly, the IT sector is driven by the growing demand for digital solutions and cybersecurity measures across industries. Occupations such as software developers, IT specialists, and network administrators are increasingly critical to meeting both local and national needs. IT plays a pivotal role in modernizing industries like **manufacturing** and **transportation and logistics**, enabling these traditional sectors to stay competitive in a global market. Additionally, IT supports the region's workforce development efforts by introducing high-tech career pathways that align with future labor market demands.

Opportunities for Diversification and Resilience

These emerging sectors represent more than just economic growth; they highlight the region's ability to adapt to changing economic landscapes and leverage its workforce strengths. Professional, scientific, and technical services provide a foundation for innovation, fostering new business opportunities and enhancing productivity across all industries. Similarly, the IT sector ensures that local businesses remain competitive and prepared for the increasing digitalization of the global economy.

The rise of these sectors also reflects the region's commitment to building economic resilience. By diversifying its economic base, the Greater New Orleans Region is better equipped to weather fluctuations in traditional industries such as oil and gas. Workforce development initiatives that prioritize skills in technical services and IT further enhance this resilience, ensuring the region remains a hub for innovation, sustainability, and long-term growth.

As these sectors continue to expand, they create new career opportunities for residents, attract investment to the region, and strengthen its position as a competitive and forward-looking economic center.

Sources of Supply and Demand Data

This analysis is grounded in data from:

Louisiana Workforce Commission

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): National and regional employment and wage trends.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW): Detailed industry-level insights.

U.S. Census Bureau: Demographic and economic data.

Lightcast

GNO, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(1)(ii));

The employment landscape in the Greater New Orleans Region reflects diverse and evolving needs across existing and emerging industry sectors. In **Manufacturing and Oil & Gas**, there is a consistent demand for skilled trades such as machinists, electricians, and welders, alongside operations managers capable of overseeing production and integrating advanced technologies. Meanwhile, the **Healthcare** sector urgently requires Registered Nurses, Medical Assistants, and Licensed Practical Nurses to address the needs of an aging population and expanding healthcare infrastructure.

The **Transportation and Logistics** sector highlights the need for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, warehouse supervisors, and logistics analysts to maintain and optimize supply chain operations. Emerging sectors, such as **Information Technology (IT)** and **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**, reveal growing opportunities for software developers, cybersecurity specialists, data analysts, and business operations professionals. Additionally, **Construction** is experiencing sustained demand for skilled laborers, project managers, and equipment operators due to major infrastructure projects, including port expansions. Employers across all these sectors consistently prioritize technical certifications, problem-solving skills, and hands-on experience with emerging technologies.

The **"Top Posted Occupations"** chart further illustrates the region's dynamic workforce demands. **Registered Nurses** lead with over 15,600 job postings between June and November 2024, underscoring the critical need for healthcare professionals. Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers, and Customer Service Representatives demonstrate the continued importance of retail and customer-facing roles in the regional economy. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, with nearly 1,000 unique postings, highlight the logistics sector's vital role in supporting supply chains. General and Operations Managers stand out as a key occupation across multiple industries, reflecting a high demand for leadership and strategic oversight in Manufacturing, Construction, and IT.

With median posting durations ranging from 19 to 32 days, employers face varying levels of urgency and competition to fill these critical roles. This highlights the importance of targeted workforce development initiatives and accelerated training programs to bridge the gap between

job seeker skills and employer needs, ensuring a responsive and resilient labor market.

Top Posted Occupations

888

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jun 2024 - Nov 2024)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Registered Nurses	15,688 / 5,699	3 : 1	19 days
Retail Salespersons	5,505 / 2,088	3 : 1	28 days
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,510 / 1,330	3 : 1	26 days
Customer Service Representatives	3,810 / 1,105	3 : 1	24 days
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,623 / 988	3 : 1	29 days
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,225 / 964	2 : 1	27 days
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2,577 / 908	3 : 1	23 days
Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,374 / 899	3 : 1	32 days
Food Service Managers	2,205 / 878	3 : 1	28 days
General and Operations Managers	2,063 / 873	3 : 1	25 days

3. Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(a)(2));
 - What are the targeted career pathway clusters in the region?
 - What are the skills that are in demand in the region?
 - How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?

Targeted Career Pathway Clusters in the Region

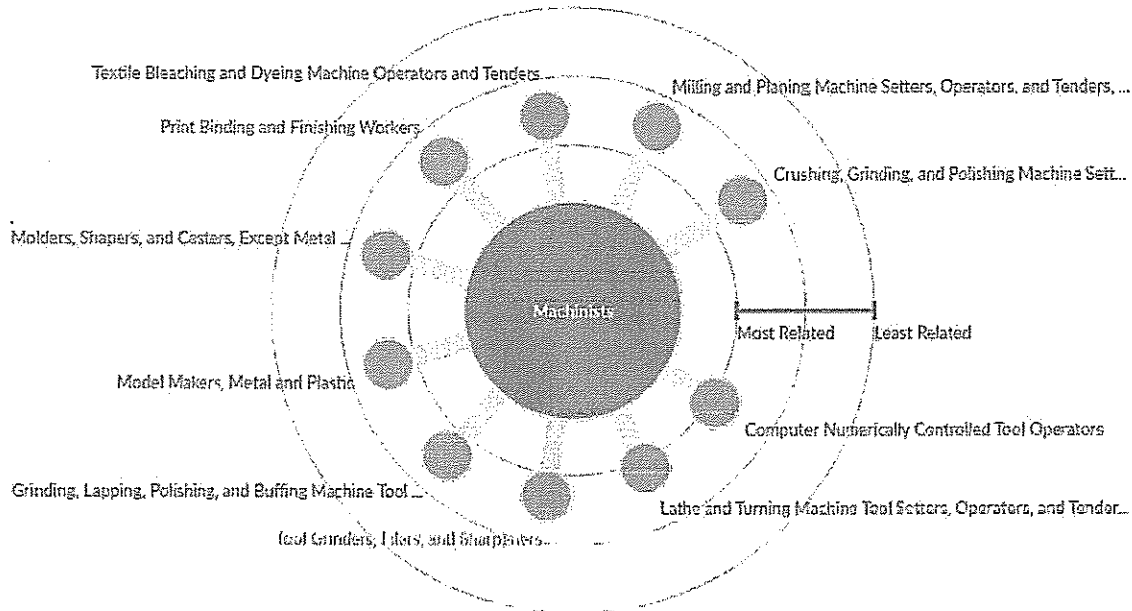
To meet the workforce needs of in demand industries and support economic growth, the Greater New Orleans Region has prioritized several targeted career pathway clusters. These clusters are designed to align training and education programs with high-demand occupations, providing residents with clear and accessible routes to sustainable careers.

Manufacturing:

The manufacturing sector continues to evolve with the adoption of advanced technologies. Career pathways in manufacturing focus on advanced manufacturing techniques, robotics, and automation, equipping workers with the skills needed for modern production environments. Training programs often include certifications in industrial maintenance, CNC machining, and mechatronics, addressing the growing demand for specialized skills. These pathways support regional industries such as oil and gas, petrochemicals, and general manufacturing, ensuring a steady pipeline of qualified workers.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Industrial Machinist

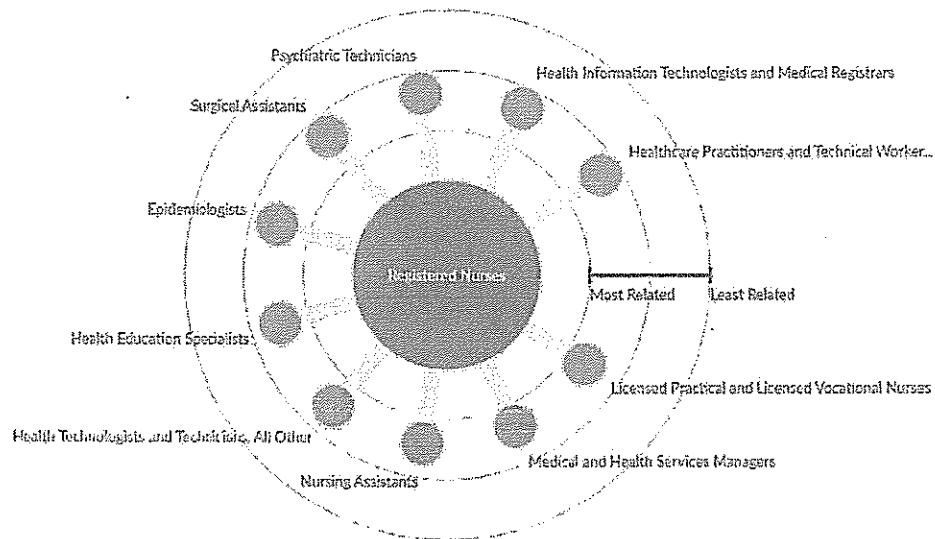
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Machinists with median advertised salary of \$57,088. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Machinists and your selected occupation.



Healthcare: The healthcare sector is a cornerstone of the regional economy, with growing demand for professionals across various roles. Career pathways in healthcare focus on Registered Nursing, Licensed Practical Nursing, and Medical Assisting, which are critical to addressing the region's expanding healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, pathways in healthcare administration prepare individuals for roles in hospital management and patient access, while medical technology programs equip students with skills in areas like medical imaging and laboratory sciences. These pathways are supported by partnerships with major healthcare employers such as Ochsner Health, ensuring alignment with industry standards and needs.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Registered Nursing

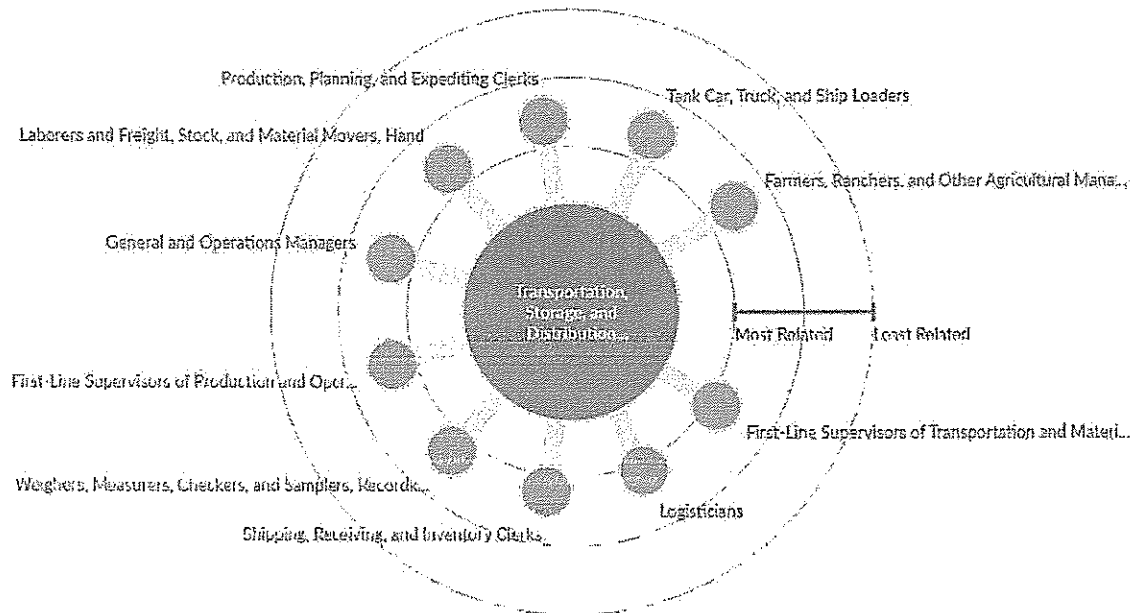
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Registered Nurses with median advertised salary of \$100,224. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e., Skill Gaps) between Registered Nurses and your selected occupation.



Transportation and Logistics: As a regional hub for trade and distribution, the transportation and logistics sector offer numerous opportunities for workforce development. Career pathways in this cluster focus on Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training programs, which prepare individuals for roles as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers. Supply chain management and logistics certification programs provide additional pathways for those seeking careers in warehousing, freight coordination, and transportation analysis. These programs support the region's infrastructure expansion efforts and the increasing demand for efficient supply chain operations.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers

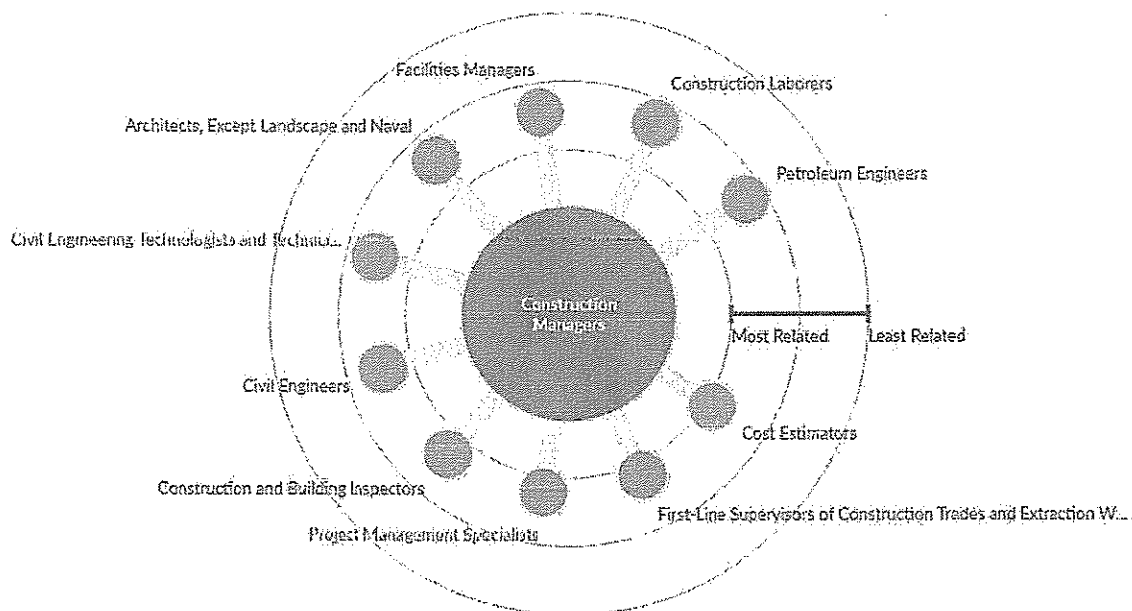
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers with median advertised salary of \$60,032. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers and your selected occupation.



Construction: With significant infrastructure projects underway, including the tremendous port expansions, construction is a high priority sector for workforce development over the next few years. Career pathways in construction emphasize apprenticeships and certifications in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and heavy equipment operation. These programs are often employer driven, with partnerships between workforce boards and local unions ensuring that participants receive hands on training and access to employment opportunities. Additionally, past programs like the Construction Connection have been proven to streamline the hiring process and connect job seekers directly with employers in the industry.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Construction Managers

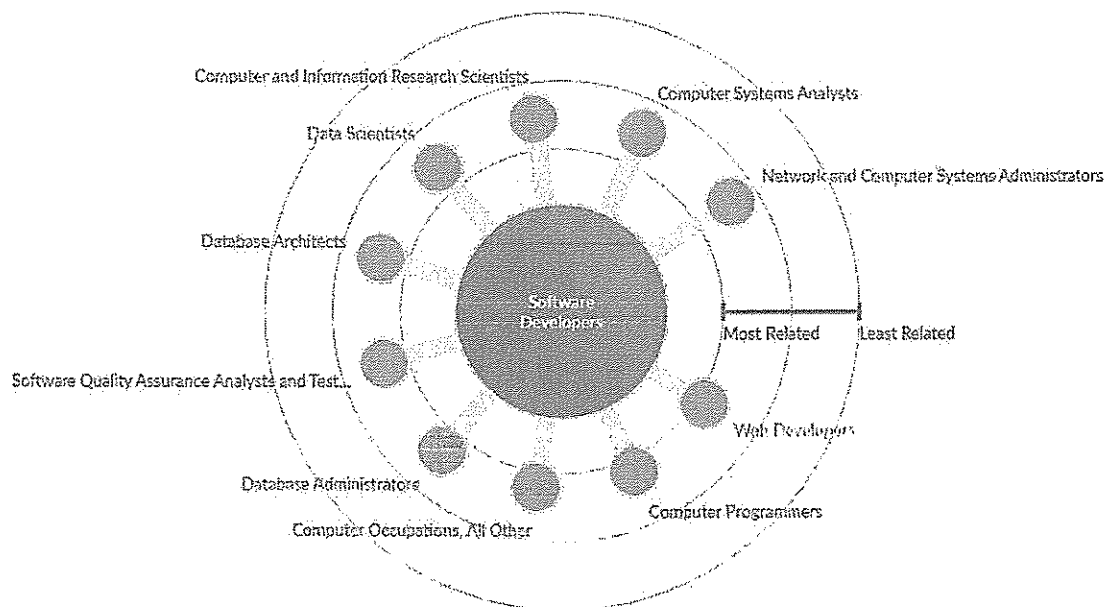
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Construction Managers with median advertised salary of \$89,984. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Construction Managers and your selected occupation.



Information Technology and Technical Services: The IT and technical services cluster is one of the fastest growing in the region, fueled by increasing digitization across industries. Career pathways in this sector focus on areas such as cybersecurity, software development, and data science, which are critical to meeting both local and national demand. Training programs often include industry recognized certifications, such as CompTIA and AWS, and are designed in collaboration with employers like DXC Technology to ensure relevance and applicability. These pathways provide opportunities for both entry-level and advanced roles, supporting the region's efforts to build a tech-savvy workforce.

Feeder Jobs Leading to Software Developer

Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Software Developers with median advertised salary of \$115,072. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Software Developers and your selected occupation.



By focusing on these career pathway clusters, the Greater New Orleans Region ensures that workforce development efforts are closely aligned with industry needs. These pathways not only provide clear routes to high-demand occupations but also support the region's broader goals of economic mobility and resilience. Through partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards these targeted pathways prepare residents for meaningful careers while addressing critical labor shortages in key industries.

Skills in Demand in the Region

The workforce needs in the Greater New Orleans Region reflect a diverse array of technical and soft skills that are essential for maintaining and expanding the region's economy. These demands are influenced by the unique economic structure of the area, which is driven by sectors such as healthcare, transportation and logistics, IT, construction, and manufacturing. To remain competitive and meet the expectations of employers, workforce development strategies must focus on equipping individuals with both specialized technical skills and essential soft skills.

Technical Skills: The Foundation of Regional Employment

The demand for technical skills is evident across key industries, and it reflects the region's reliance on specialized expertise to sustain economic growth:

- **Healthcare Dominance:** As the region's largest employer, the healthcare industry underscores the need for nursing and medical support skills. With over 16,900 job postings for nursing-related roles, the demand for healthcare professionals continues to outpace supply. Specialized skills like health assessment and medical privacy are becoming increasingly vital, particularly as advancements in medical technology evolve how care is delivered.
- **Data and Analytics:** The rapid rise of data-driven decision-making is transforming the workforce across industries. Skills in data analysis and data collection are growing at rates of +25.8% and +29.9%, respectively. These capabilities are highly sought after in IT and professional services, where businesses rely on analytics to optimize operations and develop innovative solutions.
- **Transportation and Logistics:** The demand for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and logistics coordinators highlights the importance of CDL licensure and supply chain expertise. With the region's role as a critical transportation hub, these technical proficiencies ensure the seamless movement of goods across national and international markets.
- **Construction and Manufacturing:** The ongoing infrastructure projects and industrial expansion emphasize the need for workers with certifications in trades such as welding, carpentry, CNC machining, and occupational safety. These roles form the backbone of industries driving the region's physical and economic development.

Soft Skills: A Universal Workforce Requirement

While technical skills are vital, soft skills remain a universal requirement across all sectors. Employers consistently highlight these competencies as critical for workforce success:

- **Communication and Leadership:** With communication appearing in over 35% of job postings, it is clear that the ability to convey ideas effectively and collaborate with others is indispensable. Leadership, often associated with managerial roles, is another skill highly valued by employers seeking candidates who can inspire teams and drive results.
- **Customer Service and Problem-Solving:** As the region continues to grow its retail, hospitality, and healthcare sectors, customer-facing skills remain essential. The ability to address client needs and resolve challenges efficiently is vital to maintaining satisfaction and fostering long-term business relationships.
- **Attention to Detail and Teamwork:** In precision-based industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, attention to detail ensures quality and safety, while teamwork facilitates collaboration and innovation.

Emerging Skills: Preparing for the Future

As industries adapt to technological and environmental shifts, emerging skills are becoming critical for regional competitiveness:

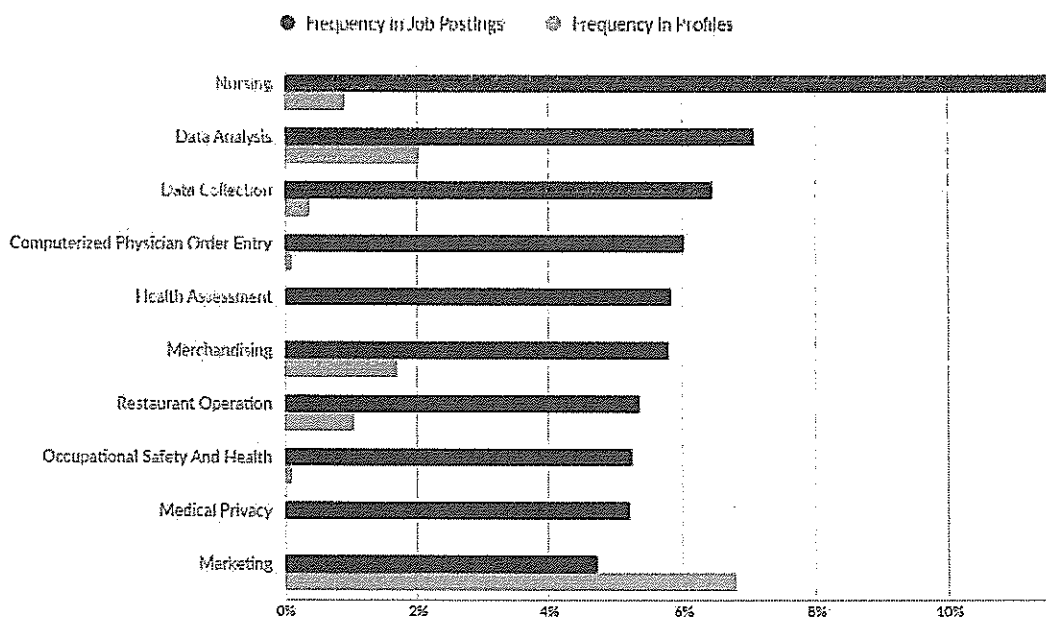
- **Digital Transformation and IT:** Programming languages like Python and Java, as well as knowledge of cloud computing and cybersecurity, are increasingly in demand as businesses integrate digital tools into their operations.
- **Data Science and Artificial Intelligence:** The integration of AI technologies into industries like healthcare and logistics highlights the need for skills in data modeling, machine learning, and AI implementation.
- **Sustainability Practices:** Growing attention to environmental impact has created demand for workers who understand sustainability principles, particularly in construction, manufacturing, and logistics.

Analysis of Regional Trends

The accompanying data provides valuable insights into these trends. The **Top Specialized Skills** chart identifies nursing, data analysis, and data collection as leading technical competencies, while the **Top Common Skills** chart highlights communication, leadership, and customer service as essential soft skills. The projected growth rates for these skills, such as +29.9% for data collection and +23% for marketing, reflect the evolving needs of the workforce and the increasing complexity of regional industries.

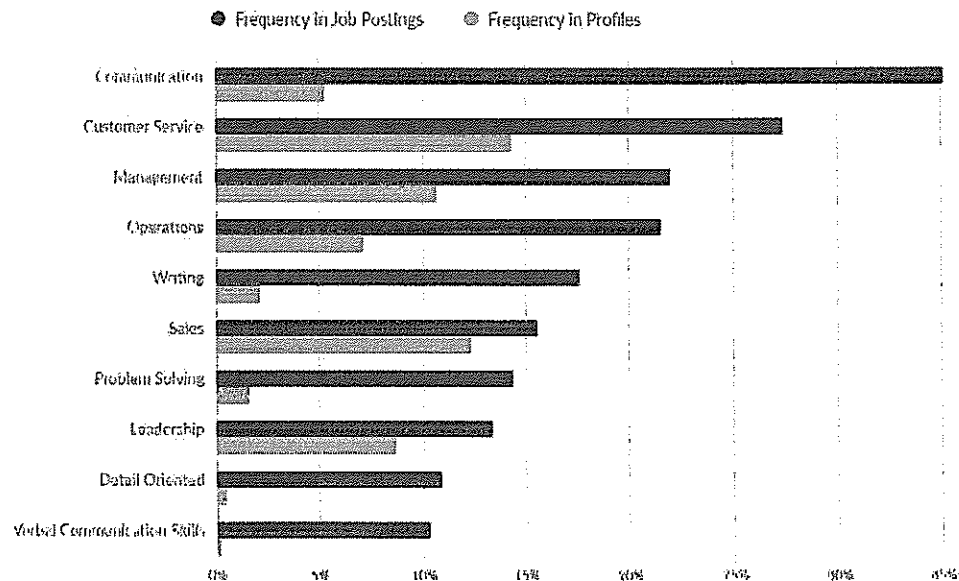
Moreover, median posting durations, particularly for roles requiring technical expertise, suggest challenges in filling these positions, further emphasizing the need for targeted training and workforce development initiatives. This is especially critical as healthcare and data-related roles continue to dominate job postings, aligning with national trends.

Top Specialized Skills



Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Nursing	16,913	12%	4,063	1%	+20.1%	Rapidly Growing
Data Analysis	10,354	7%	8,885	2%	+25.8%	Rapidly Growing
Data Collection	9,451	6%	1,637	0%	+29.9%	Rapidly Growing
Computerized Physician Order Entry	8,820	6%	487	0%	+17.1%	Growing
Health Assessment	8,515	6%	0	0%	+14.7%	Growing
Merchandising	8,479	6%	7,419	2%	+15.0%	Growing
Restaurant Operation	7,833	5%	4,565	1%	+28.0%	Rapidly Growing
Occupational Safety And Health	7,666	5%	520	0%	+12.2%	Growing
Medical Privacy	7,613	5%	0	0%	+16.6%	Growing
Marketing	6,930	5%	29,553	7%	+23.0%	Rapidly Growing

Top Common Skills



Skills Present in the Region

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The underemployment graph highlights the disparity between the education levels of the workforce and the educational requirements of available job postings in the Greater New Orleans Region. However, it should be noted that this graph reflects all jobs and not just those offering self-sustaining wages. With that being said, a significant portion of jobs (all) requires only a high school

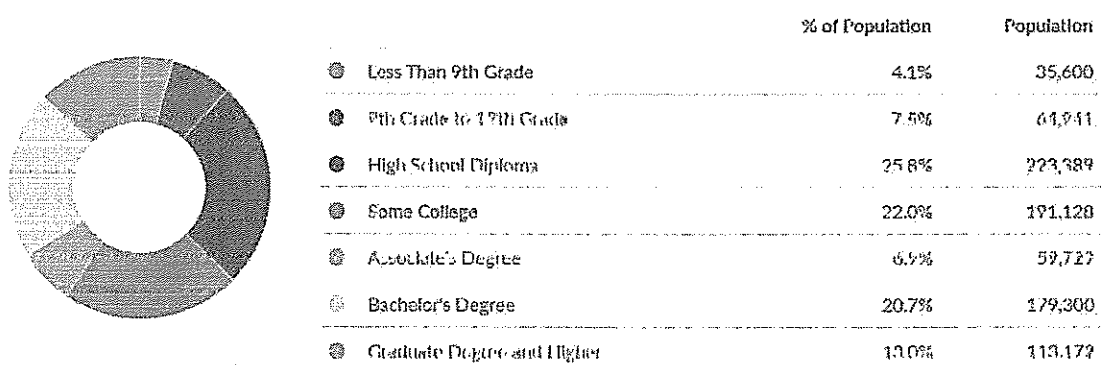
diploma or equivalent, yet there is a notable surplus of individuals with higher education levels, including bachelor's and associate degrees. This mismatch is most evident among bachelor's degree holders, where the population at this educational level far exceeds the number of jobs requiring such qualifications. Similarly, individuals with graduate degrees are underemployed due to a lack of advanced positions relative to their qualifications. Conversely, jobs requiring no formal education or only a high school diploma appear to be more aligned with the workforce, suggesting that these roles are adequately filled.

This data underscores the importance of workforce alignment strategies, such as creating opportunities for those with higher education levels and expanding pathways to advanced roles. Programs that emphasize reskilling or transitioning individuals into industries with greater demand for higher qualifications, such as healthcare, IT, and professional services, can help bridge the gap and mitigate underemployment in the region.

Educational Attainment

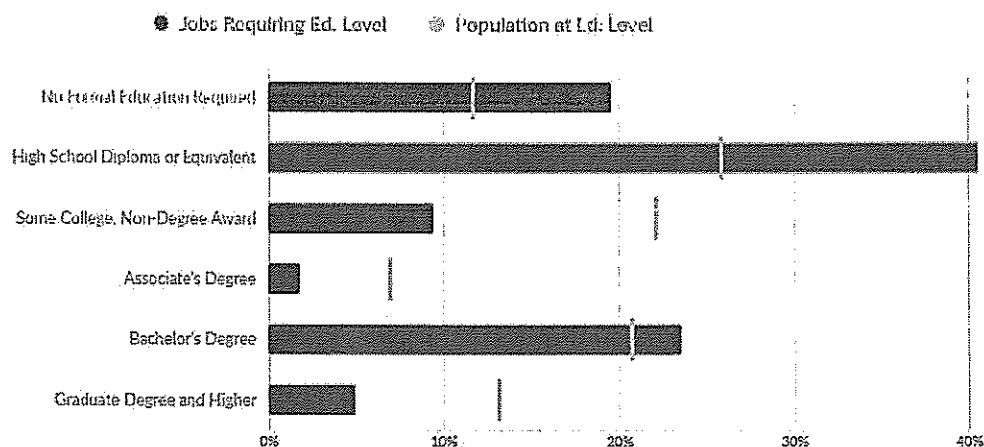
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Concerning educational attainment, 20.7% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (0.5% below the national average), and 6.9% hold an Associate's Degree (1.9% below the national average).



Underemployment

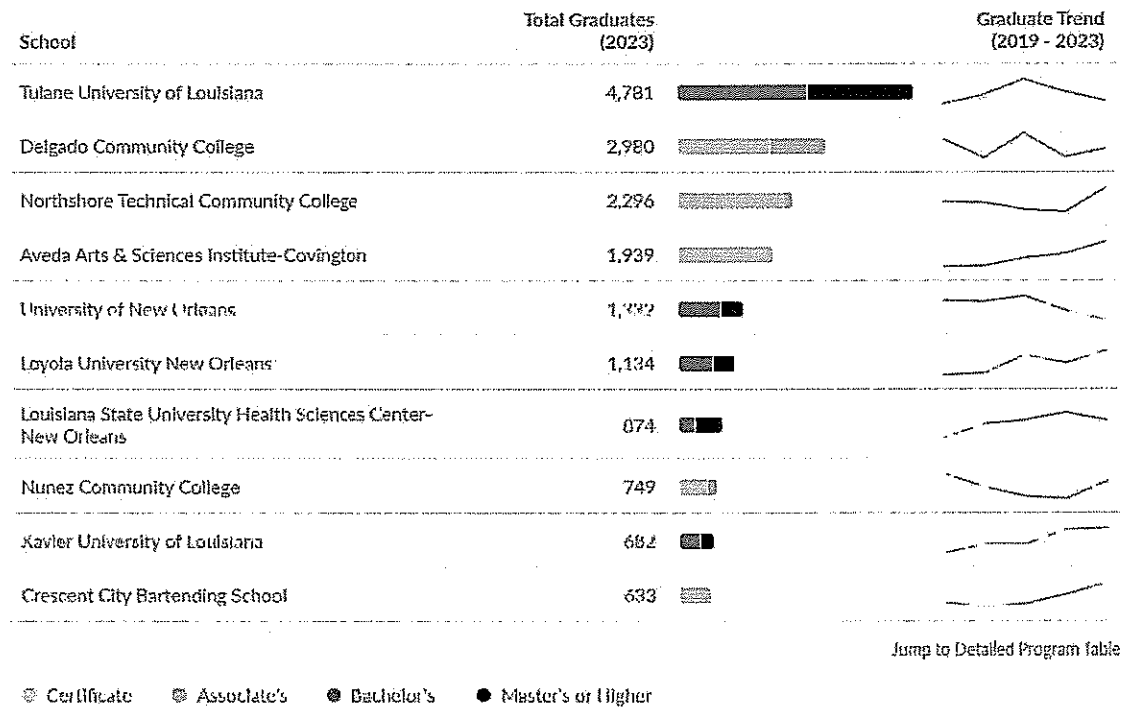
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Educational Pipeline

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In 2023, there were 19,867 graduates in 2024 - RLMA 1 (New Orleans MSA). This pipeline has grown by 1% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "Aesthetician/Esthetician and Skin Care Specialist" (Certificate), "Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General" (Certificate), and "General Studies" (Certificate).



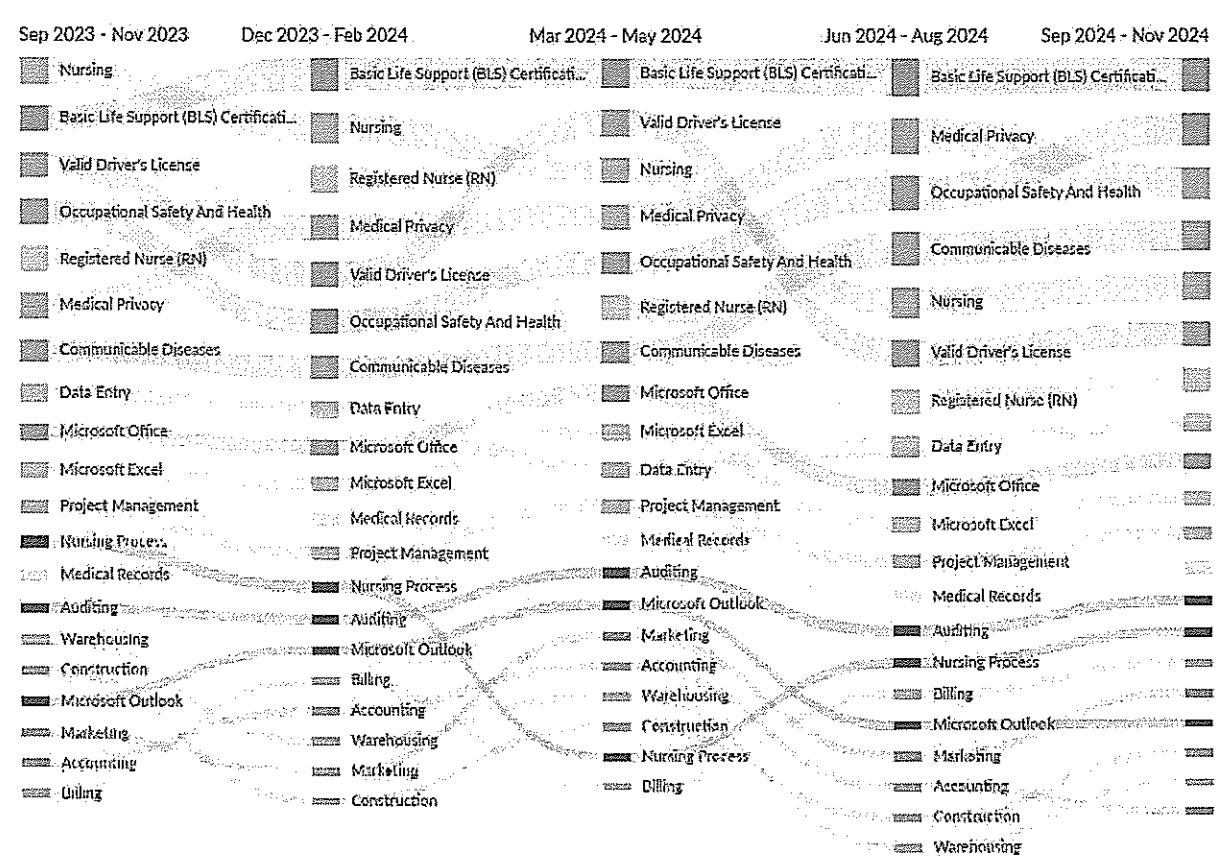
Skills sought by Employers in Targeted Sectors

There is an evolving demand for skills across key industries in the Greater New Orleans Region, prioritizing the most sought-after capabilities. In **healthcare**, skills such as Nursing, Registered Nurse (RN) certification, Medical Privacy, and Communicable Disease management consistently appear, reflecting the critical need for patient care expertise, regulatory compliance, and public health management. This sector dominates skill demand due to the region's growing healthcare infrastructure and workforce needs.

In **construction**, skills like Occupational Safety and Health, Project Management, and Warehousing are in high demand, emphasizing the importance of safety compliance, efficient project execution, and inventory handling for ongoing infrastructure development and expansion projects. Similarly, the **transportation and warehousing** industry showcases demand for skills such as Valid Driver's License, Warehousing, and Occupational Safety and Health, highlighting the need for logistics expertise, supply chain efficiency, and adherence to safety standards.

The **professional, technical, and scientific** services sector emphasizes skills like Project Management, Marketing, and Microsoft Excel, which are critical for organizational strategy, data analysis, and effective communication in high-skill industries. In manufacturing, skills such as

Microsoft Office, Data Entry, and Auditing are in demand, demonstrating the sector's reliance on administrative proficiency and quality control to maintain operational efficiency.



Meeting Employer Needs

To effectively bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer expectations, regional workforce development initiatives are focused on several strategic priorities:

- **Expanding Access to Certifications and Accelerated Training Programs:** Targeted efforts are underway to increase access to certifications and fast track training in key industries, including healthcare, IT, construction, manufacturing, and logistics. These programs aim to address specific skill shortages while accelerating job readiness.
- **Employer-Centric Training Design:** Workforce boards are actively partnering with employers to co-design training programs tailored to address critical skill gaps in high-demand sectors. This collaborative approach ensures that training aligns with real-world business needs.
- **Promoting Soft Skill Development:** To complement technical training, initiatives emphasize the development of soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork through workshops, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on experiences.

The Greater New Orleans Region has a unique opportunity to cultivate a workforce that fully meets the demands of both established and emerging industries. By aligning workforce development

efforts with the precise skills required by employers, the region can foster a resilient, adaptable, and inclusive economy, ensuring long-term competitiveness and growth.

Alignment of Job Seeker Skills with Business Demands

While there is partial alignment between the skills of job seekers and the demands of local businesses, significant gaps persist in critical sectors. Industries such as healthcare and construction have successfully implemented training programs to address workforce needs; however, fields like IT, advanced manufacturing, and logistics face ongoing challenges. Employers consistently report difficulties in finding candidates with specialized certifications, technical expertise, and hands-on experience.

This highlights the pressing need for strong collaboration among workforce boards, educational institutions, and employers to close these gaps. Expanding experiential learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, and enhancing outreach to underserved populations can further align job seeker skills with industry demands, ensuring that the region's workforce is prepared to meet evolving economic challenges.

4. Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iv) and § 679.560(a)(3)).
 - How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?
 - What special populations exist in the region, what is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?
-

Changing Demographics

The demographic trends in the Greater New Orleans Region indicate modest but notable changes between 2024 and 2027, with implications for workforce planning and economic development. The overall population is projected to decline slightly by 26,383 individuals, representing a 2% decrease. This decline is evenly distributed across genders, with both males and females experiencing a 2% reduction in population. Females will continue to constitute a slightly larger proportion of the population (51.76%), compared to males (48.24%).

Analyzing the population by age cohort reveals shifts that could impact labor force participation. The working-age population (ages 25 to 64) remains the largest segment, but younger age groups, such as those under 20, are also declining, potentially signaling a future challenge in replenishing the workforce. Meanwhile, older cohorts, particularly those aged 65 and above, remain steady or increase slightly, emphasizing the need for healthcare and retirement services to support an aging population.

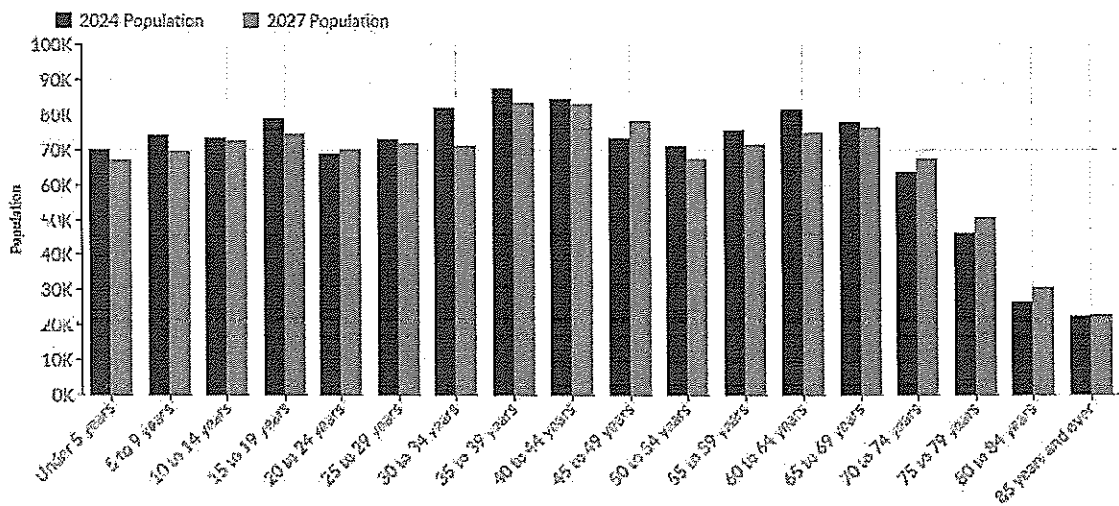
Racial and ethnic demographics show minimal shifts, with White, Non-Hispanic individuals maintaining the largest share of the population, followed by Black, Non-Hispanic and Hispanic

individuals. These stable proportions indicate that diversity within the region will remain a consistent feature, and workforce strategies should continue to focus on equitable opportunities across all racial and ethnic groups.

Overall, these demographic changes underscore the importance of policies aimed at attracting and retaining a younger, diverse, and highly skilled workforce to sustain economic growth while addressing the needs of an aging population. Strategies such as investing in education, expanding workforce training, and enhancing quality of life for all age groups will be essential in adapting to these trends.

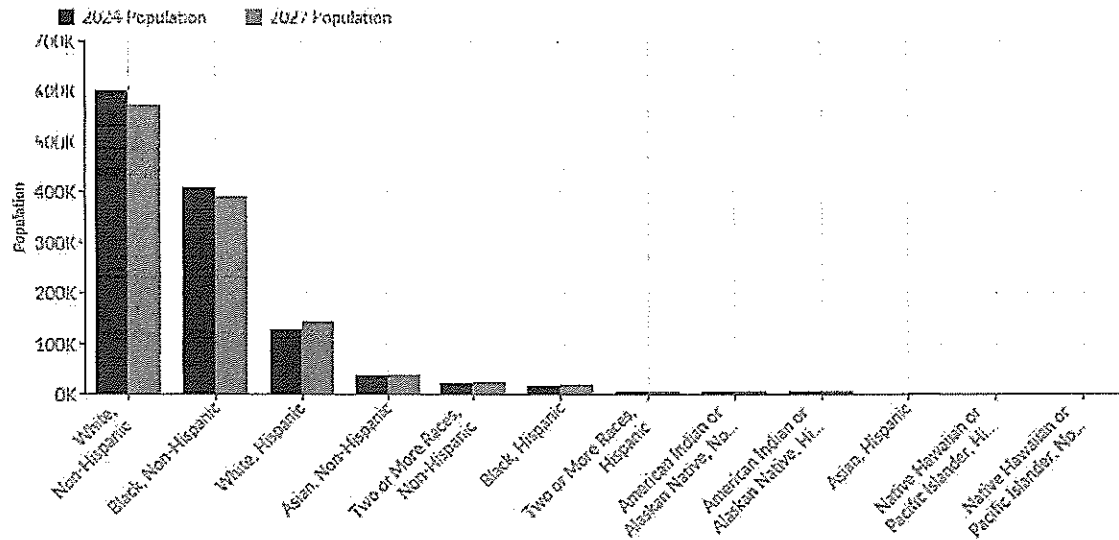
Population by Age Cohort

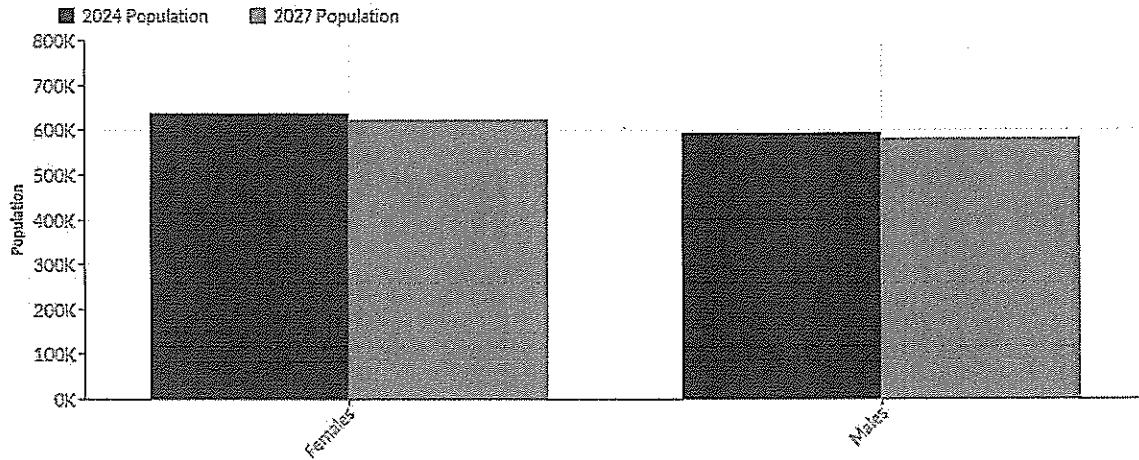
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Population by Race/Ethnicity

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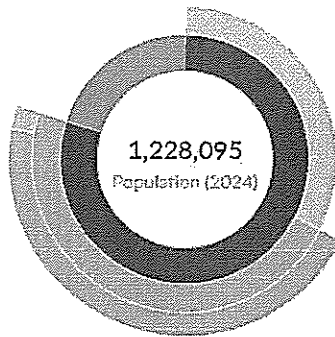


Gender	2024 Population	2027 Population	Change	% Change	2027 % of Cohort
Females	635,717	621,997	-13,725	-2%	51.76%
Males	592,378	579,720	-12,658	-2%	48.24%
Total	1,228,095	1,201,713	-26,383	2%	100.00%

Current Regional Labor Supply

The October 2024 Labor Force Breakdown provides a detailed view of the Greater New Orleans Region's population and workforce dynamics. Of the total population of 1,228,095, approximately 980,370 individuals belong to the 16+ civilian non institutionalized population. Among this group, 581,378 individuals are in the labor force, representing those either employed or actively seeking employment. The employed population accounts for 554,510 individuals, while 26,868 are unemployed, reflecting an unemployment rate of roughly 4.6%. Meanwhile, 398,992 individuals are not part of the labor force, encompassing those who are retired, pursuing education, or facing barriers to employment. Additionally, 247,724 individuals fall into the category of under 16, military, or institutionalized populations. This breakdown highlights the importance of policies aimed at increasing labor force participation and reducing barriers for those not currently engaged in the workforce to further enhance regional economic productivity.

Oct 2024 Labor Force Breakdown

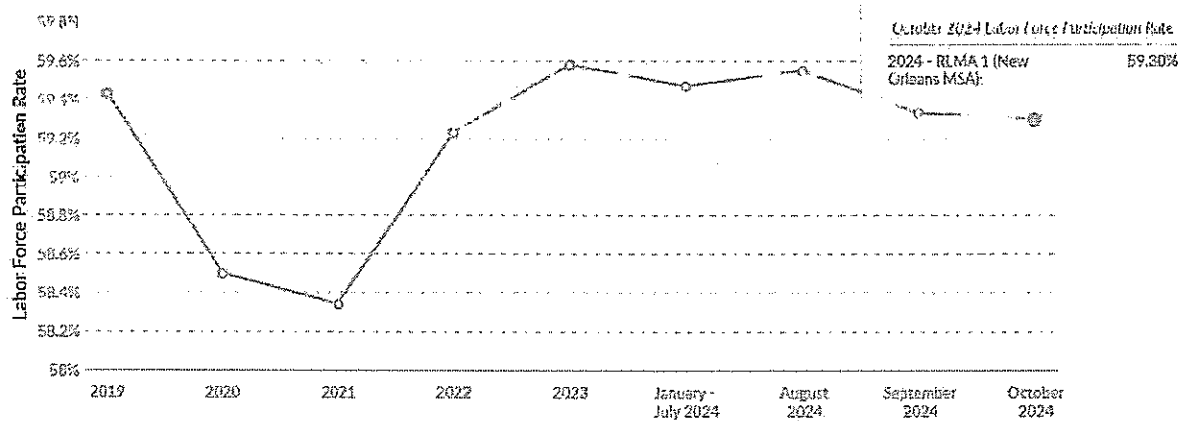


	Population
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	980,370
Not in Labor Force (16+)	398,992
Labor Force	581,378
Employed	554,510
Unemployed	26,868
Under 16, Military, and Institutionalized Population	247,724

Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) in the Greater New Orleans Region has experienced fluctuations over the past five years, reflecting broader economic trends and regional dynamics. As of October 2024, the LFPR stands at 59.3%, slightly lower than the peaks observed in 2023 but consistent with national trends in workforce engagement. The region's LFPR has shown resilience following significant declines in 2020 due to the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with gradual recovery driven by strategic investments in workforce development and targeted industry support. However, the recent slight decline highlights the ongoing challenges in labor force engagement, including workforce aging and barriers to participation. These trends emphasize the importance of continued efforts to improve access to education, training, and supportive services, ensuring that the region's workforce remains competitive and adaptable to evolving economic conditions.

Labor Force Participation Rate trends



Unemployment In the region

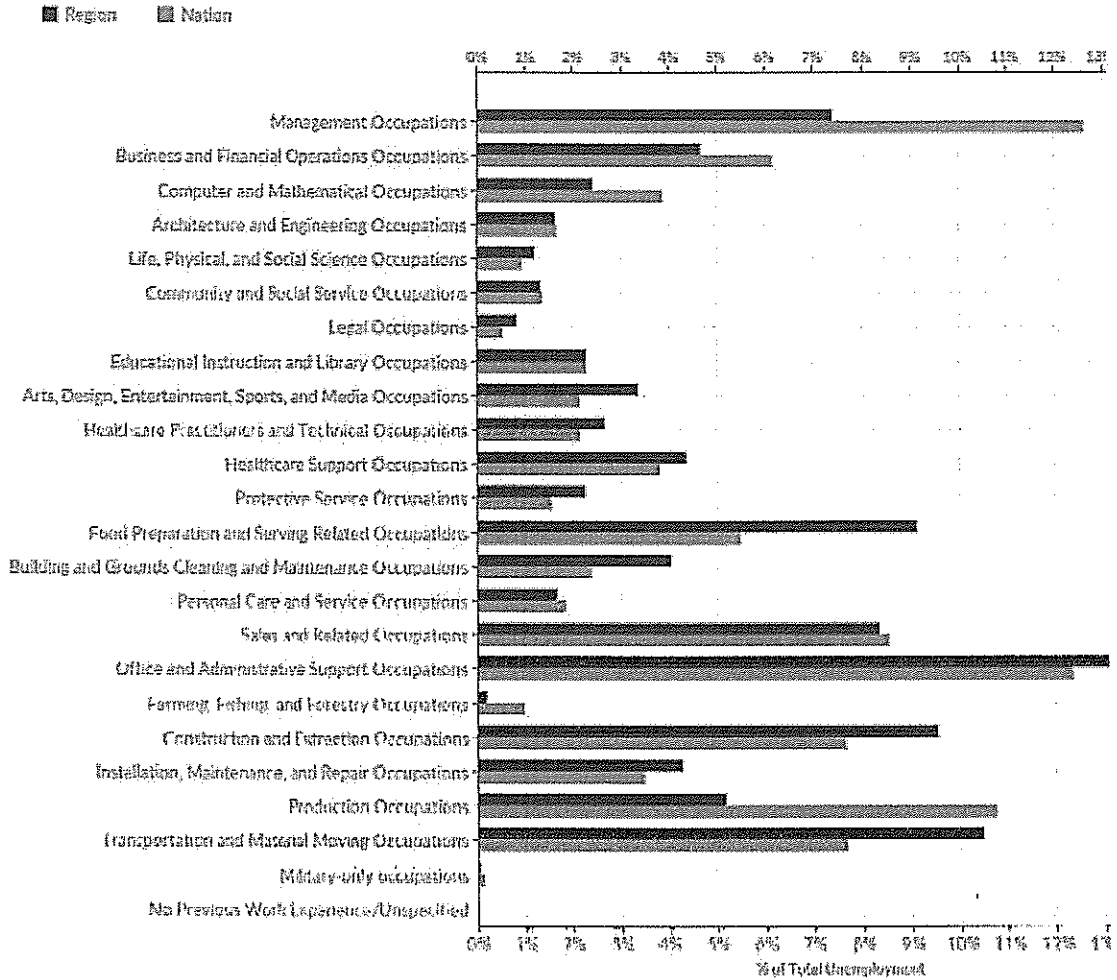
The October 2024 unemployment data by occupation provides a comprehensive view of how joblessness is distributed across various occupational categories in the Greater New Orleans Region. With a total unemployment figure of 26,868, certain occupations stand out with higher unemployment rates compared to others. Notably, Management Occupations exhibit the largest share of unemployment, exceeding the national average, which could reflect ongoing structural adjustments in leadership roles or challenges in matching qualified candidates to available positions. Similarly, Sales and Related Occupations, as well as Office and Administrative Support Occupations, show significant unemployment rates, suggesting potential oversupply or a shift in demand due to automation and evolving business needs.

On the other hand, certain skilled trades and technical roles, such as Construction and Extraction Occupations and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations, also register moderate unemployment rates, despite these being sectors traditionally associated with steady demand. This may highlight seasonal fluctuations or a mismatch between the skills of job seekers and employer needs. Healthcare-related occupations, such as Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, maintain lower unemployment rates, reflecting the ongoing demand for professionals in this sector to meet the needs of an aging population.

The data underscores the importance of aligning workforce development efforts with the changing needs of the regional economy. Investments in targeted upskilling programs, particularly for roles in high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and logistics, can help mitigate unemployment in areas with persistent joblessness while preparing the workforce for emerging opportunities in the Greater New Orleans Region.

26,868

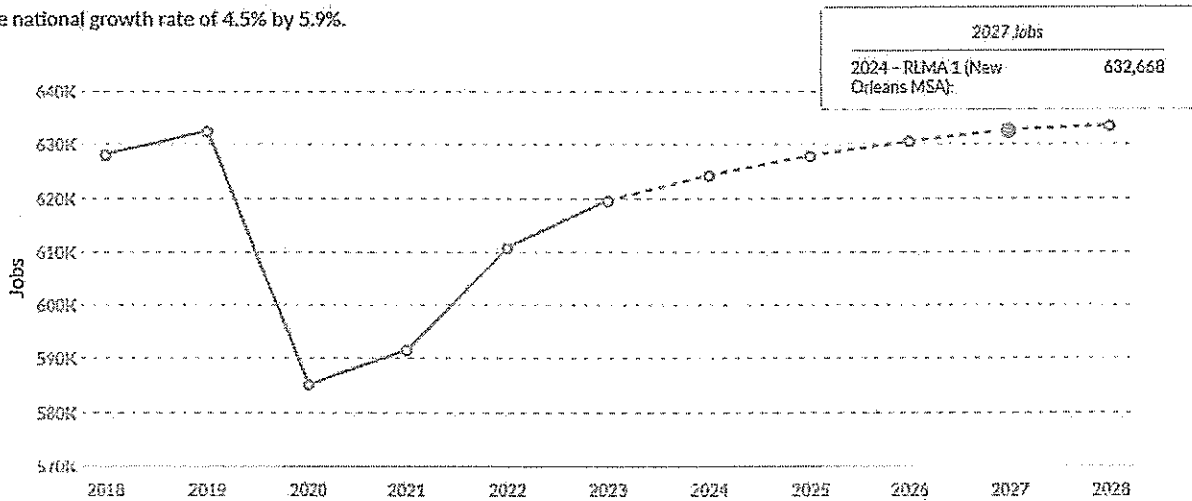
Total Unemployment (10/2024)



Job Trends

000

From 2018 to 2023, jobs declined by 1.4% in 2024 – RLMA 1 (New Orleans MSA) from 628,038 to 619,497. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 4.5% by 5.9%.



The Greater New Orleans Region's labor supply is undergoing notable shifts, driven by changes in labor force participation, employment dynamics, and unemployment distribution. As of October 2024, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) stands at 59.3%, reflecting resilience from pandemic related declines but signaling ongoing challenges in workforce engagement due to aging demographics and participation barriers. Of the 980,370 individuals in the civilian non-institutionalized population aged 16 and older, 581,378 are in the labor force, with 554,510 employed and 26,868 unemployed, resulting in a regional unemployment rate of approximately 4.6%. However, 398,992 individuals remain outside the labor force, underscoring the importance of addressing barriers to participation through enhanced access to education, training, and supportive services.

Unemployment data by occupation highlights disparities, with Management, Sales, and Office Support Occupations experiencing higher-than-average unemployment rates, potentially due to structural adjustments and shifting job demands. Conversely, skilled trades such as Construction and Healthcare-related roles maintain lower unemployment, reflecting ongoing demand in these sectors. These dynamics emphasize the need for targeted workforce development strategies to align labor supply with the evolving demands of the regional economy. By prioritizing upskilling initiatives in high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and logistics, the region can enhance workforce adaptability, reduce unemployment, and ensure sustained economic productivity.

Special Populations in the Region

Reentry Population

The Greater New Orleans Region includes a significant reentry population, estimated at approximately **7,000 individuals**. These individuals face barriers such as limited job training, employer hesitancy, and the need for supportive services like housing, transportation, and mental health resources. Workforce boards, particularly the **First Planning District** and **Jefferson Workforce Boards**, actively support reentry efforts by partnering with organizations such as the **Southern University Law Center (SULC)** and **St. Tammany Parish offices** to host expungement events. Programs like the **Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI)** also offer critical services to help individuals transition successfully into the workforce. As a policy, individuals in the reentry population receive **priority of service** to ensure access to job training and placement opportunities.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Expungement Services:** Continued partnerships with SULC and regional entities to remove employment barriers for reentry individuals.
 - **Tailored Job Programs:** Expanding training in high-demand fields such as construction, manufacturing, and logistics.
 - **Employer Engagement:** Incentivizing businesses to hire reentry individuals through tax credits and workforce readiness programs.
-

Unemployment and Dislocated Worker Population

The total unemployment population in the eight parish Greater New Orleans Region MSA, **26,868 individuals**, represents the potential dislocated worker population. This group includes individuals affected by layoffs, sector transitions, and economic disruptions. Workforce boards support dislocated workers through initiatives such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**, targeted job fairs, employer networking events, and enhanced job-matching services. These programs aim to connect dislocated workers with opportunities in growing industries like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **OJT Programs:** Providing paid, hands on training with regional employers to upskill dislocated workers.
 - **Job Fairs and Networking:** Hosting targeted events to connect dislocated workers with hiring employers in high-demand sectors.
 - **Job Matching:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively work to "open doors" to employers by making introductions and advocating for job placements.
-

Youth Population

The region has an estimated **10,000 disconnected youth (ages 16-24)** who are neither in school nor employed. These young individuals face challenges such as limited access to education, mentorship, and career opportunities. Workforce boards have developed youth-specific initiatives outlined in the **Youth Services section** of regional and local plans, which include apprenticeship programs, HISET support, and soft skills training.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Apprenticeships and Internships:** Creating hands-on learning opportunities in high-growth sectors such as IT, healthcare, and construction.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Partnering with local employers to provide career guidance and real-world experiences.
 - **Expanded Youth Services:** Leveraging regional and local plan frameworks to ensure comprehensive support for disconnected youth.
-

Veterans

The region is home to approximately **6,000 veterans**, many of whom face challenges transitioning into civilian careers. Workforce boards collaborate with local veterans' organizations and initiatives such as **NextOps** to connect veterans with high-demand jobs in logistics, manufacturing, and IT. **Veterans receive priority of service** through all workforce programs, ensuring access to tailored support and job placement services. Core and mandated partners work together to provide seamless assistance for veterans, from skills translation to employment readiness.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Priority Services:** Ensuring veterans receive front-line access to workforce development programs.
 - **Veteran-Specific Initiatives:** Partnering with **NextOps** and hosting veteran-focused job fairs.
 - **Collaboration:** Ensuring all workforce system partners collaborate to address the unique needs of veterans.
-

Senior Population

The senior population, defined as individuals aged 55 years and older, comprises **138,066 individuals**, representing **24% of the current workforce** in the Greater New Orleans Region. Within this group, individuals aged 65 and older account for **8%**, while those aged 55 to 64 make up **16%**. This substantial demographic highlights the need for targeted workforce programs that address the challenges and opportunities of an aging workforce, including upskilling, flexible work options, and leveraging their extensive experience to meet regional labor demands.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Customized Workforce Programs:** Initiatives like SCSEP and AARP Back to Work help address barriers for senior workers. SCSEP offers part-time community service roles, helping seniors gain work experience, while AARP provides skills training, resume assistance, and workshops for re-entering the workforce.
- **Employer Engagement:** Encouraging businesses to recognize the value seniors bring to the workforce through experience and reliability.
- **Supportive Services:** Providing technology skills training and addressing other barriers like transportation and healthcare access.
- **Job Matching for Seniors:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively assist seniors by identifying suitable roles, making employer introductions, and advocating for job placements in industries like healthcare, retail, and customer service.

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(iii)). Plans must answer the following questions:

- How will the workforce partners convene employers, foundations and regional institutions to help lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments?
- Identify the established and active industry sector partnerships in the region.
- What other sector based partnerships exist in the region? If any exist, are they business led and what is their role in planning?
- What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?
- What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?

Development and Implementation of Sector Initiatives for In-Demand Industry Sectors

The Greater New Orleans Region demonstrates a comprehensive approach to workforce development through sector initiatives that address in-demand industry needs. These initiatives are guided by the collaboration of four local workforce boards, employers, foundations, and regional institutions. Below are detailed responses to the questions, highlighting specific initiatives.

How Workforce Partners Will Convene Employers, Foundations, and Regional Institutions

Workforce partners in the Greater New Orleans Region utilize a collaborative and strategic approach to convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments. Key strategies include:

- **Sector-Specific Advisory Councils:** Workforce boards establish sector-specific advisory councils comprising employers, educational institutions, and foundation representatives. These councils meet regularly to identify workforce needs, discuss training program design, and align investments with industry priorities. For example, the **GNORAAMP** (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership) regularly gathers aerospace and advanced manufacturing leaders like **NASA Michoud** and **Lockheed Martin** to align training initiatives with industry advancements.
- **Regional Workforce Summits:** Workforce partners host regional workforce summits and industry forums, bringing together stakeholders to share insights, identify gaps, and foster collaboration. Initiatives like the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** utilize these summits to engage maritime employers, logistics companies, and local institutions in workforce planning.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between workforce boards, employers, and foundations are formalized through public-private partnerships. For instance, the **FUEL Initiative** partners with energy companies like **Shell** and **Entergy** to drive investments in renewable energy training, ensuring alignment with both current and future workforce needs.
- **Educational and Industry Partnerships:** Workforce boards partner with institutions like **Delgado Community College**, the **University of New Orleans**, and local technical schools to design programs that directly address skill shortages. These partnerships are exemplified by the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship in Jefferson Parish**, which brings together manufacturers and educators to train workers in robotics and automation.
- **Neutral Conveners:** Organizations such as the **St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation** act as neutral conveners, facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, ensuring alignment across sectors, and identifying opportunities for coordinated investments. They play a crucial role in initiatives like **Northshore Healthscape**, connecting healthcare employers with training providers to address workforce shortages.
- **Leveraging Funding Opportunities:** Workforce partners align federal, state, and private funding to maximize the impact of investments. For example, the **Thrive New Orleans Initiative** secures grants from environmental foundations and public agencies to fund training in sustainable construction and green infrastructure.

By fostering collaboration through these structured approaches, workforce partners ensure that sector partnerships are employer led, foundation supported, and aligned with regional priorities, resulting in coordinated investments that meet the workforce needs of both established and emerging industries.

Established and Active Industry Sector Partnerships in the Greater New Orleans Region

Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership - GNORAAMP): GNORAAMP connects aerospace and advanced manufacturing employers, including **NASA Michoud Assembly Facility** and **Lockheed Martin**, with educational institutions and workforce boards in **Orleans Parish** to address workforce needs. This

partnership has launched training programs in advanced manufacturing technologies, focusing on aerospace engineering and precision production. Successes include increased regional job placements in high-demand roles and enhanced regional competitiveness as an aerospace manufacturing hub.

Maritime and Logistics (Port of New Orleans Workforce Development): The Port of New Orleans collaborates with freight operators, workforce boards, and **Delgado Community College in Orleans Parish** to create tailored training programs for maritime and logistics careers. These programs address critical skill gaps in supply chain management and port operations. The initiative has supported the port's infrastructure expansion by ensuring a steady flow of qualified workers. Outcomes include reduced skill shortages and improved workforce readiness for roles in freight handling, warehousing, and transportation.

Technology (The Tech Hub Initiative): The Tech Hub, based in **Orleans Parish**, partners with IT employers such as **IBM, local startups**, and educational institutions like **Delgado Community College** and the **University of New Orleans**. The initiative has launched specialized training programs in cybersecurity, cloud computing, and data analytics. Successes include significant job placements in IT roles, particularly among underrepresented groups, and the development of a robust talent pipeline to support the region's growing tech sector.

Healthcare (Northshore Healthscape): Northshore Healthscape, located in **St. Tammany Parish**, partners with healthcare providers such as **Lakeview Regional Medical Center, Slidell Memorial Hospital, Ochsner Health** and **St. Tammany Health System**, alongside local workforce boards and colleges. The partnership addresses workforce needs in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Successes include the graduation of hundreds of credentialed healthcare professionals annually, many of whom fill critical roles in local hospitals and clinics. This initiative has also improved access to healthcare services in underserved communities.

Green Infrastructure and Construction (Thrive New Orleans Initiative): Thrive New Orleans, operating in **Orleans Parish**, collaborates with construction firms, **environmental nonprofits**, and government agencies to train workers in sustainable construction and urban resilience. The initiative has created over 100 jobs annually in green infrastructure projects such as stormwater management systems and energy-efficient housing. Successes include training underserved residents and completing community resilience projects that address climate and environmental challenges.

Advanced Manufacturing (Mechatronics Apprenticeship): The Mechatronics Apprenticeship program, led by **Laltram, LLC, Elmers and Zatarain's** is based in **Jefferson Parish** and partners with **Delgado Community College** and technical schools. The program trains workers in robotics, automation, and mechatronics, addressing critical skill shortages in advanced manufacturing. Outcomes include dozens of apprentices transitioning into full-time roles at leading regional manufacturing firms, strengthening the advanced manufacturing workforce pipeline.

Energy (FUEL Initiative): LSU's Future Use of Energy in Louisiana (FUEL) initiative, centered in **East Baton Rouge Parish**, collaborates with energy companies such as **Shell** and **Entergy**, alongside

community colleges and technical training centers. The initiative aims to double the state's energy workforce by 2050 by expanding training in renewable energy and traditional energy sectors. Early successes include an increase in enrollment in energy-related training programs and strategic investments by private partners in workforce development.

These initiatives highlight the collaborative efforts of workforce boards, employers, educational institutions, and local governments to address workforce needs across various parishes. Their successes in training, job placement, and economic growth reinforce the Greater New Orleans Region's commitment to aligning workforce development with industry demands.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION: REGIONAL

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (§ 679.560(a)(4)). Plans must respond to the following.
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in the region.
 - Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment.
 - Analyze the capacity of the regional partners to provide activities to address the needs of employers
 - How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?
 - Summarize the commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities In the Greater New Orleans Region

The Greater New Orleans Region boasts a dynamic workforce development ecosystem that leverages collaboration, innovation, and strategic investments to align with regional and state economic goals. While the region has made significant strides in addressing workforce challenges and fostering economic resilience, opportunities remain to strengthen service delivery, expand partnerships, and address skill gaps to meet the evolving needs of employers and jobseekers.

Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

Robust Regional Collaboration

The region's Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) work closely with each other and with the local and regional economic development organizations, educational institutions, and industry leaders to align training programs with employer needs. Partnerships like the **GNORAAMP (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership)** for aerospace and advanced manufacturing, and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** for maritime and logistics careers, exemplify how collaboration creates direct pathways to employment.

Innovative Service Delivery Models

Workforce boards have implemented online tools, such as online appointment setting, interactive chats, pre-screening applications, jobseeker videos, and virtual case management, which enhance accessibility for employers and jobseekers alike. These tools simplify hiring processes, increase workforce engagement, and ensure jobseekers are better matched to available opportunities.

Sector Focused Strategies

The region's targeted investments in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing, IT, and logistics, ensure that workforce training efforts remain relevant to the labor market. Initiatives like the **FUEL Initiative** for energy and the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship** for advanced manufacturing address specific employer needs and contribute to regional economic resilience.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Funding Limitations

Despite the success of various initiatives, limited funding restricts the scalability and reach of workforce programs, particularly in underserved areas. In addition to the overall lack of resources, the reliability and stability of funding streams remain challenges, as many programs depend on time-limited grants or fluctuating budgets. This uncertainty can hinder long-term planning and the ability to sustain and grow impactful programs. Additional resources and more stable, predictable funding mechanisms are essential to expand services, ensure equitable access to workforce opportunities, and maintain program effectiveness over time.

Coordination Challenges

The region's extensive network of 72 workforce development partners creates complexities in service delivery, sometimes leading to fragmented efforts. Improved coordination across partners is essential to maximize efficiency and outcomes.

Persistent Skill Gaps

Employers in sectors like IT and advanced manufacturing report ongoing challenges in finding candidates with specialized technical skills. Expanding access to training in emerging areas, such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy, will be critical to addressing these gaps.

Meeting Educational and Skill Needs

Educational Partnerships

The region benefits from strong partnerships with institutions such as **Delgado Community College**, **University of New Orleans**, and technical schools. These collaborations ensure that training programs are aligned with employer needs in key industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

Adult Education and Apprenticeships

Programs like **Jump Start 2.0** and registered apprenticeships offer valuable pathways for skill development, particularly for individuals transitioning into the workforce or seeking upskilling opportunities. These programs emphasize hands-on learning and real-world application.

Work based learning (WBL) offers Career and Technical Education (CTE) students on the job training and classroom instruction, helping them develop job skills, explore career interests, and gain real-world experience. WBL experiences now include cooperative education, paid internships, and structured on-the-job training through Registered Apprenticeships recognized by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).

Support for Special Populations

Initiatives such as **Reboot Louisiana** and the **MI Foster Promise Program** provide comprehensive support, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, to help individuals with barriers to employment access sustainable career opportunities.

Barriers to Address

Despite these efforts, underserved populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors face challenges. Programs like **SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)** and **NextOps Veterans** require additional resources to expand their impact. Greater investments in short-term training programs and stackable certifications would further address workforce gaps and improve accessibility.

Addressing Employer Needs

Employer-Driven Training Programs

Workforce boards collaborate directly with employers to develop customized training programs in healthcare, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. Programs like **Thrive New Orleans** in construction and the **Tech Hub Initiative** for IT ensure training aligns with employer demands and addresses skill shortages.

Labor Market Data Utilization

Partnerships with economic development organizations provide real-time labor market intelligence, allowing workforce boards to refine training priorities and investments. This ensures training programs remain relevant and responsive to regional economic needs.

Sector-Based Approaches

Sector-specific initiatives such as **Northshore Healthscape** for healthcare and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** for logistics demonstrate the effectiveness of aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities.

Challenges in Meeting Employer Needs

While those efforts have achieved significant successes, employers in emerging sectors still face difficulties recruiting candidates with advanced technical skills and certifications. Expanding training in fields like automation, robotics, and cybersecurity is essential to close these gaps and meet the region's future workforce demands.

Effectiveness of Training Programs

Successes

Training programs in the Greater New Orleans Region are aligned with high-demand occupations, such as registered nurses, IT specialists, and heavy equipment operators. On-the-job training programs have been particularly effective, achieving over 90% retention rates among participants after 12 months, underscoring the value of experiential learning.

Opportunities for Improvement

Expanding short-term credential programs and developing stackable certifications would allow jobseekers to acquire in-demand skills more efficiently. These enhancements would improve workforce adaptability and ensure alignment with the evolving needs of employers.

Partner Commitments

Collaborative Agreements

Workforce boards, educational institutions, and economic development agencies maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative agreements to streamline service delivery and foster resource sharing.

Focus on Special Populations

Programs like **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services**, **NextOps Veterans**, and **SCSEP** provide tailored support to underserved groups, ensuring equitable access to workforce opportunities for individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors.

Sector Strategy Investments

Workforce development efforts prioritize high-growth industries such as healthcare, construction, IT, and energy. Initiatives like **FUEL** and **GNORAAMP** highlight the commitment to aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities and labor market needs.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vi)). Plans must respond to the following questions:

- What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?
- What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

Coordination of Transportation and Supportive Services In the Greater New Orleans Region § 679.510(a)(1)(vi)

The Greater New Orleans Region has established a comprehensive and well coordinated system for delivering supportive services that address the barriers jobseekers face in accessing workforce opportunities. This system integrates efforts from a network of regional organizations and service providers, ensuring that individuals receive the assistance they need to achieve economic stability and sustainable employment.

Regional Organizations Providing Supportive Services

The region's network of supportive service providers plays a critical role in addressing barriers to employment. Organizations like Catholic Charities and the United Way of Southeast Louisiana

provide essential housing, utilities, and transportation assistance, helping stabilize individuals during transitional periods. Total Community Action (TCA) addresses significant challenges for families, such as access to affordable childcare and transportation subsidies, making it easier for parents to participate in training or secure employment.

Goodwill Industries of Southeast Louisiana supports jobseekers through counseling and workforce services, empowering them with the skills needed to thrive in the workplace. Community Action Agencies address basic needs through food security programs and emergency financial assistance, while the Council on Aging ensures elderly residents can access transportation to attend training or employment opportunities. These organizations collectively form the foundation of a regional system designed to meet the needs of jobseekers across diverse demographic groups.

Policies and Procedures for Coordination

The region employs a structured approach to coordinate supportive services effectively:

Interagency Collaboration: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) formalize partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to streamline service delivery and reduce redundancies.

Needs-Based Verification: Supportive services are verified at the time of request, ensuring efficient allocation of resources that align with individual requirements.

Centralized Resource Mapping. The region maps resources across providers to identify gaps and overlaps, ensuring that services reach the populations that need them most.

Regional Data Sharing: Through regular data sharing meetings, partners align supportive services with labor market trends and employer needs.

Integrated Service Delivery: Co-enrollment across WIOA, TANF, and SNAP programs allows jobseekers to access multiple services through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and accessibility.

Examples of Coordination in Action

The region's collaborative approach is evident in its execution of supportive services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Subsidized transportation programs through TCA and transit partnerships help jobseekers attend job interviews, training sessions, and employment opportunities.
- **Housing and Utility Support:** Emergency housing and utility assistance from Catholic Charities and Community Action Agencies provide critical stability for jobseekers facing financial crises.

- **Childcare Services:** Partnerships with local entities deliver affordable childcare options, enabling parents to pursue workforce opportunities without prohibitive childcare costs.

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers (§ 679.510(a)(1)(vii)). Plans must answer the following questions:

- What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?
- What economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses were invited to participate but declined?

Coordination of Services with Regional Economic Development Services and WIOA Service Providers

The Greater New Orleans Region has developed a comprehensive framework to align economic development initiatives with workforce services. This approach ensures that workforce development strategies are closely integrated with regional economic priorities and that labor market needs are addressed effectively. Through partnerships with key organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses, the region fosters collaboration to create meaningful pathways to employment and economic growth.

Active Participation in Regional Planning

The Greater New Orleans Region benefits from the active participation of a diverse network of organizations that play critical roles in shaping workforce strategies and aligning them with the needs of employers and jobseekers.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

1. **Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.):**
GNO, Inc. is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, GNO, Inc. ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress.
 2. **Regional Planning Commission (RPC):**
The RPC provides critical infrastructure planning and data analysis to support economic and workforce development initiatives. Its focus on transportation and logistics aligns closely with workforce strategies for supply chain management and related industries.
-

Local Economic Development Entities by Parish

1. **Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO):** JEDCO supports business attraction, retention, and workforce development through partnerships with local industries and educational institutions. Its focus on advanced manufacturing, IT, and energy directly aligns with regional workforce strategies.
2. **St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation (Northshore Economic Development):** The St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation works closely with healthcare providers, manufacturers, and technical schools to align workforce initiatives with local economic priorities, as demonstrated by the **Northshore Healthscape** partnership.
3. **St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation (SBEDF):** SBEDF supports workforce development in key industries such as maritime, logistics, and construction. Its collaboration with workforce boards ensures alignment between local job training programs and employer needs.
4. **Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry (PABI):** PABI plays a critical role in supporting workforce development for Plaquemines Parish. Focused on the energy and maritime industries, PABI partners with local workforce boards, employers, and educational institutions to prepare workers for high-demand careers. These efforts ensure alignment with regional workforce strategies and help bolster the parish's economic stability.
5. **Orleans Parish Economic Development Office:** The office focuses on urban economic initiatives, including technology, green infrastructure, and entrepreneurship, ensuring alignment with regional strategies like **Thrive New Orleans** and **The Tech Hub Initiative**.
6. **St. Charles Parish Department of Economic Development and Tourism:** This department supports workforce initiatives in petrochemical manufacturing, energy, and logistics, partnering with local industries to ensure the availability of skilled labor.
7. **St. James Parish Economic Development Office:** The St. James Parish Economic Development Office focuses on workforce development in industries such as petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture. Through partnerships with local technical schools and businesses, the parish supports training programs that prepare residents for careers in these high-demand sectors.
8. **St. John the Baptist Parish Economic Development Office:** This office emphasizes workforce development in logistics, petrochemicals, and advanced manufacturing. By collaborating with employers and workforce boards, St. John Parish ensures the alignment of job training programs with local economic priorities, supporting job creation and economic growth.

WIOA Service Providers

The region's WIOA service providers play a pivotal role in delivering workforce services to jobseekers, employers, and underserved populations.

- **Workforce Development Boards (WDBs):** The four WDBs in Region One provide strategic oversight and coordinate service delivery across the region's eight parishes. These boards ensure that workforce programs are tailored to meet employer demands and align with economic development goals.
- **Adult Education Providers:** A network of 11 adult education entities works collaboratively to

address foundational skill gaps. These providers focus on improving literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, helping adult learners prepare for high-demand occupations in sectors such as healthcare, construction, and IT.

- **Community Action Agencies:** These agencies are instrumental in delivering wraparound supportive services. By providing assistance with childcare, transportation, utilities, and emergency financial support, they help jobseekers overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing workforce programs.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Organizations such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to tailored training programs and supportive services, enabling them to participate fully in the workforce.
- **Youth Service Providers:** Programs focused on youth workforce development deliver career readiness training, internships, and mentoring to help young people transition into sustainable employment. These services are particularly critical for at-risk youth and those from underserved communities.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Community-based organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in the region's workforce ecosystem, providing targeted support and connecting jobseekers to vital resources. These organizations address unique community needs, complementing WIOA services through innovative and localized approaches.
 - **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches and faith-based groups offer job readiness workshops, support networks, and access to emergency assistance for vulnerable populations.
 - **Nonprofits:** Organizations like **Urban League of Louisiana** and **Goodwill Industries** deliver workforce training, job placement services, and soft skills development tailored to the needs of underserved communities.
 - **Civic Groups and Advocacy Organizations:** These groups provide mentorship, career counselling, and advocacy for populations facing systemic barriers to employment, such as reentry individuals and single parents.

Business Engagement

Employers in the Greater New Orleans Region play a central role in workforce planning and service delivery, ensuring alignment between workforce programs and industry demands. In healthcare, **Ochsner Health**, **Lakeview Regional Medical Center**, and **Slidell Memorial** leads collaborative efforts with workforce partners, including local workforce boards and educational institutions, to design training programs addressing critical skill shortages in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Similarly, the **Northshore Healthscape** initiative involves healthcare providers such as **St. Tammany Health System**, focusing on credentialing and workforce readiness to support the growing healthcare demands of the region.

In advanced manufacturing and IT, companies like **Laitram**, **NASA Michoud**, and **IBM** actively contribute to initiatives such as the **Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program** and **The Tech Hub Initiative**, which provide training in robotics, automation, cybersecurity, and data analytics. These programs are critical for developing a skilled pipeline of workers to support innovation-driven industries. The energy sector is also a major focus, with companies such as **Shell** and **Entergy**

partnering with the **FUEL Initiative** to expand the workforce in both renewable and traditional energy sectors, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth.

The maritime and logistics sectors see significant engagement from employers through the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development** initiative, which connects companies like **Cargill** and **Associated Terminals** with workforce boards and training providers. This partnership addresses skill gaps in supply chain management, freight handling, and transportation, ensuring a steady flow of qualified workers to support regional economic activity. Through these collaborations, business engagement ensures that workforce services remain demand-driven, fostering career pathways for jobseekers while meeting the needs of the region's industries.

Economic Development Organizations, WIOA Service Providers, or Businesses Invited but Declined Participation

Regional workforce planning in the Greater New Orleans Region is not a standalone function or a single event; rather, it is an ongoing, collaborative process that involves continuous engagement and robust information sharing among stakeholders. While the majority of economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses have actively participated in shaping regional strategies, some have occasionally been unable to engage due to competing priorities, resource limitations, or timing conflicts.

For instance, certain smaller businesses and organizations, particularly those in rural areas or niche sectors, may not have the capacity to fully engage in planning activities, despite being invited. Similarly, some organizations might defer participation until they see more immediate alignment with their operational goals or capacity-building needs. These instances highlight the need for continuous outreach and the cultivation of relationships over time.

The region addresses these gaps by fostering an open and transparent environment for planning, characterized by robust information sharing through advisory councils, sector-focused forums, and regular stakeholder meetings. This ensures that organizations that may have previously declined participation remain informed about opportunities to engage and contribute to regional planning as their circumstances allow. By emphasizing collaboration as an ongoing process, the region remains committed to broadening participation and ensuring that workforce strategies are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

Mechanisms for Coordination

The region employs several mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

- **Formalized Agreements:** Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative endeavor agreements establish clear roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of effort and enhancing collaboration.
- **Integrated Data Sharing Platforms:** Tools like EMSI and The Data Center enable stakeholders to access real-time labor market and economic data, ensuring workforce strategies are informed by the latest trends.
- **Cross-Regional Committees:** Regular meetings of Workforce Development Board leadership and Business Services Teams foster alignment across sectors and ensure that programs remain responsive to employer needs.
- **Employer Roundtables:** Sector-specific employer roundtables provide direct input on workforce challenges and priorities, shaping training programs and service delivery models.
- **Co-Enrolled Programs:** Programs that integrate WIOA, TANF, and SNAP services allow jobseekers to access multiple resources through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate (§ 679.510(a)(1)(v)).

Coordination of Administrative Cost Arrangements, Including Pooling of Funds

The Greater New Orleans Region has explored collaborative approaches to managing administrative costs among the four local workforce boards. While achieving a unified approach has proven challenging due to differing jurisdictional rules, guidelines, and priorities, the region remains committed to identifying opportunities for greater efficiency and resource sharing.

Efforts to improve coordination include discussions on streamlining administrative activities between the local areas and the state. A prior recommendation has been the decentralization of **Wagner-Peyser Funds** to the local level, as it is in numerous other states, allowing these funds to be braided with existing resources. This approach would reduce duplication of administrative functions, enhance service delivery, and maximize the impact of available funding.

By maintaining open communication and exploring innovative solutions, the region continues to work diligently toward a more coordinated and cost effective administrative framework that supports workforce development goals across all local areas.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Agreements

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in the region formalize their cost-sharing arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and resource-sharing agreements. These documents outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner agency, ensuring clarity and transparency in the allocation of administrative costs. Key components include the sharing of expenses for staff training, technology infrastructure, and shared facilities such as American Job Centers.

By centralizing certain administrative functions, WDBs reduce duplication of efforts, allowing more resources to be allocated toward direct workforce services. Examples include joint procurement of software for case management and shared access to labor market data platforms like Lightcast.

Pooling of Funds

Pooling administrative funds among WIOA-mandated partners enables the region to support shared priorities efficiently. For instance, pooled funds are often used to:

- Maintain and upgrade technology systems that streamline case management and reporting.
- Cover the costs of regional planning activities, such as labor market studies and economic development initiatives.
- Fund shared training sessions for staff across partner organizations, ensuring consistency in service delivery and compliance with federal regulations.

This approach not only optimizes available resources but also fosters collaboration among partners by focusing on shared objectives.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: REGIONAL

This section will outline how the Local Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must ensure alignment with other plans as well as illustrate that businesses, education, and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved in the development of the strategies.

- A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth (§ 679.560(a)(5)). Describe how this aligns with the State of Louisiana’s vision and principles.

Local Strategic Vision to Support State and Regional Economic Growth (§ 679.560(a)(5))

The Greater New Orleans Region embraces a strategic vision that aligns with the State of Louisiana’s broader goals of fostering economic mobility, educational excellence, and workforce resilience under Governor Jeff Landry’s leadership. This vision emphasizes collaboration across workforce development, education, and economic development stakeholders to create a unified approach that advances regional economic growth and ensures upward mobility for all residents.

Key Pillars of the Local Strategic Vision

The Greater New Orleans Region's local workforce boards are guided by strategic priorities designed to foster economic growth, address workforce gaps, and ensure equitable access to opportunities for all residents. These pillars reflect a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and alignment with both regional and state-level goals.

Promoting Educational Accessibility and Excellence

The region prioritizes building strong educational pathways that span from K-12 to adult learning. Initiatives such as **Jump Start 2.0** and expanded dual-enrollment programs enable high school students to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, preparing them for high-demand jobs. For adult learners, programs like **Reboot** and the **MJ Foster Promise Fund** offer targeted training in critical sectors, addressing skill gaps while overcoming barriers to employment. These efforts ensure that education remains a cornerstone of workforce development.

Fostering Sector-Based Workforce Development

The region's strategy aligns closely with Louisiana's focus on high growth sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, logistics, and information technology. Sector partnerships, such as those with **Ochsner Health** in healthcare and leading employers in advanced manufacturing, ensure that training programs align with employer needs. These initiatives provide jobseekers with clear career pathways while addressing pressing workforce shortages.

Enhancing Accessibility for Underserved Populations

Recognizing the barriers faced by many residents, the region prioritizes inclusive workforce strategies to foster economic mobility. Key services include transportation assistance, childcare subsidies, and reentry programs for justice-involved individuals. These initiatives, combined with targeted outreach to underserved populations, ensure equitable access to workforce development programs, particularly for those facing poverty or low educational attainment.

Aligning Workforce Development with Economic Development Goals

Collaboration with regional economic development organizations such as **Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.)**, **St. Tammany Economic Development** and the **Regional Planning Commission (RPC)** ensures that workforce strategies are aligned with broader economic priorities. These partnerships address employer needs, support infrastructure projects, and utilize labor market data to refine workforce initiatives, fostering economic growth across the region.

Investing in Lifelong Learning and Digital Skills

In response to the growing demand for digital competencies, local efforts focus on upskilling residents through IT training programs, cybersecurity certifications, and partnerships with technology employers such as **DXC Technology**. These initiatives not only prepare the workforce for emerging opportunities but also enhance adaptability in the face of evolving industry demands.

Alignment with the State of Louisiana's Vision and Principles

The local vision is deeply aligned with the State of Louisiana's workforce principles, ensuring a unified approach to workforce development:

- **Economic Mobility:** Local programs provide pathways out of poverty through targeted skills training and credentialing for high-wage, high-demand jobs.
 - **Educational Excellence:** By leveraging partnerships across K-12 and post-secondary Institutions, the region builds a talent pipeline tailored to meet industry needs.
 - **Inclusivity:** Focused efforts on individuals with barriers to employment reflect the state's goal of equitable access to economic opportunities.
 - **Employer-Led Strategies:** Collaboration with businesses ensures workforce programs are demand-driven and aligned with current and future labor market needs.
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Stakeholder Engagement in Strategy Development

The development of the regional vision is shaped by insights from a diverse group of stakeholders:

- **Businesses:** Employers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT provide critical input on workforce gaps and co-design training programs through sector partnerships
 - **Education:** K-12 systems, community colleges, and universities collaborate on curriculum development, dual-enrollment initiatives, and credentialing programs.
 - **Workforce Development:** Local WIOA boards, American Job Centers, and community organizations deliver direct services and wraparound support for jobseekers.
 - **Economic Development:** Partnerships with entities like **GNO, Inc, St. Tammany Economic Development** and **PABI** ensure workforce initiatives are aligned with regional economic growth strategies
-

Commitment to Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

The local workforce boards are dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in workforce strategies. Through regular stakeholder meetings, integrated resource planning, and data-driven decision-making, the region ensures its strategies remain responsive to economic shifts and labor market needs. By aligning closely with the State of Louisiana's goals, the Greater New Orleans Region positions itself as a leader in economic and workforce development, driving a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits all residents.

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals

with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators (§ 677.155(a)(1)).

Local Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce § 677.155(a)(1)

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to cultivating a workforce that is educated, skilled, and equipped to thrive in an evolving labor market. Recognizing the region's economic strengths and the opportunities created by growing sectors such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT, the local workforce strategy prioritizes preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment. These goals are reinforced by a focus on performance accountability measures that track progress and ensure effective outcomes for job seekers and employers alike.

Preparing Youth for Workforce Success

A key priority for the Greater New Orleans Region is equipping youth with the tools and opportunities needed to succeed in a competitive and evolving labor market. This effort focuses on early exposure to high-demand industries, access to aligned educational pathways, and real-world learning experiences.

Expanding Career Pathways

Programs such as **Jump Start 2.0** and dual enrollment initiatives provide high school students with the opportunity to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, preparing them for immediate employment or post secondary education. These efforts are targeted at high demand fields like IT, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, ensuring that young people enter career pathways where opportunities are abundant.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Local workforce boards are collaborating with employers to create paid internships and apprenticeships that offer students hands on experience in critical sectors. These programs help bridge the gap between classroom learning and industry expectations, providing youth with the practical skills and exposure needed to succeed

Engaging Underserved Youth

Outreach efforts prioritize at-risk and underserved youth, ensuring they have access to the resources, mentorship, and guidance necessary to thrive. Partnerships with community organizations promote equity and inclusion by addressing barriers and creating tailored programs to meet the unique needs of this population.

Supporting Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to creating opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment. By addressing challenges such as lack of education, transportation, and other systemic obstacles, workforce initiatives aim to foster economic mobility for all residents.

Customized Training Programs

Programs like **Reboot Louisiana** and the **MJ Foster Promise Fund** are designed to provide technical skills and certifications for individuals who may lack formal education or face barriers to employment. These initiatives target high-demand occupations such as construction trades, CDL drivers, and nursing, offering sustainable wage opportunities.

Supportive Services

Non-skill-related barriers, such as childcare, transportation, and access to technology, are addressed through integrated supportive services. By embedding these supports into workforce programs, the region ensures participants can fully engage in training and employment opportunities.

Inclusive Initiatives

Specialized programs cater to populations such as justice-involved individuals, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. These include reentry services, disability-inclusive training programs, and career navigation support tailored to the unique needs of these groups.

Developing a Lifelong Learning Workforce

The changing nature of the economy requires a workforce that values continuous learning and adaptability. The region invests in initiatives that promote lifelong learning and skills advancement to meet the evolving demands of industries.

Flexible Credentialing Programs

Collaborations with community colleges and industry partners offer stackable credentials that allow workers to advance their careers incrementally. Programs like short-term IT boot camps and construction certifications provide clear pathways to higher-paying roles.

Advanced Technical Training

The region prioritizes training in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and cybersecurity, addressing the growing demand for digital and technical skills across sectors. These programs prepare participants for emerging opportunities in innovation-driven industries.

Employer Partnerships

Businesses such as **Ochsner Health**, **DXC Technology**, and local construction firms actively collaborate in program design, ensuring that training aligns with current and future job requirements. This employer-driven approach enhances the relevance and effectiveness of workforce programs.

Alignment with Performance Accountability Measures

The region's workforce development initiatives are designed to meet and exceed federally mandated performance accountability measures. These benchmarks ensure programs deliver measurable outcomes that benefit jobseekers and employers alike.

Employment Rate

Programs are structured to place participants in sustainable employment within high-demand sectors. Partnerships with employers ensure a seamless transition into roles with growth potential.

Median Earnings

Training efforts focus on occupations offering competitive wages, such as IT specialists, registered nurses, and general and operations managers. Regular labor market analysis helps target roles that meet or exceed the region's median wage.

Credential Attainment

Local boards emphasize certifications and degrees tied directly to employer needs. Collaborations with educational institutions ensure that participants achieve credentials valued by the labor market.

Measurable Skill Gains

Short-term training programs are designed to track progress through skill-based milestones, preparing participants for incremental career advancement while ensuring adaptability in the workforce.

Employer Engagement

Regular feedback from businesses informs the design and delivery of workforce programs. Business satisfaction surveys and sector partnerships ensure workforce initiatives remain aligned with labor market demands.

Equity and Sustainability in Workforce Goals

The region's workforce strategy is rooted in equity, ensuring all residents—regardless of their starting point—can access training, earn credentials, and secure meaningful employment. Sustainability is also a core focus, with continuous improvement processes that use data and stakeholder feedback to refine strategies and address emerging challenges.

By emphasizing youth development, support for individuals with barriers to employment, and alignment with performance measures, the Greater New Orleans Region is building an inclusive and adaptive workforce. These efforts align with state goals for economic mobility, ensuring residents are prepared to meet the demands of an evolving labor market while fostering long-term economic resilience.

- C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:
1. To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (§ 679.560(b)(3)(i));

Regional and Local Strategies to Facilitate Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs **§ 679.560(b)(3)(i)**

Key Regional and Local Strategies

The Greater New Orleans Region's workforce development efforts are grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to meeting the needs of both employers and jobseekers. By fostering industry partnerships, engaging businesses of all sizes, and aligning programs with labor market data, the region has developed strategies that support long term economic growth and workforce resilience.

Industry-Led Collaborations

Collaboration with key industries remains at the heart of the region's workforce strategy. Sector partnerships bring together employers, workforce boards, and educational institutions to design training programs that address specific workforce needs. For example, the **GNORAAMP (Greater New Orleans Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership)** focuses on equipping workers with advanced manufacturing skills such as robotics, automation, and precision production, preparing them for careers in a rapidly evolving sector. In healthcare, collaborations with **Ochsner Health** address workforce shortages by creating specialized programs in nursing, healthcare administration, and related fields. The energy sector benefits from initiatives like the **FUEL Initiative**, which ensures workforce development in renewable and traditional energy fields, preparing workers for emerging opportunities while supporting the region's sustainability goals.

Engaging Small and Medium-Sized Employers

Small and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in the regional economy, and the workforce development system prioritizes their engagement to ensure they can access the resources needed to remain competitive. Dedicated business services teams work closely with these employers, providing one-on-one consultations to assess workforce needs and offer labor market insights. These teams also connect businesses to workforce incentives such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)** and **Work Experience (WEX)** programs, which subsidize hiring and training costs. Programs like the **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)** provide small employers with financial support to upskill their current workforce, helping them adapt to industry changes and increase productivity.

Targeted Outreach to In-Demand Industries

The region's targeted outreach efforts focus on identifying high-growth industries using labor market intelligence tools such as **EMSI/Lightcast**. Sectors like healthcare, IT, and logistics are prioritized due to their high demand for skilled workers. Regular employer roundtables create opportunities for businesses in these industries to share workforce challenges and collaborate with workforce boards on tailored solutions. These discussions not only inform workforce planning but also foster stronger relationships between employers and workforce development partners.

Co-Designing Workforce Solutions

Workforce programs are developed in close collaboration with employers to ensure they are aligned with current and future job requirements. Apprenticeship programs in fields like construction and IT combine classroom instruction with hands-on experience, creating a pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet employer needs. Additionally, work-based learning opportunities, such as paid internships and job shadowing, provide participants with practical, industry-specific experience that bridges the gap between education and employment.

Integrating Employer Feedback

A continuous feedback loop with employers ensures that workforce programs remain responsive to the evolving demands of the labor market. Employers are engaged through surveys and direct consultations to provide insights into training effectiveness and identify emerging needs. By involving employers in the evaluation of training outcomes, the region can refine its programs to improve candidate performance and meet industry standards more effectively.

Services to Support Employer Engagement

The Greater New Orleans Region offers a comprehensive suite of services to employers, designed to facilitate talent acquisition, improve workforce retention, and leverage technology to enhance

recruitment efforts. These employer-centered services ensure businesses can access the skilled workforce they need to thrive in a competitive economic landscape.

Talent Acquisition Support

Employers benefit from robust talent acquisition services provided through the region's **American Job Centers (AJCs)**. These centers offer pre-screening services, ensuring employers receive candidates who align closely with their specific job requirements. By matching job seekers to positions based on qualifications, AJCs save employers time and resources in the hiring process. Workforce boards also coordinate **targeted hiring events and job fairs** tailored to high-demand sectors, creating direct connections between job seekers and employers. These events, both in-person and virtual, enable businesses to efficiently meet their staffing needs while promoting job opportunities in critical industries.

Customized Workforce Solutions

To support long-term workforce sustainability, workforce boards offer customized solutions that address employers' unique challenges. For example, **employee retention strategies** include leadership development programs and team-building workshops aimed at reducing turnover and improving workplace culture. Additionally, employers receive assistance in navigating funding opportunities such as the **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)** and Louisiana's **Rapid Response Program** for dislocated workers. These grants enable businesses to upskill their existing workforce, adapt to changing industry demands, and recover from economic disruptions.

Technology-Enhanced Services

Employers in the region have access to technology-driven tools that streamline the recruitment process. The **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** platform allows businesses to post job openings, search candidate resumes, and connect with qualified job seekers, all in one centralized portal. In addition, **virtual job fairs** expand employers' reach by enabling them to engage with candidates across the region without geographic limitations. These online tools enhance efficiency, broaden access to talent, and support employers in meeting their workforce needs.

Alignment with Vision and Principles

These strategies align with the State of Louisiana's vision of fostering economic mobility and resilience by ensuring that employers play an active role in workforce development. By prioritizing sector partnerships, small business engagement, and customized solutions, the region equips employers with a skilled workforce while creating opportunities for job seekers. This collaborative approach ensures that workforce programs are both demand-driven and inclusive, addressing the needs of the economy and the community alike.

2. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(3)(ii));

Strategies to Support a Local Workforce Development System that Meets Business Needs § 679.560(b)(3)(ii)

The Greater New Orleans Region's local workforce development system is designed to address the evolving needs of businesses while ensuring job seekers are equipped with the skills and resources to succeed. This system prioritizes alignment between workforce training, employer demands, and regional economic goals through a combination of collaborative partnerships, tailored services, and innovative approaches.

Key Strategies to Meet Business Needs

Customized Employer Services

To address specific workforce challenges, the region offers personalized services that connect businesses with the tools and resources they need.

Business Service Representatives (BSRs): Dedicated BSRs work directly with employers to identify workforce gaps and develop tailored solutions. These include programs such as **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**, **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)**, and **Work Experience (WEX)**, all designed to address unique training and hiring needs.

Customized Training Programs: Employers collaborate with training providers to create specialized training initiatives. For instance, **Ochsner Health** partners with local boards to develop healthcare certification programs, while IT firms like **DXC Technology** benefit from boot camps focused on cybersecurity and software development.

Sector-Based Approaches

Industry-specific strategies ensure that workforce initiatives remain aligned with regional economic priorities.

- **Targeted Sector Partnerships:** Partnerships in industries such as healthcare, construction, transportation, and IT bring together employers, training providers, and economic development organizations to co-design programs that address current and future workforce needs.
- **Rapid Response Services for Employers:** Businesses undergoing downsizing or closures receive support from **Rapid Response teams**, which help workers transition into new roles while maintaining positive employer relationships.

Talent Recruitment and Retention Support

Efforts to recruit and retain talent focus on building pipelines that align with employer needs and offering businesses seamless access to qualified candidates.

- **Pre-Screened Talent Pipelines: American Job Centers (AJCs)** provide businesses with pre-screened candidates tailored to their specific hiring criteria, reducing recruitment time and costs.
- **Job Fairs and Hiring Events:** Workforce boards coordinate industry-specific events that connect employers with job seekers in high-demand sectors like logistics, manufacturing, and professional services.

Enhanced Use of Technology

Technological tools enhance workforce development by streamlining employer engagement and expanding access to job seekers.

- **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment):** This online platform allows businesses to post job openings, search resumes, and access labor market data to refine their hiring strategies.
- **Virtual Workforce Services:** Employers can participate in virtual job fairs, conduct online interviews, and engage with training programs, broadening their reach and simplifying the recruitment process.

Support for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMBs)

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses, the region offers targeted support to enhance their workforce capacity.

- **SMB Engagement Programs:** Workforce boards dedicate resources to assist SMBs in workforce planning, accessing training funds, and navigating labor market challenges.
- **Shared Workforce Solutions:** Collaborative programs allow SMBs to share resources like training facilities and expert instructors, reducing costs while improving access to skilled labor.

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3. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(III));

Coordination of Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iii))

The Greater New Orleans Region prioritizes seamless integration of workforce development and economic development initiatives to ensure alignment between labor market needs and regional economic strategies.

Key Coordination Strategies

Joint Planning and Data Sharing: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) collaborate with organizations like Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), St. Tammany Economic Development and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to align workforce training with economic growth priorities.

- Shared labor market data and industry forecasts guide investments in in-demand sectors such as construction, healthcare, and IT.

Sector Partnerships: Sector-based strategies engage economic development partners and employers to co-design training programs aligned with high-growth industries. For example, the Northshore Healthscape initiative was developed through economic development partnerships and employer feedback. Regionally, the Greater New Orleans Region has embarked on several additional sector partnerships: Construction, Healthcare, and Transportation, Trade and Logistics. As we continue to build upon these partnerships, new endeavors will arise.

Business and Workforce Advisory Councils: Advisory councils composed of business leaders and economic development professionals provide continuous input into workforce strategies, ensuring responsiveness to shifting economic demands.

Collaborative Grants and Funding: Joint applications for state and federal funding support initiatives that simultaneously address workforce and economic development needs, such as DRA grants or technology-driven manufacturing.

4. To strengthen linkages between the one stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv));

Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs (§ 679.560(b)(3)(iv))

The Greater New Orleans Region integrates unemployment insurance (UI) services with the one stop delivery system to provide seamless support for jobseekers transitioning back into the workforce.

Key Strategies for Linkage Improvement

Co-Location of Services: Unemployment Insurance services are co-located within American Job Centers (AJCs) to ensure easy access to reemployment resources, such as job matching, resume workshops, and training opportunities.

Coordinated Case Management: UI claimants are assigned case managers who coordinate services across UI programs and WIOA-funded training initiatives to streamline their return to work.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Programs: AJCs coordinate with RESEA to provide UI claimants with personalized career counseling, skills assessments, and connections to training programs in high-demand industries.

Technology-Enabled Support: Digital tools and virtual workshops allow UI claimants to access one-

stop services remotely, broadening participation and reducing barriers.

5. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (§ 679.560(b)(4));

Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services (§ 679.560(b)(4))

The region emphasizes fostering entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and innovation.

Key Strategies and Services

Entrepreneurial Training Programs: Partnerships with organizations like the Urban League of Louisiana and Louisiana Small Business Development Centers (LSBDCs) provide workshops on business planning, financial management, and marketing.

Microenterprise Support: Microenterprise programs offer small business loans, grants, and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in underserved communities.

Targeted Outreach to Youth and Special Populations: Programs such as the Young Entrepreneurs Academy engage youth in hands-on entrepreneurial training, while initiatives for veterans and justice-involved individuals provide tailored support for starting small businesses.

Incubators and Coworking Spaces: Collaborations with incubators like Propeller and The Idea Village provide entrepreneurs with mentorship, networking opportunities, and shared office space to grow their businesses.

6. To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on the job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v)).

Implementing Employer-Focused Initiatives (§ 679.560(b)(3)(v))

The region implements a variety of initiatives to address employer needs and ensure a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Key Initiatives

On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs: OJT programs subsidize wages for new hires during their training period, enabling employers to onboard candidates while reducing financial risk.

Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP): Employers partner with workforce boards to upskill existing employees in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Customized training programs are funded to address specific business needs.

Customized Training Programs: Tailored training initiatives, like those developed for Ochsner Health and DXC Technology, ensure that workers are equipped with the skills required for specific roles.

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Initiatives: Sector strategies align training programs with employer needs, while career pathways initiatives provide clear advancement opportunities in industries like transportation and healthcare.

Utilization of Business Intermediaries: Workforce boards partner with intermediaries such as industry associations and chambers of commerce to strengthen employer engagement and facilitate workforce solutions.

Business Services and Support: Business services teams offer hiring support, pre-screening of candidates, and access to grants for workforce training, ensuring that employers can address their labor needs efficiently.

These coordinated efforts ensure that the region's workforce development system is responsive to business needs, fosters economic growth, and supports jobseekers in accessing sustainable employment opportunities.

D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.

Regional Strategies to Increase Apprenticeship and Work Based Learning Opportunities

The Greater New Orleans Region has implemented a robust set of strategies to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. These initiatives are designed to align with the needs of employers in high-demand industries while providing career pathways for job seekers, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. By fostering collaboration among employers, training providers, and workforce development organizations, the region is building a sustainable model for workforce development.

Key Strategies

Expansion of Registered Apprenticeships

- **Industry-Specific Programs.** The region has successfully introduced new apprenticeship programs tailored to high demand industries, such as the Deckhand/Tankerman program for maritime transportation and apprenticeships in construction trades like pipefitting and welding.
- **Employer Partnerships:** Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) collaborate with employers to create customized apprenticeship models, ensuring alignment with specific occupational requirements.

Integration of On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- OJT programs offer businesses a cost-effective solution to train workers while ensuring they acquire the practical skills needed to perform effectively. In a study conducted by LWC, they

found 92.4% of OJT participants are retained by their employers after 12 months, highlighting the program's success in fostering long-term employment.

Work-Based Learning Pathways

- **Internships and Co-Op Programs:** These opportunities allow students and recent graduates to gain hands-on experience in industries such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing. Employers collaborate with educational institutions to offer structured learning experiences.
- **Youth-Focused Initiatives:** Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment opportunities with career and technical education, providing high school students with pathways to apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials.

Streamlined Candidate Recruitment

- **Online Pre-Screening Tools:** The region has developed tools to simplify the apprenticeship application process, ensuring a seamless experience for candidates and reducing administrative burdens for employers.

Support for Underserved Populations

- **Second Chance Employers:** Programs are in place to support individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration, including apprenticeships that emphasize skill-building in trades like industrial maintenance and construction.
- **Veterans and Disabled Workers:** Customized apprenticeships and transitional programs cater to the unique needs of veterans and individuals with disabilities, ensuring equitable access to work-based learning.

Public-Private Partnerships Driving Growth

The Greater New Orleans Region leverages a variety of public-private partnerships as critical components of its workforce and economic development strategies. These collaborations bring together government entities, private employers, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations to address workforce needs and economic priorities. Key initiatives include the **FUEL Initiative**, which focuses on preparing workers for clean energy and advanced manufacturing roles, and the **Port of New Orleans Workforce Development Program**, which supports logistics and maritime sector workforce needs through specialized training and partnerships with Delgado Community College.

Other notable efforts, such as the **HealthCARE Connections Initiative**, tackle healthcare worker shortages by offering tuition assistance and clinical training, while the **IT Innovation Hub** develops talent pipelines for the region's growing tech sector through coding boot camps and mentorship programs. These partnerships enhance alignment between training and industry demands, leverage shared resources, drive innovation, and ensure equitable access to workforce opportunities, ultimately contributing to the region's long-term growth and competitiveness.

Future Initiatives

- **Healthcare and IT Replication:** Following the success of construction apprenticeship programs,

efforts are underway to develop similar initiatives in healthcare and IT.

- **Sector-Specific Training Programs:** Advanced manufacturing and energy sectors are identified as priority areas for apprenticeship expansion.

These strategies collectively enhance the region's capacity to meet employer needs, bridge skill gaps, and provide equitable access to quality work-based learning opportunities.

- E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.

Initiatives to Shorten the Time from Credential to Employment

The Greater New Orleans Region is committed to reducing the time it takes for individuals to move from acquiring credentials to securing employment. By leveraging innovative training models, regional partnerships, and employer engagement, workforce development efforts focus on equipping job seekers with the skills and connections they need to enter the labor market efficiently and successfully.

Streamlined Training and Credentialing Programs

Accelerated Credentialing Programs: Programs like Jump Start 2.0 allow high school students to dual enroll in technical education courses, enabling them to graduate with industry-recognized credentials. These initiatives are designed to address skill gaps in key sectors, such as healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing.

Fast-Track Career Pathways: Local training providers, including Delgado Community College and the Louisiana Technical College System, offer condensed training schedules for in-demand occupations such as welders, pipefitters, and IT specialists. These programs are developed in collaboration with employers to align training outcomes with workplace requirements.

Employer Based Training: On the Job Training (OJT) and customized training programs are integral to connecting job seekers with immediate employment opportunities. With 92.4% of OJT participants retained after 12 months, these programs emphasize practical skills and employer satisfaction.

Workforce and Education System Collaboration

Partnerships with K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions: Workforce boards work with schools to integrate career exploration and technical education into curricula. By coordinating with Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and local employers, these partnerships ensure that students graduate workforce-ready.

Industry-Driven Curriculum Design: Through advisory councils and sector partnerships, employers play a direct role in shaping training curricula. This approach ensures alignment with evolving

industry needs, particularly in sectors like IT and healthcare.

Interactive Career Resources: Comprehensive Centers across the region host interactive kiosks that provide information on training programs, funding opportunities, and career pathways. These tools empower job seekers to make informed decisions and quickly transition to training or employment.

Innovative Approaches to Address Barriers

Support for Special Populations: Initiatives such as the Re Entry Program under the Second Chance Act and partnerships with veteran services provide tailored training opportunities, ensuring equitable access to fast-track programs.

Comprehensive Support Services: Wraparound services, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance for training materials, help job seekers overcome barriers to completing accelerated programs.

Digital Tools and Virtual Training: Online pre-screening tools, virtual classrooms, and video-based job counseling expand access to training and shorten delays caused by logistical challenges.

By fostering strong partnerships, integrating employer-driven training models, and addressing individual barriers, the region is positioned to create a seamless pipeline from credentialing to employment, supporting both job seekers and employers in achieving their goals.

7. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:
- Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.
 - Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings
 - Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs.
 - Expanding information for employers and job seekers to access services to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

Steps to Support the State's Alignment and Integration of Education, Workforce, and Economic Development

The Greater New Orleans Region implements a strategic approach to integrate education, workforce development, and economic initiatives. These strategies emphasize building employer-driven partnerships, expanding career pathways, addressing skill gaps, and improving accessibility to services for both employers and job seekers.

Fostering Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

Sector-Based Collaborations

The region engages employers through dynamic sector partnerships that streamline training and hiring efforts in high-demand industries. For example, partnerships with organizations like GNO, Inc., and local chambers of commerce focus on aligning workforce development with critical sectors such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and transportation. These collaborations ensure workforce strategies address the needs of both employers and job seekers.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Regional economic development entities leverage labor market intelligence, powered by platforms like Lightcast, to guide investments in training and workforce initiatives. This data driven approach aligns workforce programs with high-demand occupations and supports strategic decision-making in high-growth sectors.

Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities

Accelerated Training and Work-Based Learning

Programs like **Jump Start 2.0** integrate dual enrollment and technical education, enabling high school students to earn industry recognized credentials while completing their diplomas. Additionally, on-the-job training (OJT) programs and registered apprenticeships provide rapid pathways to employment in key industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT.

Bridge Programs

Training initiatives are paired with comprehensive support services to help individuals overcome barriers to employment. These bridge programs are designed to transition participants into high-wage, high-demand careers, particularly in sectors requiring advanced technical skills.

Addressing Skill Gaps for Special Populations

Targeted Support Services

Customized training programs are available for veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those with justice-involved backgrounds, developed in collaboration with partners like Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. Programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these groups, ensuring equitable access to career opportunities.

Community Engagement

Efforts to connect underserved populations with job and training opportunities include outreach events like job fairs and industry-specific recruitment sessions. Digital tools and platforms also help bridge gaps by providing access to career resources and job matching services.

Improving Information Access for Employers and Job Seekers

Interactive Tools and Portals

Online platforms, including pre-screening applications and labor market dashboards, enhance transparency and accessibility for both employers and job seekers. These tools provide real time insights into job openings, training programs, and labor market trends.

Comprehensive Career Services

American Job Centers act as centralized hubs offering a range of services, including career counseling, resume workshops, and connections to training providers. These centers ensure job seekers have the resources needed to navigate career transitions effectively.

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LOCAL

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDAs must incorporate key documents in the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services provided by the workforce partners.

- A. **Coordination of Planning Requirements:** The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan and include the following statements in this chapter:
 - 1. The Local Workforce Development Area **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.

Coordination and Planning Requirements:

The **First Planning District Workforce Development Board (FPD WDB)** administers the American

Job Centers (AJCs) within St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes. LWDA 10 has developed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** and **cost allocation plan** with all core and mandated partners to support a seamless one-stop workforce delivery system.

The MOU establishes a collaborative workforce system where core partners are co-located, ensuring unduplicated workforce services and shared infrastructure costs. It defines partner roles, service delivery, target populations, participation requirements, site supervision, performance accountability, and cost allocation. The MOU and any subsequent modifications are incorporated by reference into this plan.

The **One-Stop Operator** coordinates **quarterly meetings** with all mandated partners to review the **MOU and cost allocation plan**. Core and mandated partners include:

- WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Wagner-Peyser
- Job Corps
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Community Services Block Grants (CSBG)
- Jobs for Veterans
- Senior Community Service Employment Activities
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- State Unemployment Compensation Program
- Second Chance Act Programs

- 2 The Local Workforce Development Area **Service Integration Action Plan** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan

Service Integration Approach and Alignment with OWD 2-23.2

Service Integration efforts are embedded within the broader Local Workforce Development Plan (LWDP), ensuring alignment with the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2).

Accordingly, the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) adheres to the integrated service delivery framework through its existing policies, operational procedures, and partnerships, as outlined in this plan. Any necessary modifications to service integration strategies will be incorporated through updates to relevant policies rather than through a standalone document.

- B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:
1. How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA (§ 679.560(b)(20)).

The **First Planning District Workforce Development Board (FPD WDB)** serves as the governing body for **Local Workforce Development Area 10 (LWDA 10)**, encompassing the three parishes of St. Tammany, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard. This board oversees **Tri-Parish Works (TPW)**, the region's American Job Center, which provides comprehensive workforce development services to job seekers and employers. Through strategic leadership and collaboration, the FPD WDB ensures that workforce programs align with local economic needs, driving the development of a skilled labor force and fostering economic growth across its tri-parish region.

Implementation of a Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management System

The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) has prioritized the implementation and transition to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system to meet the requirements of programs carried out under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). To achieve this, the following key strategies and tools have been adopted:

HiRE System Integration: The Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) system serves as the primary platform for intake and case management. HiRE enables job seekers, businesses, and workforce development staff to access a centralized database of workforce information, including job openings, training providers, ONET data, resumes, and assessment tools. This system streamlines service delivery by providing real-time data and communication between partners.

Virtual Pre-Screening Applications: The LWDA has developed an online pre-screening application accessible through the Tri-Parish Works website. This tool allows individuals to initiate the intake process remotely, submit necessary information online, and have their data reviewed by staff before their first interaction. This feature minimizes delays in service delivery and enhances staff efficiency.

Online Appointment Scheduling with WIX: To further enhance accessibility and efficiency, the LWDA utilizes WIX for online appointment scheduling. This platform enables participants to conveniently book appointments for services such as career counseling, training enrollment, or case follow-ups. WIX's user-friendly interface, automated reminders, and real-time updates improve staff-client communication, reduce administrative burdens, and support the LWDA's goal of delivering timely and efficient services in alignment with WIOA requirements.

Centralized Case Management: Workforce staff co-located in one-stop centers use a centralized case management approach where available, facilitated by integrated technology. This allows for a more seamless exchange of information between WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, and to a

more limited extent, Vocational Rehabilitation. Shared case information between staff ensure that clients receive coordinated services tailored to their specific needs. We continue to work with partners to find avenues for data sharing whenever possible.

Cross-Agency Data Sharing: Efforts are underway to improve cross-agency data sharing among workforce partners. For example, co-enrollment between WIOA and other programs, such as Adult Education or Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), ensures that participants benefit from a holistic approach to case management. Technology platforms support this by enabling data exchange, tracking progress, and reducing duplication of services. LWC is actively working to consolidate agencies and establish additional data-sharing agreements. **Training and Technical Support:** Regular training is provided to staff on the use of technology tools to ensure all stakeholders are proficient in navigating the integrated system. This includes understanding how to input data, retrieve case files, and generate reports to monitor outcomes effectively. Additionally, local staff conduct annual reviews of monitoring outcomes to identify areas requiring reinforcement training. Based on these reviews, targeted refresher sessions are provided, focusing on detailed areas such as follow-up services and the intricacies of the dislocated worker program. Collaboration with internal monitors ensures that training addresses identified gaps and enhances staff capacity to deliver comprehensive and compliant services.

Continuous Improvement: The LWDA regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its technology systems, seeking feedback from both staff and participants. This includes conducting annual staff polling to assess the usability and effectiveness of various tools, including the HIRE system (developed by GeoSol) and alternate assessment tools. These polls help identify tools that may have become outdated or require updates to stay effective. Additionally, the LWDA monitors advancements and updates to existing tools that can significantly enhance their functionality, ensuring the system remains aligned with user needs and technological advancements. This continuous feedback loop supports the LWDA's commitment to delivering efficient and innovative workforce solutions.

- 2 How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii)).

Facilitating Access to One-Stop Services in Remote Areas

The LWDA has embraced innovative strategies to ensure equitable access to services for individuals in remote or underserved areas. This includes leveraging technology and adopting flexible service delivery models:

Hybrid Service Delivery Model: The LWDA employs a hybrid model that combines in-person and virtual services. For individuals unable to visit workforce centers, services are delivered remotely through virtual platforms, email, and phone communication. This approach proved highly effective during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to benefit remote populations.

Technology-Enhanced Access Points: Remote access points, such as libraries, community centers, and partner organizations, are equipped with internet-enabled computers and kiosks where individuals can access the HiRE system and other workforce services. Staff or volunteers are available at these locations to assist clients with navigation.

Virtual Services and Workshops: The LWDA offers virtual career counseling, workshops, and training programs through video conferencing platforms. Job seekers can attend resume-building sessions, interview preparation workshops, and career planning meetings without the need to travel.

Mobile Service Units: To serve individuals in geographically isolated areas or in times of specific need, the LWDA has the ability to request the deployment of the LWC mobile service units equipped with technology to provide on-site assistance. These units offer services such as job search support, skill assessments, and training referrals.

Assistive Technology for Accessibility: The LWDA ensures that technology solutions are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes screen readers, alternative input devices, and other assistive technologies. Workforce staff are trained to provide support to individuals with varying abilities, ensuring compliance with Section 188 of WIOA.

Strategic Partnerships with Local Organizations: Collaboration with local community and faith-based organizations extends the reach of workforce services. These organizations serve as intermediaries, facilitating outreach and providing referrals to the one stop delivery system. Some of these organizations that enhance our local efforts include:

Catholic Charities*

Day Reporting Center

Delgado Community College

Families in Need of Services*

Northshore Healthscapes

Northshore Society for Human Resource Management

Northshore Technical Community College

Nunez Community College

Pearl River Community College

Plaquemines Association for Business & Industry Greater New Orleans, Inc.

Plaquemines School System

St. Bernard Adult Education

St. Bernard Community Action Agency*

St. Bernard School System

St. Bernard Sheriff's Office

St. Tammany Adult Education

St. Tammany Business Alliance

St. Tammany Chamber

St. Tammany Community Action Agency*

St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation (Economic Development)

St. Bernard Economic Development

St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office

St. Tammany School System

United Way of Southeast Louisiana*

UNO/LSU Regional Education Center

West 30's Redevelopment District

**Indicates a partner organization that is able to provide supportive services to participants*

Outreach and Awareness Campaigns: The LWDA employs a multi-faceted approach to inform residents about available services and how to access them remotely. This includes leveraging social media, newsletters, local advertisements, and press releases to disseminate key messages. Radio programming is also a significant component, ensuring consistent and targeted communication with the community. Additionally, the LWDA collaborates with partner agencies to expand its reach and amplify messaging. Highlighting success stories and providing clear, accessible instructions for virtual participation further encourages engagement and demonstrates the impact of the services offered.

By utilizing these methods, the LWDA ensures that all residents, regardless of location, can access the full array of services provided through the one-stop delivery system. These strategies align with the State of Louisiana's vision for integrated and accessible workforce services, creating pathways to sustainable employment for all job seekers.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Combined State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs, including a description of (§679.560(b)(1)(ii)):

1. Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i));

- Scaling up the use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their HSE I and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credential and industry recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations;
- Using the insights and lessons learned from successful dual credit programs to scale up similar efforts in other sectors and regions;
- Determining the most effective marketing methods and messages for informing college and university students about Prior Learning Assessments;
- Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations;

Expanding Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Supportive Services

The FPB WDB is committed to enhancing access to workforce services, particularly for individuals who face barriers to employment. This is accomplished through innovative strategies and partnerships:

Scaling Integrated Education and Training (IET) Models: The FPB WDB has adopted IET models to ensure individuals can simultaneously earn their HISET, improve basic skills, acquire English language proficiency, and gain industry-recognized credentials. These credentials are targeted at in-demand occupations, aligning with employer needs, and creating career opportunities. For example, Adult Education partners within the tri parish area collaborate with the FPB WDB to provide WorkReady U programs. These programs integrate basic skills instruction with career-focused training, helping individuals transition seamlessly into sustainable employment.

Leveraging Dual Credit Programs: The FPB WDB builds on the success of dual credit programs, which allow students to earn both high school and college credits while receiving industry-specific training. These programs are being expanded regularly, to ensure alignment with high-demand industries. Collaborative efforts with local technical and community colleges, such as those under the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, support this Initiative.

Targeting Untapped Talent Pools: The board uses data-driven strategies to identify and engage underemployed individuals and mature workers who may not require extensive additional education or training to qualify for high-demand occupations. For instance, outreach campaigns focus on informing these groups about opportunities in industries such as healthcare, construction, and information technology.

2. Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs (§ 679.560(b)(2)(II)); and

Facilitating the Development of Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment in Core Programs

Career pathways are central to the FPB WDB's strategy to align education, training, and supportive services with workforce needs. The board collaborates with employers, education providers, and core program partners to develop pathways that lead to meaningful employment.

Comprehensive Career Pathway Development: The FPB WDB aligns its career pathways with the region's high-growth sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, logistics, and IT. These pathways are developed in partnership with local employers and educational institutions to ensure they address both job seeker and employer needs.

Co-Enrollment Strategies: Co-enrollment across WIOA core programs is actively encouraged to provide participants with a holistic set of services. For example, individuals participating in WIOA Title I programs are co-enrolled in Adult Education or Vocational Rehabilitation programs, depending on their needs. This approach maximizes resources while addressing multiple barriers to employment.

Sector-Specific Strategies: The board collaborates with industry groups to identify specific skill gaps and tailor career pathways accordingly. For instance, the Healthcare Sector Partnership launched in 2022 provides customized training programs to meet the needs of regional healthcare employers while offering clear pathways to sustainable careers for participants. Additionally, the board has expanded its focus to include emerging industries, such as Marine Technology, by partnering with Northshore Technical Community College to bring a new Marine Technology program to the region. This partnership ensures that training aligns with industry needs, equipping participants with the skills required for high-demand roles while supporting regional economic development.

3. Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii)).

Improving Access to Activities Leading to Recognized Post-Secondary Credentials

The FPB WDB prioritizes access to credentials that are industry-recognized, portable, and stackable, ensuring participants gain the skills necessary for long-term career growth.

Industry-Recognized Credentials: The FPB WDB invests in training programs that lead to certifications in high-demand fields. Examples include partnerships with technical colleges and other training providers to deliver programs for nurses (RNs), nursing assistants, medical assistants, linemen, welders, process technicians (P-Tec), and logistics professionals. The FPB WDB works in sync with multiple providers to ensure these programs yield positive results, including immediate employment in high-demand fields with significant growth opportunities. These programs are carefully aligned with the needs of employers in the Tri-Parish area and the broader regional economy, supporting both workforce development and economic sustainability.

Supportive Services Integration: To ensure participants can complete credentialing programs, the FPB WDB integrates supportive services into its delivery model. These services include transportation assistance, childcare, housing support, and access to technology. Supportive services are provided directly through WIOA, as well as through a network of both mandated and outside community partners, such as through the Community Action Agency (CAA). When supportive services are not available in the community, the LWDA steps in to ensure these barriers are removed efficiently to avoid disruption of training. These wraparound efforts significantly reduce barriers to participation and improve program completion rates, fostering success for participants in achieving their career goals.

Focus on High-Demand Sectors: Credentialing efforts are closely tied to high-growth industries. For example, programs in construction, IT, and healthcare are designed to address the specific needs of regional employers while providing participants with meaningful employment opportunities.

Continuous Feedback and Improvement: Employer input is regularly incorporated into credentialing programs to ensure alignment with labor market needs. This feedback loop ensures

training remains relevant, and participants are equipped with skills that directly translate to job opportunities.

Integration of Services Across the One-Stop Delivery System

The FPB WDB's approach to supporting Combined State Plan strategies includes integrating services across core programs and streamlining service delivery within the one-stop system. A key initiative in achieving this integration is the implementation of comprehensive Public Workforce training led by the One Stop Operator. This training ensures that staff across all programs understand key areas such as eligibility requirements, available services, and program offerings. By enhancing staff knowledge and fostering collaboration, the FPB WDB has strengthened its ability to provide seamless service referrals and deliver a more integrated customer experience.

The FPB WDB has also incorporated innovative tools, such as the WIX system, which allows individuals to schedule their own appointments (live or virtual) with AJC staff via their computers. This addition complements existing options, such as surveys, call-ins, and walk-ins, providing participants with flexible and accessible pathways to connect with workforce services.

On a regional level, the FPB WDB has expanded communication efforts to ensure the consistent provision of wrap-around services. These efforts are particularly crucial given the funding limitations of certain programs, such as MJ Foster and STRAP. By fostering collaboration and alignment among FPB WDB partners in region 1, the FPB WDB ensures that wrap-around services are increasingly available to support participants' needs comprehensively.

Additionally, the use of virtual platforms has expanded access to services, enabling individuals in remote or underserved areas to fully participate in workforce development programs. This approach aligns with the Combined State Plan's priorities by ensuring equitable access to resources and support.

These strategies are further applied across the regional landscape through initiatives such as the development of effective on the job training (OJT) contracts, sector strategy partnerships, and cross-regional alignment to address workforce needs comprehensively. By leveraging these efforts, the FPB WDB ensures access to high quality, integrated services that promote sustainable employment and economic growth while meeting the strategic goals of the Combined State Plan.

- D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Combined State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:
 - 1. Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Employment and Training Activities Under WIOA Title I (§ 679.560(b)(6))

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) ensures comprehensive, tailored services for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth through its WIOA Title I programs. These services are delivered via the Tri-Parish Works Centers and are designed to address the unique needs of each group while fostering economic growth in the region. The FPB WDB's approach focuses on career readiness, training, and long-term employment outcomes, particularly for populations with significant barriers to employment.

Adult Services

Adult services focus on helping individuals improve their employability, access training, and secure meaningful employment.

- **Basic Career Services:** All adults have access to self-directed services in the Tri-Parish Works Centers, such as job search assistance, resume development tools, labor market information, and workshops on career navigation. Staff provide initial assessments to determine employment readiness and identify gaps in skills or credentials.
- **Individualized Career Services:** For individuals requiring more intensive assistance, services include comprehensive skills assessments, career counseling, the development of Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), and pre-vocational services. Staff work closely with participants to create pathways to sustainable employment in high-demand sectors.
- **Training Services:** Training opportunities are offered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), on-the-job training (OJT), customized training for specific employers, and apprenticeships. Priority is given to veterans, individuals receiving public assistance, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities.
- **Supportive Services:** To ensure that participants can fully engage with training and employment opportunities, the FPB WDB provides supportive services such as transportation, childcare, and needs-related payments.

Dislocated Worker Services

Dislocated Workers, who have been laid off or are at risk of layoff, are a key focus of the FPB WDB's efforts. Services are designed to facilitate rapid reemployment and retraining:

- **Reemployment Assistance:** Rapid Response activities are implemented in partnership with employers to connect workers affected by layoffs to job opportunities and support services before or immediately after a layoff.
- **Specialized Training Programs:** Dislocated Workers may access training tailored to the needs of growing industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. The FPB WDB ensures that these programs are aligned with local labor market demands and are designed to lead to employment in family-sustaining jobs.

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA):** The FPB WDB, while rarely impacted by TAA eligible layoffs, stands ready to integrate TAA resources for workers impacted by global trade. Eligible participants would be able to receive training, job search assistance, relocation support, and other available services.
 - **Career Navigation:** Dislocated Workers receive individualized career counseling to help them transition into new roles or industries. Staff guide participants in identifying transferable skills and exploring career pathways in high-demand occupations.
-

Youth Services

Youth programs target individuals aged 16–24, with a specific emphasis on out-of-school youth and those facing significant barriers to employment. The goal is to prepare youth for meaningful careers through education, training, and experiential learning.

- **Career Exploration and Pathway Development:** Youth are introduced to various career pathways in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, construction, and IT. The Career Exploration Academy, for example, exposes participants to multiple career options, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on learning experiences.
 - **Educational Support:** Services include HSET preparation, basic skills training, and dual enrollment programs that enable youth to earn college credits while completing high school. The FPB WDB collaborates with secondary and post secondary institutions to create seamless transitions into advanced training or employment.
 - **Work-Based Learning:** Internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities provide youth with practical experience and the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Partnerships with local employers and industry groups ensure that these opportunities align with regional economic needs.
 - **Leadership and Life Skills Development:** Youth programs also focus on building soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving, which are critical for workplace success. Leadership development activities and mentoring relationships further support personal and professional growth.
 - **Wraparound Services:** Recognizing the unique challenges faced by youth, the FPB WDB provides supportive services, including transportation, childcare, and connections to social services. Programs specifically target vulnerable populations, such as foster youth, parenting teens, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
-

Integration Across Programs

The FPB WDB ensures that services for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are fully integrated within the one-stop delivery system to avoid duplication and maximize efficiency. Co-enrollment in multiple programs is encouraged to address participants' needs comprehensively. For instance, a youth participant may simultaneously benefit from adult training programs and supportive services

under the WIOA Adult stream. This holistic approach enables the FPB WDB to leverage resources, create synergy among programs, and deliver impactful outcomes for the community.

By aligning services with labor market demands, fostering partnerships with local employers, and prioritizing the needs of underserved populations, the FPB WDB's WIOA Title I program empowers individuals to achieve sustainable employment and contribute to regional economic vitality.

2. Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232 (§ 679.560(b)(12)).

Adult Education and Literacy Activities Under WIOA Title II

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) plays a critical role in coordinating and supporting adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. These activities are designed to improve the foundational skills of adults, enabling them to achieve educational and employment goals while aligning with local workforce development strategies. The board ensures these programs are integrated with other workforce activities to create seamless transitions for participants into higher education, training, and employment opportunities.

Partnerships and Co-Location

The FPB WDB fosters partnerships between Adult Education providers and other workforce entities to streamline service delivery.

- **Co-Located Services:** Adult Education programs are integrated into one-stop centers, such as the comprehensive center in St. Tammany Parish, where HHSIT classes are offered on site. This ensures participants have access to both educational and workforce services in one location.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** The FPB WDB collaborates with programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation and community colleges to address the unique needs of diverse populations, including individuals with disabilities and English language learners.

3. Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services (§ 679.560(b)(11)).

Wagner-Peyser Act Services (§ 679.560(b)(11))

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) integrates Wagner-Peyser Act services into the local one-stop delivery system to provide universal access to job seekers and employers. These services, delivered by state merit staff, focus on job placement, labor exchange activities, and other workforce services that align with regional economic needs. Wagner-Peyser services play a

foundational role in ensuring that the local workforce system remains accessible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of both job seekers and employers.

Core Functions of Wagner-Peyser Services

Wagner-Peyser staff provide essential workforce services designed to help individuals find employment and assist employers in filling vacancies. These services include:

- **Job Search Assistance:** Providing guidance on job search strategies, resume development, and interview preparation. Job seekers can access these services through self-service platforms or with staff assistance at one-stop centers.
 - **Labor Exchange Activities:** Matching job seekers with employer job postings using the Louisiana HiRE system, a robust online platform that facilitates job listings, resumes, and labor market data analysis.
 - **Career Counseling:** Offering personalized advice to help job seekers identify career paths based on their skills, interests, and labor market demands.
 - **Referrals to Training Programs:** Directing job seekers to relevant workforce programs under WIOA Title I, Title II, Vocational Rehabilitation, or other partner programs for skills development and training opportunities.
 - **Labor Market Information:** Providing job seekers and employers with up-to-date data on local labor market trends, wage rates, and in-demand occupations to inform career and hiring decisions.
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Integration with the One-Stop Delivery System

The co-location of Wagner-Peyser services within comprehensive one-stop centers ensures seamless service delivery and collaboration with WIOA core programs.

- **Comprehensive Center Coordination:** In the St. Tammany Parish comprehensive center, Wagner-Peyser staff work alongside WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation, and periodically, Adult Education personnel to create a cohesive service experience for job seekers and employers.
 - **Service Integration:** Wagner-Peyser staff are trained to refer clients to appropriate services, such as WIOA Title I career training or supportive services for individuals facing barriers to employment. This coordination minimizes duplication of services and maximizes the use of resources.
 - **Universal Access:** As Wagner-Peyser services are available to all job seekers, regardless of eligibility for WIOA programs, they provide an entry point for individuals who may not yet be enrolled in workforce programs.
-

Collaboration with Workforce Partners

Wagner-Peyser services are fully integrated into the broader workforce system, enhancing collaboration and reducing duplication:

- **Partner Coordination:** Wagner-Peyser staff work closely with WIOA Title I, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs to ensure that job seekers receive comprehensive support.
 - **Rapid Response Teams:** In cases of mass layoffs, Wagner-Peyser staff play a critical role in Rapid Response efforts, coordinating with employers and workforce partners to assist dislocated workers.
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By integrating Wagner-Peyser services with other workforce programs, leveraging technology, and prioritizing collaboration, the FPB WDB ensures that these services meet the needs of the local workforce and contribute to regional economic vitality.

4. Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13)).

Vocational Rehabilitation Service Activities Under WIOA Title IV (§ 679.560(b)(13))

The Local Workforce Development Board (LPB WDB) coordinates closely with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services under WIOA Title IV to ensure individuals with disabilities receive the support they need to achieve meaningful employment. These efforts include integrating VR services within the one-stop delivery system, fostering partnerships with employers, and leveraging resources to remove barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. VR services are delivered in collaboration with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and focus on holistic, participant-centered approaches.

Core Services Provided by Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation services are comprehensive, addressing the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities to help them prepare for, secure, and retain employment. These services include:

- **Career Counseling and Guidance:** VR staff assist individuals in identifying career goals, understanding labor market opportunities, and developing strategies to achieve their objectives.
 - **Skills Assessment and Development:** Participants undergo assessments to evaluate their skills, interests, and abilities, which guide the development of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs).
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- **Training and Education Support:** VR provides access to occupational skills training, post-secondary education programs, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships tailored to the needs of participants.
 - **Assistive Technology and Accommodations:** Participants receive support in acquiring assistive devices and workplace accommodations, ensuring they can perform job tasks effectively.
 - **Job Placement Assistance:** VR staff work directly with employers to identify job opportunities that align with participants' skills and interests, facilitating smooth transitions into the workforce.
-

Co-Location and Integration in the One-Stop System

VR services are fully integrated into the Tri-Parish Works comprehensive one-stop center located in St. Tammany Parish, ensuring seamless coordination with other workforce programs:

- **Collaborative Service Delivery:** VR staff work alongside WIOA Title I and Wagner Peyser staff to provide coordinated services to participants, reducing duplication and enhancing access.
 - **Shared Resources:** The co-location allows for efficient use of facilities, such as shared meeting spaces and technology resources, to deliver workshops and training sessions for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, there are adaptive technologies that are available in the AJC which are available to all participants and partner participants, as needed.
 - **Cross-Training:** Staff from all workforce programs receive training on VR resources and services, ensuring all team members can effectively assist individuals with disabilities and refer them to appropriate resources.
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Collaboration with Workforce Partners

VR programs are tightly integrated with other workforce services, creating a seamless experience for participants:

- **Referrals and Co-Enrollment:** Individuals with disabilities often co-enroll in WIOA Title I and Adult Education programs to access a broader range of resources, such as skills training and supportive services.
 - **Shared Strategies:** VR staff participate in strategic planning sessions with the FPB WDB to align services with local labor market demands and address emerging workforce needs.
 - **Community Partnerships:** Collaboration with community-based organizations and advocacy groups enhances the reach and effectiveness of VR programs, particularly for underserved populations.
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5. Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities (§ 679.560(b)(9)).

Relevant Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Programs and Activities with Education and Workforce Investment Activities (§ 679.560(b)(9))

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) collaborates with secondary and post-secondary education providers to align educational programs with workforce investment activities, ensuring that training and education lead to meaningful employment in high-demand sectors. These partnerships emphasize career pathways, credential attainment, and work-based learning, supporting both regional economic priorities and the Combined State Plan strategies.

Collaboration with Secondary Education Programs

The FPB WDB recognizes the importance of early exposure to career pathways for youth and engages with K-12 education systems to integrate workforce readiness into secondary education.

- **Jump Start Initiative:** The FPB WDB actively supports Louisiana's Jump Start initiative, which equips high school students with industry-based credentials that align with workforce demands. Students participate in programs that combine academic coursework with technical skills training, enabling them to graduate with both a high school diploma and an industry-recognized credential.
- **Dual Enrollment Opportunities:** Partnerships with local community colleges and technical schools provide high school students with dual enrollment options. These programs allow students to earn college credits while completing high school, reducing the time and cost required to achieve post secondary qualifications.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** The FPB WDB works with local school districts to expand CTE offerings, emphasizing programs in high-growth industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and logistics. Students gain hands on experience through labs, simulations, and internships that prepare them for in demand careers.

Collaboration with Post-Secondary Education Programs

Post-secondary institutions play a critical role in preparing individuals for careers in the region's priority sectors. The FPB WDB collaborates with colleges and technical schools to ensure that education programs align with local labor market needs.

- **Customized Training Programs:** The FPB WDB partners with post-secondary institutions to develop customized training programs tailored to the specific needs of employers. For instance, healthcare employers may collaborate with technical schools to create certified

nursing assistant (CNA) training programs, while manufacturers work with colleges to develop welding or industrial maintenance certifications.

- **Stackable Credentials:** Post-secondary programs are designed to offer stackable credentials, allowing participants to build on their qualifications over time. For example, a participant may start with an entry-level credential, such as a forklift operator certification, and progress to advanced certifications in logistics or supply chain management.
- **Integration with Apprenticeships:** Apprenticeship programs offered through technical schools and community colleges provide participants with a combination of classroom instruction and paid, on-the-job training. These programs are often developed in partnership with local employers and focus on high-demand occupations such as electricians, HVAC technicians, and software developers.
- **Focus on Adult Learners:** Post-secondary institutions collaborate with the FPB WDB to create programs that accommodate the needs of adult learners, including evening and weekend classes, accelerated training options, and online learning platforms.

Alignment of Education Programs with Workforce Investment Activities

The FPB WDB collaborates with secondary and post-secondary education programs to support alignment with workforce investment activities to address the local and regional labor market needs

- **Labor Market Data Utilization:** The FPB WDB provides education partners with labor market data to guide the development of curricula and training programs. This ensures that students are acquiring skills that align with current and projected workforce demands
- **Career Pathways Development:** The FPB WDB works with education providers to develop clear, structured career pathways that connect education, training, and employment. These pathways often include articulation agreements between secondary schools, community colleges, and universities, enabling students to progress seamlessly from one level of education to the next

Focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Perkins Act Integration

The FPB WDB works with local education providers to implement the Perkins Act's goals of enhancing Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs

- **Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment:** The FPB WDB participates in the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment to identify gaps in CTE programs and align them with regional labor market needs.
- **CTE Program Expansion:** Programs are expanded in high-demand fields such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and skilled trades. This includes the integration of work-based learning components, such as internships and apprenticeships, into CTE curricula.
- **Support for Non-Traditional Fields:** Efforts are made to recruit individuals into non-traditional fields, such as women in construction or IT, to diversify participation and meet employer demands.

By fostering strong partnerships with secondary and post-secondary education providers, aligning programs with workforce investment activities, and addressing the needs of diverse populations, the FPB WDB ensures that the local workforce is prepared to meet the challenges of a dynamic economy. These efforts contribute to both individual success and regional economic growth.

6. How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii)).

Supporting State Strategies and Aligning Programs Under the Perkins Act (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii))

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) actively supports the state strategies outlined in § 676.105 and works collaboratively with entities delivering core programs, workforce development initiatives, and education programs under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins Act). These efforts focus on aligning services, building career pathways, and addressing regional and local workforce needs through comprehensive planning and collaboration.

Alignment with State Strategies

The FPB WDB promotes strategic alignment with the state's Combined Plan by incorporating the following core principles into its operations:

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Coordinating workforce development, education, and economic development efforts to create seamless pathways for participants transitioning from education to employment.
- **Focus on In-Demand Industries:** Prioritizing programs in key sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, transportation, and skilled trades, as identified in the state's labor market analysis.
- **Equity and Access:** Expanding opportunities for underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, and youth with barriers to employment.
- **Employer Engagement:** Collaborating with employers to ensure workforce programs are demand-driven and address skill gaps in the regional economy.

Partnerships to Align Career Pathways

The FPB WDB collaborates with secondary and post-secondary education institutions, employers, and community organizations to align career pathway programs with the state's goals and regional labor market needs.

- **Career Pathways Integration:** Career pathways are developed to connect participants with industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning opportunities, and meaningful employment. These pathways are structured to include:
 - Entry-level certifications for immediate employment opportunities.
 - Stackable credentials enabling participants to progress in their careers.
 - Clear articulation agreements between secondary schools, community colleges, and universities to ensure seamless transitions.
- **Support for Perkins Act Goals:** The FPB WDB leverages funding and guidance under the Perkins Act to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This includes enhancing career exploration, increasing access to technical training, and supporting pathways in high-demand fields.
- **Sector-Focused Strategies:** The FPB WDB partners with industry groups to develop sector-specific pathways. For example:
 - The healthcare sector focuses on pathways from Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) to Registered Nurse (RN).
 - Advanced manufacturing pathways begin with certifications in welding or machine operations, progressing to industrial maintenance or robotics technician roles.

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

As required under the Perkins Act, the FPB WDB participates in the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process to evaluate local education and workforce alignment.

- **Assessment Objectives:** The CLNA identifies gaps in education and training programs, ensuring they align with current and projected labor market demands.
- **Collaborative Input:** The FPB WDB collaborates with education providers, employers, and community stakeholders to gather input for the assessment.
- **Implementation:** Findings from the CLNA are used to inform program design, prioritize funding, and address regional skill shortages.

Collaboration with Education Providers

The FPB WDB supports and collaborates with secondary and post-secondary education institutions to align workforce development programs with Perkins Act priorities.

- **Secondary Education:**
 - The FPB WDB works with local school districts to expand access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, ensuring high school students are prepared for post-secondary education or employment.
 - Programs like Louisiana's Jump Start initiative provide students with dual credit opportunities and industry-recognized credentials in fields like construction, healthcare, and IT.
 - **Post-Secondary Education:**
 - Partnerships with community colleges and technical schools focus on developing training programs that meet employer needs while offering stackable credentials and apprenticeships.
 - Programs are designed to accommodate non-traditional learners, including evening and weekend classes, online learning options, and accelerated training models.
-

Coordination with Core Programs

The FPB WDB promotes coordination between Perkins Act programs and WIOA core programs to create an Integrated workforce system.

- **Co-Enrollment:** Participants are co-enrolled in Perkins-supported education programs and WIOA training programs to maximize access to resources and services.
 - **Supportive Services:** The FPB WDB coordinates supportive services, such as transportation and childcare, to reduce barriers to participation in education and training programs.
 - **Employer Engagement:** Employers are engaged in designing and implementing programs to ensure alignment with industry standards and workforce needs.
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Programs of Study

Programs of study under the Perkins Act are closely aligned with local workforce needs to create clear pathways for participants from education to employment. These programs are developed and enhanced through ongoing collaboration with the Workforce Roundtable, which includes partners in K-12 and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). These discussions help identify opportunities to expand programs, ensure alignment with high-demand industries, and create pathways for direct partnerships that benefit both participants and employers.

- **Design and Development:** Programs are designed based on regional labor market data and insights gained from Workforce Roundtable discussions, ensuring alignment with high-growth industries and emerging employer needs.
 - **Work-Based Learning:** Programs incorporate internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to provide participants with hands-on experience, with input from industry and education partners.
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- **Industry Credentials:** Programs lead to industry-recognized credentials that are portable and stackable, supporting participants' long-term career growth while meeting employer expectations for skilled workers.
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Addressing Equity and Access

The FPB WDB works to ensure that Perkins-funded programs are accessible to all, particularly underserved populations.

- **Target Populations:** Programs prioritize individuals with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, English language learners, and low-income participants.
 - **Supportive Services:** Wraparound services, such as transportation, childcare, and academic support, are integrated into programs to reduce barriers to participation.
 - **Outreach and Recruitment:** Targeted marketing efforts are used to increase awareness of Perkins-supported programs, particularly among underrepresented groups.
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Employer Engagement and Regional Alignment

The FPB WDB emphasizes employer collaboration to align Perkins programs with workforce demands.

- **Advisory Committees:** Employers participate in advisory committees to guide program design and ensure alignment with industry standards
 - **Internships and Apprenticeships:** Partnerships with employers create work-based learning opportunities that allow participants to gain practical skills while earning credentials.
 - **Talent Pipeline Development:** Programs are designed to address specific talent pipeline needs in sectors like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and construction
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Use of Technology

Technology is leveraged to enhance Perkins-supported programs and align them with workforce development goals.

- **Virtual Learning Platforms:** Online tools and hybrid learning models increase accessibility for participants in remote areas or those balancing work and education.
 - **Simulations and Labs:** Investments in cutting-edge technology, such as simulation labs for healthcare and advanced equipment for manufacturing, ensure participants receive hands-on training that meets industry standards.
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- **Digital Career Exploration:** Tools like virtual job shadowing and career exploration platforms help participants identify career pathways aligned with their skills and interests.

By aligning programs of study, career pathways, and CTE initiatives with Perkins Act goals, the FPB WDB ensures that participants receive high-quality education and training that leads to meaningful employment. These efforts support state strategies, address regional workforce needs, and contribute to the economic development of the local area.

7. Provide a copy of the local supportive service policies and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(10)) and include information on the supportive services by each local program as appropriate.

Supportive Service Policies and Coordination of Transportation and Other Services (§ 679.560(b)(10))

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) recognizes the critical role that supportive services play in ensuring participants can access and successfully complete education, training, and employment programs. To address barriers that might prevent individuals from fully participating in workforce activities, the FPB WDB has established comprehensive supportive service policies that include transportation assistance, childcare, housing, and other necessary services. These services are provided in coordination with local partners to maximize resources and enhance program impact.

Supportive Services Offered

Supportive services are designed to address barriers that prevent individuals from engaging in workforce programs or maintaining employment. Key services include:

Transportation Assistance: The FPB WDB offers transportation support to participants who lack reliable means of travel by providing mileage reimbursements, bus passes, although extremely limited in the local area, or access to ridesharing services. To further enhance accessibility, the FPB WDB coordinates with local transit authorities, where applicable, to ensure participants in rural or underserved areas can reach training and employment sites.

Childcare Support: The FPB WDB provides childcare support to participants attending training, education, or employment-related activities through childcare subsidies or direct payments to licensed childcare providers. Additionally, partnerships with local childcare centers and Head Start programs help expand access to affordable and reliable childcare services.

Housing Assistance: Participants at risk of homelessness or living in unstable housing situations may receive temporary housing assistance through referrals to community-based organizations or emergency housing programs. Additionally, co-enrollment in housing initiatives, such as those funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), ensures participants receive comprehensive and holistic support.

Needs-Related Payments: Financial assistance is provided to eligible participants to cover basic living expenses while they attend training or education programs. These payments are particularly important for participants enrolled full-time, as their ability to work and earn an income during this period is often limited. By alleviating immediate financial concerns, these payments enable participants to focus fully on their career goals and successfully complete their training or education programs.

Other Supportive Services: Other supportive services offered by the FPB WDB include the provision of tools, uniforms, or equipment necessary for training or employment. Participants pursuing industry-recognized certifications may receive assistance with licensing fees or exam costs. Additionally, referrals are available for healthcare services, mental health support, or substance abuse counseling to address participants' individual needs and ensure their success in training or employment opportunities.

Supportive Services by Program

Each WIOA program provides supportive services tailored to the needs of its participants:

WIOA Title I (Adults and Dislocated Workers): Supportive services under this program focus on reducing barriers to training and employment, with an emphasis on transportation, childcare, and job-related needs (e.g., tools or uniforms).

WIOA Title I (Youth): Youth participants, especially out of school youth, often face multiple barriers to success. Services include mentoring, leadership development, and support for education related costs, in addition to transportation and childcare.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (WIOA Title IV): Participants with disabilities receive accommodation and assistive devices, as well as referrals to community resources for housing and other essential services.

La-PRI Re-Entry Program (Second Chance Act of 2007): Participants receive comprehensive reentry support, including job readiness training, connections to employment opportunities, access to mental health and substance abuse counseling, housing assistance, and case management to facilitate successful reintegration into the workforce and community.

Coordination of Supportive Services: The FPB WDB ensures that supportive services are delivered efficiently and effectively by collaborating with local and regional partners, leveraging federal and state programs, and utilizing resource mapping and referral systems to meet participants' needs.

Community Partnerships: The FPB WDB collaborates with a variety of organizations to provide additional resources for participants, enhancing their access to comprehensive support systems. Key partners include the **United Way**, local housing authorities, and nonprofit agencies, as well as organizations such as the **Community Action Agency, Family Reach Alliance, Community Christian Concern, Northlake Homeless Coalition Catholic Charities, Day Reporting Center, Northshore Families Helping Families, Start Community Health Center**, and the **Northshore Food Bank**. For example, the **United Way Prosperity Center** in St. Tammany Parish functions as a satellite site for workforce programs, offering wraparound services including financial coaching, housing support, and childcare referrals. These partnerships ensure participants receive the holistic support needed to achieve their career and life goals.

Resource Mapping and Referral Systems: To streamline service delivery, the FPB WDB maintains a comprehensive resource map of available supportive services within the region. This tool enables staff to make timely and accurate referrals to appropriate organizations. Through coordinated intake and case management processes at one-stop centers, participants are seamlessly connected to the services they need, improving their overall outcomes.

Leveraging Federal and State Programs: The FPB WDB aligns its supportive services with other federally and state-funded programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), to maximize efficiency and avoid duplication. Co-enrollment strategies are utilized to ensure participants have access to the full range of benefits and support available, fostering a holistic approach to meeting their needs.

Transportation Solutions for Rural and Underserved Areas

Recognizing the challenges faced by participants in rural areas, the FPB WDB prioritizes innovative transportation solutions:

- **Public-Private Partnerships (where applicable):** Collaborations with local businesses and transportation providers can address gaps in public transit, particularly in rural regions where transportation options are limited.
- **Subsidized Rideshare Programs:** Participants may receive subsidized rides through platforms like Uber or Lyft to reach training or employment sites.
- **Vanpool Services:** For participants in areas with significant travel distances, vanpool services can offer affordable and reliable transportation to job centers.
- **Coordination of Bicycle Donations:** The police department initiated this effort by donating the first bike, generating significant community interest through their public relations efforts. As a result, calls began pouring in from the community with additional bike donations. The FPB WDB, in collaboration with TPW, repairs donated bikes (if needed) and provides them to

WIOA-enrolled participants. These bikes offer a critical transportation solution, helping participants get to work or school and alleviating transportation barriers.

Local Supportive Service Policies

The FPB WDB has established clear policies to govern the provision of supportive services, ensuring consistency and equity:

- **Eligibility Criteria:** Supportive services are available to participants who are actively engaged in WIOA-funded programs and demonstrate a need for assistance to overcome barriers.
 - **Documentation and Case Management:** Participants work with case managers to identify their needs, document their eligibility, and develop individualized service plans.
 - **Funding Limits and Prioritization:** Policies specify funding caps, reviewed annually, for supportive services to ensure resources are distributed equitably. Priority is given to individuals with significant barriers to employment, such as single parents, veterans, or individuals with disabilities.
-

By offering comprehensive supportive services and coordinating efforts with local partners, the FPB WDB ensures that participants can overcome barriers and achieve their education, training, and employment goals. These efforts are critical to fostering workforce success and economic growth in the region.

- E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:
1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(6)).

Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) is committed to providing comprehensive employment and training services to adults and dislocated workers in the local area. These services are designed to address the unique needs of job seekers and ensure alignment with local labor market demands, creating pathways to meaningful employment and supporting regional economic growth.

Description and Assessment of the Type and Availability of Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in the Local Area (§ 679.560(b)(6))

The FPB WDB offers a robust suite of employment and training services for adults and dislocated workers through its network of one-stop centers and partnerships with training providers, community organizations, and employers. Services are tailored to meet the specific needs of participants and align with the region's high-growth industries.

Employment Activities

Employment activities focus on preparing individuals for the workforce, connecting them to job opportunities, and supporting long-term career success.

Career Services:

- **Basic Career Services:** Available to all job seekers, these include self-directed job search tools, access to labor market information, resume assistance, and referrals to job openings.
 - **Individualized Career Services:** For participants requiring more intensive support, these include career assessments, development of Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), career counseling, and job readiness workshops.
 - **Job Placement Services:** The FPB WDB collaborates with employers to identify job openings and connect participants to available opportunities through targeted job fairs, hiring events, and employer partnerships.
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Work-Based Learning Opportunities:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Participants gain hands-on experience with employers who provide training in exchange for wage reimbursement
 - **Incumbent Worker Training:** Employers receive support to upskill current employees, helping them advance in their careers and retain jobs.
 - **Work Experience Programs:** Participants, particularly those with limited work history, are placed in temporary work experiences to gain critical workplace skills and build their resumes.
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Training Activities

Training activities focus on equipping individuals with the skills and credentials needed to secure employment in high-demand sectors.

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):** Eligible participants can access ITAs to enroll in training programs offered by approved providers. Programs are aligned with local demand occupations, such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and logistics.

- **Industry-Recognized Credentials:** Training programs emphasize the attainment of portable, stackable, and industry-recognized credentials that improve participants' employability and career mobility.
- **Customized Training:** Developed in partnership with local employers, customized training addresses specific workforce needs, such as advanced skills in welding, machine operations, or software development.
- **Apprenticeship Programs:** Existing Pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships provide participants with structured learning and on-the-job training. Additionally, the local area is always seeking opportunities to promote apprenticeships with local employers. The local WDB is also seeking ways to assist employers in the area in setting up pre-apprenticeship and Registered apprenticeship programs, to further the access of these programs to local participants.

Availability of Services

Employment and training services are delivered through the FPB WDB's network of comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers. The following resources ensure broad accessibility:

- **Comprehensive One-Stop Centers:** These serve as centralized hubs where participants can access all workforce services, including career counseling, job search assistance, and training referrals. Our comprehensive center resides in St. Tammany Parish.
- **Satellite Locations and Partnerships:** Services are expanded through satellite sites and collaborations with community organizations to ensure participants in rural or underserved areas can access workforce programs. We have a satellite location in St. Bernard Parish on the campus of Nunez Community College and we work with the K-12 system and community organizations within Plaquemines Parish to provide on-site workforce development services.
- **Virtual Services:** Online platforms, such as the Louisiana HIRE system, enable participants to access job listings, training opportunities, and career resources remotely.

Assessment of Services

The FPB WDB continuously evaluates its service offerings to ensure they meet the needs of participants and employers. Metrics such as job placement rates, credential attainment, and participant satisfaction inform program improvements. Feedback from participants and employers is used to identify service gaps and adjust offerings to address evolving workforce needs.

2. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities (§ 679.560(b)(7)).

Description of How the Local Board Will Coordinate Workforce Development Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Activities (§ 679.560(b)(7))

The FPB WDB collaborates closely with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and the state's Rapid Response team to deliver proactive, timely, and comprehensive services to workers affected by layoffs, business closures, or economic disruptions. These efforts ensure a seamless integration of workforce development activities with statewide Rapid Response initiatives, providing targeted assistance to dislocated workers while minimizing the negative impact on the local economy.

Goals of Rapid Response Coordination

The FPB WDB's coordination with statewide Rapid Response activities are designed to:

- Help dislocated workers transition quickly into reemployment.
 - Reduce the economic impact of layoffs on the community.
 - Support employers in managing workforce reductions in a way that minimizes disruption.
 - Align workforce services with regional labor market needs to connect workers to high-demand opportunities.
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Early Detection and Intervention

A critical aspect of Rapid Response coordination is the ability to identify and respond to layoffs and closures as early as possible:

Notification of Layoffs: The FPB WDB receives advanced notification of layoffs and business closures through partnerships with local employers and notification requirements under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. The state's Rapid Response team alerts the FPB WDB of impending layoffs, enabling immediate planning and deployment of services.

Employer Engagement: The FPB WDB collaborates with affected employers to plan layoff events and ensure workers receive timely assistance. Employers are encouraged to involve the FPB WDB and Rapid Response team early in the process to facilitate effective service delivery.

Proactive Strategies: In some cases, the FPB WDB works with employers to explore alternatives to layoffs, such as providing incumbent worker training to upskill existing staff and retain jobs.

Additionally, the FPB WDB recently participated in a trial of the Econovue program, hosted by LWC. This program provides access to data that highlights how businesses are performing. If data indicates that a business may be struggling, the FPB WDB has the opportunity to proactively reach out to the employer, offering support and workforce development resources ahead of any potential layoffs or closures. While the trial was limited in scope, the FPB WDB is awaiting confirmation on whether LWC will purchase a license for continued access to this valuable tool.

Delivery of Rapid Response Services

The FPB WDB collaborates with the state's Rapid Response team to provide comprehensive services to dislocated workers, both onsite at affected businesses and through one-stop centers.

Information and Assistance Sessions: Rapid Response sessions are conducted for affected workers, typically at their workplace or virtually, depending on the circumstances. These sessions include:

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Information: Guidance materials on applying for unemployment benefits and understanding eligibility.

Workforce System Orientation: Information about services available at one-stop centers, including job search assistance, career counseling, and training programs.

Supportive Services Overview: Referrals to supportive services, such as transportation, childcare, housing assistance, and mental health resources.

Customized Services: Tailored resources are provided to address the specific needs of workers in different industries or geographic areas.

Career Counseling and Job Placement Assistance: Dislocated workers are connected to career counseling services to assess their skills, interests, and career goals. Job placement assistance includes access to local job fairs, hiring events, and connections with employers in high-demand sectors.

Labor Market Information: Workers receive up-to-date information about regional labor market trends, including high-demand industries, wage data, and job opportunities.

Workforce Development Activities for Dislocated Workers

In addition to initial Rapid Response services, dislocated workers are directed to the FPB WDB's broader workforce development programs to facilitate reemployment and career advancement.

Training and Education Opportunities: Dislocated workers can access Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to enroll in programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials in high-demand fields, such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and construction. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities are prioritized for dislocated workers to provide hands-on experience and accelerated entry into new careers.

Targeted Industry Focus: Workers from declining industries are connected to training in growing sectors, ensuring alignment with regional economic needs. For example, dislocated workers from the oil and gas industry may transition into renewable energy or advanced manufacturing roles through targeted reskilling programs.

Supportive Services: To remove barriers to participation, dislocated workers are provided with supportive services, including transportation assistance, childcare, and financial support during training.

Coordination with Employers

The FPB WDB works closely with employers during Rapid Response efforts to ensure smooth transitions for workers and mitigate the impact of workforce reductions:

Job Placement Assistance for Employers: Employers facing layoffs are supported in connecting displaced workers to new opportunities within the region. The FPB WDB facilitates partnerships with other local businesses and industries to streamline hiring processes for affected workers.

Customized Business Services: Employers are offered resources to manage layoffs effectively, including workshops on legal obligations, community resources, and workforce retention strategies. Employers seeking to hire displaced workers are connected to the FPB WDB's job placement services and one-stop center resources.

Integration with Local Workforce Development Activities

The FPB WDB works with Rapid Response efforts are seamlessly integrated with its local workforce programs to maximize impact and efficiency:

Co-Enrollment in Workforce Programs: Dislocated workers are co-enrolled in WIOA Title I programs, enabling them to access a comprehensive suite of career, training, and supportive services. This integration ensures that workers receive continuous support throughout their reemployment journey.

Resource Sharing: One-stop centers provide a centralized location for dislocated workers to access Rapid Response services and other workforce development resources. Collaborative partnerships with local training providers and community organizations expand the availability of services for dislocated workers.

Virtual Access: Rapid Response services are offered virtually through webinars, online resource portals, and digital counseling sessions, ensuring accessibility for workers in remote or underserved areas.

By integrating workforce development activities with statewide Rapid Response efforts, the FPB WDB ensures that dislocated workers receive timely, effective, and comprehensive support. These

coordinated strategies minimize the economic impact of layoffs, empower workers to transition into new careers, and contribute to the resilience of the local workforce and economy.

- F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:
1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities (§ 679.560(b)(8)).

Youth Activities

The Local Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) offers a robust and diverse portfolio of youth workforce investment activities tailored to the unique needs of the local population. These activities are designed to equip young people with the education, skills, and support necessary to build successful careers, with a special emphasis on serving out-of-school youth (OSY) and youth with disabilities. The FPB WDB ensures compliance with WIOA requirements while fostering inclusivity and addressing the barriers that often prevent youth from engaging in workforce programs.

Description and Assessment of Youth Workforce Investment Activities

The FPB WDB delivers a wide range of youth-focused workforce activities that address educational gaps, promote career exploration, and build essential workforce skills. These programs aim to prepare youth for high-demand industries and equip them with the tools necessary to achieve long-term success in their chosen career paths.

Core Services and Programs

The FPB WDB provides a comprehensive suite of services to meet the needs of In-school and out-of-school youth, ensuring accessibility and alignment with regional workforce demands.

Comprehensive Assessments: Youth participants undergo personalized assessments to identify their academic levels, occupational skills, and personal barriers. These evaluations are used to develop an **Individual Service Strategy (ISS)** tailored to each participant's career and educational goals. The ISS serves as a roadmap, outlining steps to address gaps, achieve credentials, and transition into employment.

Educational Support:

The FPB WDB places a strong emphasis on ensuring youth achieve educational milestones that are critical for workforce readiness. Partnerships with local institutions and programs play a key role in these efforts:

- **Tutoring and Study Skills Training:** These services help participants improve academic performance, preparing them for high school completion or equivalency exams (e.g., HiSET).

- **Dropout Prevention:** Programs like Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) work to re-engage youth at risk of dropping out by providing counseling, mentorship, and workforce preparation activities. The FPB WDB partners closely with the JAG program hosted at Northshore Technical College, where collaborative efforts focus on mentorship, skills training, and wraparound services that address both educational and workforce readiness.
- **Dual Enrollment Opportunities:** Through partnerships with local community colleges and technical schools, youth can simultaneously earn high school and college credits, reducing the time and cost of obtaining post-secondary credentials.

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Dual Enrollment Opportunities: Through partnerships with local community colleges and technical schools, youth can simultaneously earn high school and college credits, reducing the time and cost of obtaining post-secondary credentials.

Occupational Skills Training: Youth have access to training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials in high demand sectors, such as:

- Healthcare (e.g., Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant certifications).
- Information Technology (e.g., cybersecurity, coding certifications)
- Advanced Manufacturing (e.g., welding, CNC machining).
- Logistics and Transportation (e.g., forklift operation, supply chain management certifications).

Work-Based Learning Opportunities: To bridge the gap between education and employment, the FPB WDB offers extensive work-based learning opportunities:

To bridge the gap between education and employment, the FPB WDB offers extensive work-based learning opportunities designed to build skills, provide real-world experience, and connect youth with meaningful career pathways:

- **Internships:** Paid and unpaid internships provide hands-on experience and exposure to various industries, helping participants develop essential workplace skills.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Youth are employed by the participating employer and receive practical, on-the-job training while earning a wage. Employers are reimbursed for a portion of the wages for up to six months to offset training costs, ensuring youth gain real-world skills aligned with industry demands.
 - **Work Experience (WEX):** In this program, the FPB WDB serves as the employer, paying the youth's full salary for a more limited duration. WEX focuses on helping youth build work readiness skills in a structured environment, preparing them for long-term employment. Work experience is also an integral part of the **Summer Career Exploration Academy**, where youth engage in skill-building activities. The FPB WDB collaborates directly with the **Community Action Agency** to braid funding and expand these opportunities.
 - **Apprenticeships:** The FPB WDB has been actively working to expand opportunities by learning more about how employers can establish registered apprenticeship programs. These programs can provide structured pathways into skilled trades and technical careers, with the goal of FPB WDB facilitating the process to increase employer participation and placement opportunities for youth.
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Specialized Services for Youth with Disabilities

The FPB WDB prioritizes the inclusion of youth with disabilities in its workforce programs, offering targeted services and accommodations to reduce barriers and create equitable access to employment opportunities.

Accessibility: One stop centers and training locations are equipped with assistive technologies, such as screen readers and adaptive devices, ensuring compliance with ADA standards. Virtual learning platforms are also optimized for accessibility.

Co-Enrollment Opportunities: Youth with disabilities are co-enrolled, where possible, in WIOA Title I and Vocational Rehabilitation programs to provide access to specialized services. These services include career counseling, skills assessments, workplace accommodations, and referrals to additional community resources.

Employer Engagement: Employers are engaged to create inclusive work environments, offering supported employment opportunities tailored to the needs of youth with disabilities. Job coaches and disability advocates work alongside employers to ensure successful placements.

Successful Models of Youth Workforce Activities

The FPB WDB has developed and implemented several high-impact programs that serve as successful models for youth workforce development:

Career Exploration Academy: This innovative program provides youth with exposure to over 20 career options across multiple industries. Activities include interactive workshops, employer presentations, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on learning experiences. Participants gain valuable insights into career pathways and technical training opportunities available in the region. This program is facilitated in collaboration with Northshore Technical Community College in St. Tammany Parish. In St. Bernard Parish, we have partnered with the St. Bernard Parish Government to provide exposure to careers for the youth. Many of these activities and learning opportunities have translated into direct hire jobs. In Plaquemines Parish, we are working directly with the K-12 education system along with the Plaquemines Parish Government to provide career exploration opportunities for the youth, as well.

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG): Targeting at-risk out-of-school youth, JAG focuses on dropout recovery, leadership development, and career readiness. The program incorporates intensive mentoring, job shadowing, and life skills training, helping participants complete their education and secure employment. Youth participating in this program are co-enrolled in **WIOA**, giving them access to the full range of youth services and support, including career counseling, educational resources, and wraparound services. This comprehensive approach improves participant outcomes by addressing barriers and providing the tools needed for long-term success.

Financial Literacy Training: Delivered in partnership with United Way of Southeast Louisiana, these workshops equip youth with essential financial management skills. Topics include budgeting, credit management, savings strategies, and understanding student loans. Financial literacy is integrated into broader career readiness programs to prepare youth for economic independence.

Youth Leadership Programs: Leadership development initiatives encourage youth to participate in community service projects, public speaking engagements, and peer mentoring. These activities build confidence, teamwork, and interpersonal skills critical for workplace success.

The FPB WDB's youth workforce investment activities reflect a commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and results-driven environment for young people. By addressing barriers, promoting equity, and offering robust career development opportunities, the FPB WDB ensures youth are prepared to meet the demands of the modern workforce while contributing to the local economy's vitality.

2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.

Meeting the Minimum Expenditure Rate for Out-of-School Youth

The FPB WDB places a strong emphasis on serving out-of-school youth (OSY), ensuring compliance with WIOA's mandate that at least 75% of youth program funds be allocated to this population. To meet this requirement, the FPB WDB implements targeted outreach, comprehensive programming,

and rigorous financial monitoring. These efforts ensure OSY receive the resources they need to overcome barriers and transition into meaningful careers.

Outreach and Engagement

The FPB WDB employs innovative strategies to identify and engage OSY, prioritizing populations that face significant barriers to education and employment. Effective outreach is achieved through strategic partnerships and data-driven initiatives:

Targeted Outreach Campaigns: Campaigns focus on high-need populations, including:

- Youth aging out of foster care, who often lack stable support systems.
- Homeless youth, who require immediate access to resources such as housing assistance and educational support.
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system, who benefit from structured programs to reenter education or employment pathways.

Community Collaborations. The FPB WDB partners with organizations like the United Way Prosperity Center, faith-based organizations, and local nonprofits to identify and engage disconnected youth. These partnerships expand the reach of workforce programs and ensure access to wraparound services.

School and Agency Partnerships: Outreach extends to alternative schools, dropout recovery programs, and local government agencies, such as child welfare services. Additionally, the FPB WDB actively engages with local high schools to inform counselors, teachers, and administrators about available programs and services. This collaboration enables schools to refer students who have dropped out, where possible, ensuring they are connected to FPB WDB programs and resources that support their educational and career goals. FPB WDB works with the local parish sheriff's office to identify potential participants that may benefit from WIOA Youth services, as well as serve as mentors and as a work experience site. These partnerships play a critical role in identifying and reaching out-of-school youth (OSY) and facilitating their transition to productive pathways.

Job Corps Referrals: As part of an updated focus, Job Corps will now refer all participants who are no longer part of their program to the FPB WDB for career services. This new partnership creates an additional recruitment and outreach pool of youth participants, enabling the FPB WDB to connect these individuals with critical resources and programs to support their education and career goals.

Digital and Social Media Outreach: Recognizing the digital engagement habits of younger populations, the FPB WDB uses targeted social media campaigns and online resources to raise awareness about available opportunities for OSY.

Expanded Services for OSY

The FPB WDB tailors its programs for OSY to address unique challenges and provide pathways to career readiness. These services emphasize hands-on learning, skills development, and support to overcome systemic barriers.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Work-based learning remains a cornerstone of OSY programming, offering:

- **Internships:** Structured experiences that connect youth to employers, providing exposure to workplace environments and opportunities to apply newly acquired skills.
- **Apprenticeships:** Programs in industries like construction, IT, and healthcare combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction, creating clear pathways to sustainable careers.
- **Job Shadowing:** Youth gain insight into various career options through day-in-the-life experiences with professionals in high-demand industries.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): OSY participants are eligible for ITAs, which fund education and credentialing programs aligned with regional labor market demands. Training programs include certifications in logistics, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology.

Supportive Services: To ensure OSY can participate fully in workforce programs, the FPB WDB provides:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Bus passes (where applicable), mileage reimbursement, and rideshare subsidies, if available.
- **Childcare Support:** Subsidized childcare services for young parents or guardians.
- **Housing Assistance:** Referrals to emergency housing or long-term housing programs for youth experiencing homelessness.

Mentorship and Life Skills Development: OSY are connected to mentors who provide guidance on career development, decision-making, and navigating workplace environments. Life skills workshops focus on areas like financial literacy, communication, and time management.

Monitoring Compliance

The FPB WDB employs a rigorous financial oversight process to ensure compliance with the 75% expenditure requirement for OSY programs. This ensures funding is used effectively to achieve maximum impact:

Monthly Expenditure Tracking: Program expenditures are reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure funds are allocated appropriately to OSY activities. This proactive monitoring allows the FPB WDB to address potential shortfalls in real-time.

Quarterly Reporting: The FPB WDB provides quarterly updates to the Board, detailing progress toward meeting expenditure targets and highlighting key program outcomes.

Alignment with Strategic Goals: Financial reviews ensure that spending aligns with broader workforce development goals, including the provision of industry-relevant training and employer engagement initiatives for OSY.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The FPB WDB is committed to refining its OSY programs to meet the evolving needs of youth and the regional labor market. Continuous improvement is achieved through feedback mechanisms, performance evaluation, and stakeholder collaboration:

Stakeholder Feedback: Input from youth participants, employers, and community partners is gathered through surveys, focus groups, and regular meetings. This feedback informs adjustments to program delivery and outreach efforts.

Performance Metrics: Key metrics, such as credential attainment rates, job placement rates, and participant retention, are tracked to evaluate program effectiveness. The FPB WDB uses this data to identify areas for improvement and replicate successful strategies.

Employer Partnerships. Regular engagement with local employers ensures programs remain aligned with industry needs. The FPB WDB's participation in the **Workforce Roundtable, SIEP (St. Tammany Economic Partners), Northshore Healthscape, PABI, and Chambers of Commerce (across all three parishes)** further strengthens these efforts by fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, including employers, educators, and community leaders. Employer feedback gathered through these discussions helps refine work-based learning opportunities and training curricula, ensuring they address current and emerging industry demands. This proactive approach supports the development of a skilled workforce while meeting the needs of local businesses.

Adaptation to Emerging Trends: The FPB WDB continuously monitors economic and workforce trends to adapt programming for OSY. For example, as demand for IT professionals increases, the FPB WDB incorporates certifications in coding, cybersecurity, and software development into its offerings.

Youth-Specific Policies and Committees: The FPB WDB has established policies directly addressing youth, such as incentives and eligibility criteria, to better serve their needs. Additionally, the FPB WDB has revived the **Community Development Committee**, which previously played a vital role in developing and recommending local youth employment and training policies, establishing linkages with other organizations serving youth, and addressing broader community issues impacting youth labor market success. The revival of this committee will enhance the board's ability to focus on comprehensive youth employment strategies and community collaboration.

By prioritizing outreach, providing robust services, and maintaining strict financial oversight, the FPB WDB ensures compliance with the 75% expenditure requirement for OSY programs. These efforts not only address barriers to employment but also empower youth to achieve their career goals and contribute to the region's economic vitality.

- G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment⁸ as outlined in the Combined State Plan:
1. Provide information on how priority will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E) (§ 679.560(b)(21)).

Providing Services to Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The FPB WDB is fully committed to delivering effective services to individuals with barriers to employment, as outlined in the Combined State Plan. Priority is given to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, ensuring compliance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(E). This approach aims to foster equitable access to workforce development opportunities and align services with regional economic and labor market needs.

Priority for Recipients of Public Assistance, Low-Income Individuals, and Basic Skills Deficient Individuals

The FPB WDB employs a comprehensive strategy to prioritize services for individuals in the designated priority groups. This includes targeted outreach, tailored program design, and continuous evaluation to address barriers to workforce participation effectively.

Outreach and Engagement

The FPB WDB implements outreach campaigns designed to connect underserved populations with workforce services:

- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborations with local organizations, such as housing agencies, food banks, and public assistance programs, streamline referrals and expand service reach to recipients of TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid.
- **Targeted Campaigns:** Outreach focuses on populations with the greatest needs, including low-income individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, and those classified as basic skills deficient.

Eligibility and Assessment

- **Defining Basic Skills Deficiency:** Individuals are identified as basic skills deficient if they demonstrate English, reading, writing, or computing skills below the 8th-grade level or if their skill levels prevent them from functioning effectively in the workforce, family, or society.
 - **Assessment Tools:** The FPB WDB employs standardized testing, intake interviews, triage form and case notes to assess eligibility for prioritized services, particularly for veterans.
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Core Services for Priority Populations

The FPB WDB offers a wide array of services tailored to meet the unique needs of priority groups:

Career Services:

- Basic career services include orientation, intake, skills assessment, and job search assistance.
- Individualized career services, such as comprehensive assessments, career counseling, and case management, are available for individuals requiring additional support.
- Additional tools and training are offered in areas of job interview preparation, soft skill development, understanding your target market, creating multiple resumes, cover letter writing, warm hand offs to local employers, and participation in workshops.

Training Opportunities:

- Occupational skills training and on-the-job training (OJT) programs are linked to high-demand industries.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) fund educational programs leading to industry recognized credentials.

Supportive Services:

- Assistance with transportation, childcare, and housing is provided to remove barriers to participation.
 - Referrals to community resources and financial literacy workshops address additional needs.
-

Programs for Basic Skills Development

The FPB WDB integrates adult education and literacy services into its offerings:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) courses improve language proficiency for individuals with limited English skills.
- Partnerships with local community colleges and literacy programs enhance access to HISET preparation and other foundational skills training.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The FPB WDB uses robust tracking and evaluation systems to ensure compliance with WIOA priority requirements and effectiveness in serving target populations:

- **Regular Monitoring:** Participation rates and outcomes for priority groups are monitored quarterly, and adjustments are made to program design as needed.
- **Performance Metrics:**
 - Metrics include job placement rates, credential attainment, and wage growth among participants.
 - Feedback from participants and community partners informs program improvements.

By implementing targeted outreach, delivering comprehensive services, and maintaining rigorous oversight, the FPB WDB ensures that individuals with barriers to employment receive the support they need to achieve economic independence and contribute to the local workforce. This commitment strengthens the regional economy while advancing the State's vision of a more inclusive workforce system.

- 2 Describe how the local workforce area will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:
 - Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.
 - Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and prepare action plans to achieve them.
 - Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields.
 - Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.
 - Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.
 - Ensuring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.

Equitable Access to Workforce and Educational Services

The FPB WDB has outlined a comprehensive strategy to ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services. These efforts focus on addressing disparities in access and outcomes while fostering a workforce system that is inclusive and equitable for all populations.

Disaggregating Data to Identify Disparities

The FPB WDB disaggregates data by race, gender, and target populations to uncover disparities and inequities in programs and policies. This data-driven approach ensures that programs are evaluated for equitable outcomes. Key efforts include:

- **Targeted Reporting:** Regular collection and analysis of participant data by demographic characteristics, as mandated by the State Workforce Plan, to identify underrepresented groups in program participation and outcomes.
 - **Informed Decision Making:** Using data from HiRE, the state's integrated management information system, to track and analyze enrollment and outcomes across racial, gender, and socioeconomic lines.
 - **Partnership to Reduce Disparities:** FPB WDB works closely with the Urban League of Louisiana and the See Change Collective a data-driven, community-oriented and outcomes-focused initiative committed to identifying policy and practice solutions to close the racial wealth gap for Blacks, Hispanics, and Latinos in Greater New Orleans through homeownership, business ownership and entrepreneurship, and income and wages
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Developing Equally Goals and Action Plans

The FPB WDB collaborates with local educational institutions and community organizations to establish equity goals and actionable strategies:

- **Equity Frameworks:** Incorporating equity frameworks developed by the Louisiana Workforce Commission into local workforce initiatives to align goals with state-wide priorities. A specific example includes, targeted outreach in our work with GNO, Inc. RAAMP grant, highlighting Aerospace and Advanced Technology growth in our local area.
 - **Educational Alignment:** Working with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to increase access to Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, which combine foundational education with workforce skills.
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Expanding STEM Opportunities for Underrepresented Groups

To address the underrepresentation of young women and minorities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers, the FPB WDB:

- **STEM Career Exploration:** Hosts career exploration academies in partnership with K-12 systems and local community colleges and industry stakeholders, providing mentorship and exposure to STEM fields.
 - **School Outreach:** Engages with high schools to introduce students to dual-enrollment programs that lead to STEM certifications and credentials in high-demand sectors.
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Expanding Effective Mentorship Programs

The FPB WDB recognizes the value of mentorship programs for individuals transitioning careers or re-entering the workforce:

- **Adult Mentorship Initiatives:** Leveraging existing youth mentorship frameworks to expand support for displaced workers through collaborations with community organizations.
 - **Workforce Integration Support:** Partnering with employers to provide job shadowing and mentorship for adult learners pursuing industry-recognized credentials.
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Training Workforce Staff on Equity

To address equity gaps effectively, workforce program staff receive comprehensive training:

- **Diversity and Inclusion Training:** Staff participate in regular workshops focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion to foster culturally responsive service delivery.
 - **Data Utilization Workshops:** Training on how to interpret disaggregated data and incorporate findings into program improvement strategies.
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Strategically Locating Workforce Services

Ensuring services are accessible to populations in need is a priority:

- **Co-Location of Services:** Establishing Adult Education programs within American Job Centers, such as the Slidell Comprehensive Center, to centralize resources for underserved populations.
 - **Rural Outreach:** Improving the accessibility of most services through virtual means and increasing partnerships with rural community organizations to improve service accessibility in geographically isolated areas. Some of these include virtual appointments through Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and the WIX system.
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Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The FPB WDB's initiatives aim to eliminate systemic barriers and enhance equitable access to services. By leveraging partnerships, data-driven insights, and community engagement, the FPB WDB ensures that all individuals, regardless of background, have the opportunity to thrive in Louisiana's workforce.

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

1. How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement;

Training Policies and Activities

The FPB WDB implements comprehensive training policies and activities that align with WIOA mandates and address the specific workforce needs of the region. These efforts prioritize sustainable employment opportunities in high-demand industries, foster partnerships with employers and training providers, and ensure equitable access to training resources. The FPB WDB's strategies focus on effective fund allocation, robust monitoring systems, and alignment with local and state economic goals.

1. Meeting the Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

The FPB WDB ensures compliance with the annual training expenditure requirement by strategically managing resources to maximize the impact of training programs. These efforts are guided by regional labor market needs, employer demand, and WIOA requirements, ensuring investments produce measurable outcomes for jobseekers and employers.

Regular Monitoring and Reporting

- The FPB WDB tracks training expenditures monthly to ensure funds are allocated efficiently and appropriately.
 - Quarterly financial updates are presented to the FPB WDB to assess progress toward meeting the training expenditure requirement and identify potential gaps or opportunities for reallocation.
 - Expenditure reports are evaluated against WIOA standards and local goals, ensuring compliance while maintaining flexibility to adapt to emerging workforce demands.
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Strategic Fund Allocation

Employer-Based Training Activities: At least 40% of the FPB WDB's formula training funds are allocated to employer-based training initiatives, including:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Programs where participants earn wages while acquiring job-specific skills under the guidance of an employer.
- **Customized Training:** Employer-driven programs tailored to specific skill gaps, ensuring a direct pipeline of qualified workers for local businesses.
- **Internships and Work Experience:** These provide participants with exposure to real-world work environments while building critical workplace competencies.

Leveraging Federal and State Funds: The FPB WDB combines WIOA formula funds with other federal and state funding sources to expand the reach of training programs, ensuring fiscal responsibility and enhanced service delivery.

Focus on In-Demand Sectors

The FPB WDB aligns training investments with industries critical to the region's economic development:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** Programs focus on upskilling workers in welding, robotics, and CNC machining to meet the demands of modern manufacturing.
 - **Healthcare:** Investments prioritize certifications in areas such as nursing, medical assisting, and allied health professions to address labor shortages in the healthcare sector.
 - **Technology:** Training includes certifications in IT support, cybersecurity, and software development to align with the growing demand for tech professionals.
 - **Transportation and Logistics:** Training programs focus on developing skills in commercial driving, in order to support supply chain and warehouse operations and the efficient movement of goods and services across the region.
 - **Construction and Skilled Trades:** Participants are prepared for careers in construction management, HVAC, and electrical systems, supporting the region's infrastructure needs.
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Outcome-Focused Investment

- Training programs are evaluated based on participant outcomes, such as credential attainment, job placement rates, and wage growth.
 - Partnerships with employers ensure training programs remain relevant and responsive to real-time labor market trends, fostering stronger employment opportunities for participants.
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By implementing rigorous tracking systems, prioritizing employer-driven training activities, and focusing on high-demand sectors, the FPB WDB ensures that training funds are utilized effectively, meeting WIOA mandates and contributing to regional economic growth. These policies promote workforce readiness, economic resilience, and long-term sustainability in the local area.

2. How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities;

Encouraging Work-Based Learning Strategies

Work-based learning (WBL) strategies are central to the FPB WDB approach to fostering a well-prepared workforce. These initiatives create pathways for participants to gain practical, on-the-job experience while building strong employer relationships that address skill gaps and labor shortages. By integrating hands-on learning with workforce preparation, WBL helps bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring participants are equipped with industry-relevant skills and employers can access a pipeline of qualified workers.

Goals for Work-Based Learning Activities

The FPB WDB is committed to expanding and diversifying work-based learning opportunities to meet the needs of participants and employers. These efforts focus on increasing participation, ensuring equity, and strengthening outcomes in critical industries

Expanding Opportunities

Increasing On the Job Training (OJT) Programs: OJT programs are a cornerstone of the FPB WDB's work-based learning (WBL) strategy, enabling participants to earn wages while acquiring job specific skills. The FPB WDB collaborates closely with local businesses to design tailored OJT opportunities that meet employer needs, ensuring participants gain practical experience and transition seamlessly into full time employment.

Target industries for OJT include healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and IT—sectors where labor shortages pose significant challenges. Employers are incentivized to participate through wage reimbursement programs, which reduce hiring costs and foster stronger partnerships between businesses and the workforce system. While these areas remain primary focuses, OJT opportunities are also offered in other industries with a defined local need or where there is a strong match for the individual, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to the evolving labor market.

Scaling Registered Apprenticeships: The FPB WDB promotes and actively collaborates to expand apprenticeship opportunities when and where possible. Apprenticeships offer participants structured training and mentorship, providing a clear pathway to long-term career success.

Diversifying Participation

The FPB WDB emphasizes the inclusion of underserved populations in WBL initiatives to promote equity and economic opportunity:

- **Underserved Populations:** Efforts are made to recruit individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency, ensuring they have access to work-based learning programs.
 - **Youth and Young Adults:** High school students, recent graduates, and out-of-school youth are prioritized for internships, pre-apprenticeships, and summer employment opportunities to introduce them to career pathways early.
 - **Dislocated Workers:** First is providing assistance in finding direct employment utilizing the existing skills of the participant. When additional intervention is needed, FPB WDB will also use ITA's, OJT, and customized training programs help dislocated workers transition to new industries, leveraging their transferable skills.
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Proposed Outcomes

The FPB WDB sets clear, measurable outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of work-based learning initiatives. These proposed outcomes are aligned with local and state workforce goals and focus on ensuring participant success and employer satisfaction.

Improved Participant Retention and Career Advancement

Participants in work-based learning (WBL) programs demonstrate higher retention rates and faster career advancement compared to those in traditional training models. Additionally, WBL leads to higher wages and long-term employment stability, with many participants securing full time positions with the employers who provided their training.

Increased Employer Satisfaction

Employers report high satisfaction with the opportunity to shape training programs and develop a workforce tailored to their specific needs. Partnerships between the FPB WDB and employers foster ongoing collaboration, creating a feedback loop that ensures training programs remain relevant and effective.

Strengthened Partnerships with Educational Institutions

The FPB WDB collaborates with community colleges, technical schools, and universities to integrate academic instruction with work-based learning (WBL) experiences. These partnerships enable

participants to enroll in classroom-based training while simultaneously participating in WBL programs, allowing them to earn credentials and gain practical experience.

Sector-Focused Results

Programs focus on high-demand industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and construction, ensuring that participants are placed into careers where opportunities for growth and advancement are significant. Employers in these sectors benefit from a skilled, job-ready workforce, contributing to regional economic development.

Innovative Approaches to Work-Based Learning

To maximize the impact of work-based learning, the FPB WDB employs innovative strategies that address regional workforce challenges and align with participant needs:

- **Virtual and Hybrid Work-Based Learning Models:** In response to changing workplace dynamics, the FPB WDB supports virtual and hybrid work based learning opportunities, particularly in IT and administrative roles.
- **Employer-Centered Program Design.** The FPB WDB works with employers to co-develop training curricula that reflect current industry standards and emerging technologies
- **Enhanced Data Tracking:** Outcomes of WBL programs are monitored through metrics such as placement rates, employer satisfaction scores, and participant wage growth, ensuring continuous improvement

Through its work based learning strategies, the FPB WDB creates dynamic, mutually beneficial partnerships between employers and participants. These initiatives address skill shortages, support economic development, and provide individuals with the practical experience and training needed to succeed in their careers. By expanding opportunities, diversifying participation, and focusing on measurable outcomes, the FPB WDB ensures its work based learning efforts remain impactful and responsive to the needs of the local workforce.

3. Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (§ 679.560(b)(18)); and

Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are a cornerstone of the FPB WDB's strategy for delivering training services under WIOA. By leveraging ITAs, the FPB WDB ensures that participants have access to high-quality training opportunities that align with regional economic priorities and foster informed customer choice. The ITA system supports eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth in acquiring industry-recognized credentials, empowering them to secure employment in high-demand occupations.

Key Components of the ITA Policy

Eligibility Criteria

- ITAs are offered to individuals who meet eligibility requirements under WIOA Title I programs, including adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth.
- Participants must pursue training in occupations identified as high-demand within the local labor market, ensuring alignment with workforce needs.
- A minimum earning potential of \$12.00 per hour post-training is required, reflecting the FPB WDB's commitment to fostering self sufficiency and sustainable careers.

Program Approval

- Training programs must be included on the State's **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)**, which ensures compliance with accreditation, licensure, and performance standards.
- The FPB WDB prioritizes programs that demonstrate
 - Alignment with regional labor market trends and in-demand industries, such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, IT, and logistics.
 - Proven outcomes, including high rates of job placement and credential attainment.
 - Accessibility to individuals with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

Customer Choice

- The FPB WDB empowers participants to select from a wide range of training programs that align with their career goals and personal circumstances.
- Participants receive guidance from career counselors to help them evaluate options, understand labor market demands, provide assessments to help identify good matches in career pathways, and make informed decisions.
- The ITA process emphasizes flexibility, allowing participants to pursue training in various formats, including classroom-based, online, and hybrid models.

Funding and Caps

- ITA funding caps are established based on program costs, local demand, and available resources. These caps are periodically reviewed to ensure they meet participant needs without exhausting funds prematurely.
 - Supportive services, such as transportation, childcare, and materials, may be provided alongside ITAs to reduce barriers to participation.
-

Local Training Provider Approval Policy and Procedures

Initial and Continued Eligibility

Training providers must apply for inclusion on the ETPL by demonstrating compliance with state and federal regulations, including:

- Accreditation by a recognized educational body or industry organization.
- Licensure to operate within the state of Louisiana.
- Capacity to meet performance metrics, such as job placement rates and credential attainment.

Providers are required to maintain eligibility by submitting annual performance data and participating in periodic evaluations conducted by the FPB WDB.

Collaboration with Employers and Educators

The FPB WDB fosters partnerships between training providers, employers, and educational institutions to ensure programs remain relevant and responsive:

Employer Engagement Employers provide input on program design, skill requirements, and real time labor market needs. This collaboration ensures participants are job ready upon program completion

Educator Collaboration: Community colleges, technical schools, and universities partner with the FPB WDB to deliver training that aligns with regional economic development goals.

Continuous Improvement

Innovation and Adaptation:

Providers are encouraged to incorporate innovative training methods, such as virtual simulations, augmented reality, and other technology-driven approaches. Programs are adjusted to address emerging industry needs, such as green energy and advanced manufacturing.

Impact of ITA Policy and Training Provider Oversight

Through the ITA policy and rigorous training provider approval procedures, the FPB WDB ensures that participants receive high-quality training aligned with the needs of the local labor market. This approach fosters informed customer choice, strengthens partnerships with industry and education stakeholders, and ensures continuous improvement in the delivery of workforce training services. These efforts contribute to building a skilled, resilient, and inclusive workforce that supports regional economic growth.

- I. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:
 1. To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Authorization of WIOA Title IB Workforce Funds Transfers and Usage

The FPB WDB ensures the strategic allocation and utilization of WIOA Title IB funds to meet the evolving workforce needs of the local area. Through the careful authorization of fund transfers and designated usage, the FPB WDB maximizes the impact of its programs, addressing economic fluctuations and aligning resources with local labor market demands. This approach promotes continuous service delivery, economic growth, and workforce resilience.

Transfer of Funds Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Streams

The FPB WDB utilizes its authority to request fund transfers between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams to respond to changing economic conditions and participant needs. This flexibility allows the FPB WDB to address workforce challenges efficiently, ensuring resources are allocated where they are most needed.

Policy and Transfer Limits

- The FPB WDB is authorized to transfer up to **50% of funds** from one funding stream to another during the first year of allocation. An additional **25% transfer** is permissible in the

second year, subject to justification and approval from the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).

- Fund transfer requests must include detailed rationales, anticipated outcomes, and compliance with federal and state guidelines.
- All transfers are monitored to ensure they do not disrupt the equitable delivery of services across funding streams.

Rationale for Fund Transfers

Economic Conditions: Transfers are often necessitated by economic shifts, such as rising unemployment rates, plant closures, or regional workforce dislocations caused by natural disasters or economic downturns.

For example, in times of significant layoffs, Dislocated Worker funds may need to be increased to support reskilling and job placement efforts. Conversely, in periods of economic growth with low unemployment, adult funding may require supplementation to expand training programs for underserved populations.

Service Demand: Fund transfers address disparities in demand for services. When demand for adult services, such as skills training and job placements, exceeds the allocated budget, funds are reallocated from underutilized Dislocated Worker resources. Similarly, when major layoffs or closures increase demand for Dislocated Worker services, funds from the adult stream can be transferred to meet participant needs.

Alignment with Regional Goals: Transfers are used strategically to align funding with high-priority sectors in the local labor market, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and construction. These sectors are critical for regional economic growth and offer high-quality career pathways.

Implementation and Impact

Formal Request Process: The FPB WDB submits a formal written request to the LWC, detailing:

- The proposed transfer amount.
- Specific reasons for the transfer, supported by labor market data and participant trends.
- Anticipated outcomes for affected programs and participants, such as improved access to training or increased employment rates in targeted industries.

Impact on Service Delivery: Transfers ensure seamless service delivery by:

- Filling potential funding gaps that could disrupt training or employment services.
- Addressing immediate workforce challenges, such as layoffs or skill shortages, without waiting for new funding allocations.

Case Study Example: During the COVID-19 pandemic, fund transfers were instrumental in supporting displaced workers through retraining and reemployment initiatives, ensuring rapid responses to changing labor market needs.

Benefits of Fund Transfers

- **Adaptability:** The ability to transfer funds allows the FPB WDB to adapt quickly to changing economic and workforce conditions.
- **Efficiency:** Resources are reallocated to areas of greatest need, ensuring optimal use of funding.
- **Equity:** Fund transfers enable the FPB WDB to maintain equitable access to services for all populations, including underserved groups and displaced workers.

By leveraging its authority to transfer funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker streams, the FPB WDB enhances its capacity to respond to labor market dynamics, align resources with regional goals, and ensure continuous, high-quality workforce services for the community. This strategic approach promotes long-term economic resilience and workforce success.

2. To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

Use of Funds for Incumbent Worker Training

The FPB WDB prioritizes the use of WIOA Title IB funds to support **incumbent worker training (IWT)**, a critical tool for enhancing the skills of existing employees and fostering economic growth. By allocating up to **20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds** for IWT, the FPB WDB ensures **businesses remain competitive** and workers can adapt to changing industry needs, technological advancements, and economic shifts. This Initiative aligns with WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4) and supports both employer and employee success.

Purpose and Goals of Incumbent Worker Training

Upskilling the Workforce: IWT programs are designed to improve the skills of existing employees, helping businesses meet the demands of a dynamic labor market. Training focuses on emerging technologies, operational efficiency, and compliance with industry standards.

Preventing Job Losses: IWT reduces the likelihood of layoffs by enabling businesses to adapt to market changes and technological innovations. Workers gain new skills that allow them to take on advanced roles within their current companies, supporting business continuity and worker retention.

Strengthening Regional Competitiveness: By investing in the upskilling of employees, IWT enhances the competitiveness of local businesses in high-growth industries like healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and logistics.

Eligibility for Incumbent Worker Training

Employer Eligibility

Employers must meet specific criteria to qualify for IWT funds:

- Be actively engaged in a **high-demand or critical industry** in the local area, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, or construction.
- Demonstrate a need for training to avoid layoffs, improve operational efficiency, or respond to market demands.
- Provide evidence of financial contribution to the training costs (e.g., matching funds) based on the size of the business:
 - **Small Businesses (50 or fewer employees):** A 10% match is required.
 - **Mid-Sized Businesses (51-100 employees):** A 25% match is required.
 - **Large Businesses (over 100 employees):** A 50% match is required.

Employee Eligibility

Employees participating in IWT must:

- Be currently employed and at risk of layoff due to skill gaps or operational changes.
 - Have an established work history with the employer.
 - Require training to enhance productivity, advance within the organization, or meet evolving job requirements.
-

Program Design and Focus Areas

Training Delivery

IWT programs are customized to meet the specific needs of participating employers and industries:

- **On-Site Training:** Delivered directly at the worksite to minimize disruption and maximize applicability.
 - **Third-Party Providers:** Partnering with local community colleges, technical schools, or private trainers to deliver specialized instruction.
 - **Online and Hybrid Models:** Leveraging virtual platforms for flexible learning options, especially for roles in IT and administration.
-

Skill Development

Training programs focus on key areas such as:

- **Technology Integration:** Helping workers adapt to new equipment, software, and processes in sectors like IT and manufacturing.
 - **Industry Standards:** Certifications and licensures that align with industry regulations, such as OSHA compliance or medical certifications.
 - **Advanced Skills:** Upskilling in areas like robotics, data analytics, or green technologies to align with future workforce needs.
-

Implementation and Monitoring

Employer Engagement

The FPB WDB works closely with employers to identify skill gaps and training needs:

- Employers are required to submit a detailed **training plan** outlining goals, expected outcomes, and how the training will benefit both the business and employees.
- The FPB WDB collaborates with employers to design programs that align with industry standards and address local labor market demands.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Training outcomes are tracked to measure success, including:

- **Employee Retention Rates:** Evaluating whether trained workers remain with the employer.
 - **Skill Gains:** Assessing improvements in worker capabilities and productivity.
 - **Employer Satisfaction:** Gathering feedback to refine and enhance future IWI initiatives.
-

Expected Outcomes

For Employers

- Increased productivity and profitability due to a more skilled workforce.
- Reduced turnover rates and costs associated with recruitment and onboarding.
- Enhanced ability to compete in regional, national, and global markets.

For Employees

- Career advancement opportunities, including promotions and wage increases.
-

- Improved job security and ability to adapt to evolving job roles.
 - Acquisition of portable, industry-recognized credentials.
-

Examples of Incumbent Worker Training Success

- **Healthcare Sector:** A local hospital partnered with the FPB WDB to train its nursing staff in advanced patient care technologies, enabling the organization to reduce costs while improving care quality.
 - **Advanced Manufacturing:** A regional manufacturing firm upskilled employees in robotics and CNC machining, increasing productivity and expanding the company's market share.
 - **IT Sector:** A mid-sized IT company used IWT funds to train employees in cybersecurity protocols, ensuring compliance with industry regulations and enhancing service offerings.
-

Conclusion

By prioritizing incumbent worker training, the FPB WDB strengthens the local economy, enhances workforce adaptability, and fosters business growth. This investment in upskilling ensures that both employers and employees can thrive in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

3. To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

Use of Funds for Transitional Jobs

The FPB WDB strategically allocates up to **10% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds** to support **transitional jobs**, as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5). Transitional jobs are temporary, subsidized work experiences designed to help individuals with significant barriers to employment gain valuable skills, establish a work history, and transition into unsubsidized, long term employment. This initiative aligns with the FPB WDB's commitment to fostering inclusivity and equity in workforce development, ensuring that even the most vulnerable populations have access to meaningful career opportunities.

Purpose and Goals of Transitional Jobs

Skill Building and Workforce Readiness: Transitional jobs provide participants with hands-on experience, helping them develop essential workplace skills such as time management, communication, and problem-solving. Participants gain exposure to real-world work environments, improving their confidence and preparedness for permanent employment.

Establishing a Work History: For individuals with limited or no employment experience, transitional jobs create an opportunity to build a track record of reliable work, which is critical for securing long-term employment.

Addressing Employment Barriers: Transitional jobs are designed to support individuals who face significant barriers to employment, such as homelessness, incarceration, long-term unemployment, or limited education. These jobs provide a structured environment where participants can receive support while gaining skills and experience.

Target Populations for Transitional Jobs

Transitional job opportunities are prioritized for individuals who face the greatest challenges in entering or re-entering the workforce:

- **Justice-Involved Individuals:** Recently released individuals transitioning from incarceration often face stigma and a lack of opportunities. Transitional jobs offer a pathway to reintegrate into society while building job skills.
 - **Long-Term Unemployed:** Individuals who have been unemployed for extended periods benefit from re-entering the workforce in a supportive environment.
 - **Homeless Individuals or Those in Unstable Housing:** Transitional jobs provide financial stability and access to supportive services that help participants achieve stable housing.
 - **Individuals with Disabilities:** Programs ensure accessibility and provide accommodations for individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities, allowing them to participate fully and gain valuable experience.
-

Program Design and Structure

Duration and Structure: Transitional jobs are **time-limited**, typically lasting between three to six months, and are structured to provide participants with meaningful work experiences while preparing them for long-term employment. Jobs are offered in **nonprofit, public sector, and private sector organizations**, with a focus on community-based projects or roles that provide transferable skills.

Comprehensive Support Services: Transitional jobs programs integrate wraparound services to address participants' personal and professional needs:

- **Case Management:** Participants are assigned case managers who provide individualized support, helping them navigate challenges and set career goals.
 - **Soft Skills Training:** Programs include workshops on workplace etiquette, conflict resolution, and team collaboration.
-

- **Supportive Services:** Transportation vouchers, childcare subsidies, and housing assistance are provided to remove barriers to participation.

Work-Based Learning Integration: Transitional jobs often include a work-based learning component, such as mentorship or shadowing opportunities, to help participants develop skills relevant to high-demand industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT.

Employer Partnerships and Benefits

Engaging Employers: The FPB WDB collaborates with local employers to identify transitional job opportunities that align with labor market demands and provide participants with exposure to in-demand occupations. Employers benefit from wage subsidies provided through WIOA funds, reducing the financial burden of onboarding participants.

Building Talent Pipelines: Transitional jobs serve as a gateway for employers to evaluate potential hires, creating opportunities to transition participants into permanent roles. Employers in sectors experiencing labor shortages, such as healthcare and construction, leverage transitional job programs to address immediate workforce needs while supporting community development.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance Metrics

The FPB WDB evaluates the success of transitional jobs programs based on key metrics, including:

- **Job Placement Rates:** The percentage of participants who transition from subsidized jobs to unsubsidized, permanent employment.
- **Skill Development:** Measurable improvements in participants' workplace competencies, such as communication, teamwork, and technical skills.
- **Retention Rates:** Long-term employment outcomes, tracking participants' stability in unsubsidized roles over six months to a year.

Participant Feedback: Feedback is collected through interviews to understand participant experiences and identify areas for program improvement.

Employer Satisfaction: Employers participating in transitional job programs are surveyed to assess the value of the program, the quality of participants, and their likelihood of being offered permanent roles.

Outcomes and Benefits

For Participants

- **Increased Employability:** Participants gain experience, skills, and confidence, positioning them for success in the competitive job market.
- **Financial Stability:** Subsidized wages provide participants with immediate income, helping them meet basic needs and reduce economic insecurity.
- **Career Pathways:** Transitional jobs often lead to opportunities in high-demand sectors, enabling participants to build sustainable careers.

For Employers

- Employers gain access to a pool of motivated workers while benefiting from financial incentives and reduced hiring risks.
- Partnerships with the FPB WDB enhance employers' community engagement and support local workforce development efforts.

Case Studies and Examples

Community Cleanup Initiatives: Transitional jobs in public works and environmental cleanup projects provide participants with skills in project management, teamwork, and technical labor while contributing to community improvement.

Healthcare Support Roles: Participants gain experience in entry-level healthcare roles, such as medical office assistants, preparing them for long-term employment in the growing healthcare industry.

IT Support Positions: Transitional jobs in nonprofit IT organizations allow participants to develop technical skills and build portfolios that open doors to careers in technology.

Conclusion

The FPB WDB's investment in transitional jobs supports individuals with significant barriers to employment, providing them with the skills, experience, and resources needed to succeed in the workforce. By integrating wraparound services, fostering employer partnerships, and focusing on measurable outcomes, the FPB WDB ensures transitional jobs contribute to economic stability, workforce inclusivity, and regional development.

4. To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).

Use of Funds for Pay-for-Performance Contracts

The FPB WDB may allocate up to **10% of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds for Pay-for-Performance (P4P) contracts**, as authorized under WIOA Sec. 133(b) (2-3). These contracts were designed to incentivize service providers to deliver exceptional outcomes tied to specific performance metrics. When engaging in P4P contracts, payments are tied to measurable results, to ensure accountability, foster innovation, and maximize the impact of workforce development funds.

Pay-for-performance contracts can align provider efforts with workforce goals by tying payments to outcomes like employment and wage growth. These contracts promote accountability, innovation, and high-quality services that support sustainable employment and career advancement.

Pay-for-performance contracts are intended to be designed with clear benchmarks aligned to workforce priorities and awarded through a competitive process favoring proven providers. Regular monitoring and evaluations ensure accountability, allowing adjustments to improve outcomes.

Implementation of Pay-for-Performance Contracts

Contract Design and Approval: Contracts are designed in collaboration with service providers, with clear deliverables and payment structures defined upfront. The FPB WDB sets performance benchmarks aligned with WIOA measures and regional workforce priorities, ensuring contracts contribute to the overall success of the workforce system.

Provider Selection: Providers are selected through a competitive procurement process, with preference given to those with a demonstrated ability to deliver outcomes for target populations. Evaluation criteria include past performance, organizational capacity, and alignment with the FPB WDB's strategic goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The FPB WDB monitors contract performance regularly, tracking metrics such as participant enrollment, program completion, and employment outcomes. Mid-contract evaluations allow for adjustments to address challenges or capitalize on successful strategies.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION: LOCAL

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)).

- A. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system (core and required partners as applicable) in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(16)).
1. WIOA Performance Measures

Local Workforce Development Board's Approach to Becoming a High-Performing Board

The FPB WDB is committed to achieving and maintaining high-performance standards as defined by the criteria established by the State Workforce Development Board under WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6). By focusing on strategic goals, innovative approaches, and data-driven accountability, the FPB WDB ensures the effective use of resources and delivery of impactful workforce services. This includes actively negotiating and meeting local performance levels with the Governor and chief elected official, as outlined in WIOA Sec. 116(c).

Local Levels of Performance Negotiated with the Governor and Chief Elected Official

The FPB WDB works closely with state leadership and local elected officials to ensure that performance goals are aligned with WIOA Title I requirements and regional economic priorities. These goals set benchmarks for evaluating the success of the local fiscal agent, eligible service providers, and the one-stop delivery system, which includes core and required partners.

PY23 Performance Measures and Outcomes

WIOA INDICATORS	Negotiated Goal PY23	LWDA 10 Results PY23	%of goal met
ADULT			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	73.00%	79.87%	109.41%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	65.50%	77.71%	118.64%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,350	\$9,137	109.43%
Credential Attainment	83.00%	83.18%	100.22%
Measurable Skill Gains	76.50%	84.72%	110.75%
DISLOCATED WORKER			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	72.00%	75.00%	104.17%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	65.00%	64.22%	98.80%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,019	\$9,370	116.85%
Credential Attainment	83.50%	87.50%	104.79%
Measurable Skill Gains	76.90%	90.00%	117.04%
YOUTH			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	76.70%	79.25%	103.32%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	73.20%	69.07%	94.36%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,756	\$5,568	148.24%
Credential Attainment	57.80%	87.04%	164.85%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.00%	56.94%	109.50%

**Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA
First Planning District (LWDA 10)**

	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	73.42%	73.42%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	66.21%	66.21%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$8,505	\$8,505
Credential Attainment Rate	85.0%	85.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	78.12%	78.12%
DISLOCATED WORKER		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	73.34%	73.34%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	65.0%	65.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$8,714	\$8,714
Credential Attainment Rate	87.0%	87.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	78.86%	78.86%
YOUTH		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	80.12%	80.12%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	71.5%	71.5%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$4,327	\$4,327
Credential Attainment Rate	53.90%	53.90%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.18%	52.18%

Actions for Maintaining and Improving High Performance

The FPB WDB implements a range of strategies to achieve high performance, focusing on data-driven oversight, continuous improvement, collaboration, and equity. These efforts ensure that all programs meet or exceed negotiated performance levels while adapting to local economic and workforce conditions.

Data-Driven Oversight

Real-Time Monitoring: The FPB WDB tracks program performance using data from state and local systems, such as HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment), to identify trends and address underperformance proactively. Metrics are analyzed regularly to ensure alignment with negotiated goals and provide insights into participant outcomes and service delivery gaps.

Accountability for Providers: Eligible providers, including training institutions and one-stop operators, are evaluated based on their contributions to WIOA performance measures. Data is reviewed to promote compliance and high-quality services.

Continuous Improvement

Evaluation and Feedback: The FPB WDB incorporates participant feedback and stakeholder input to refine services, focusing on areas such as job placement, retention, and credential attainment. Results from mid-year and annual reviews inform targeted technical assistance for underperforming programs.

Innovative Practices: Adoption of technology driven tools, such as virtual job fairs and online training platforms, increases accessibility and participant engagement, particularly for rural and underserved populations.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Integration with Core Partners: Collaboration with Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education partners ensures a seamless service delivery model for job seekers and employers. Cross agency initiatives focus on improving service coordination, reducing duplication, and streamlining participant referrals, creating an environment that allows for maximizing wrap-around services.

Employer Engagement. Ongoing partnerships with regional employers ensure training programs are aligned with labor market demands and lead to meaningful employment opportunities.

Equity and Accessibility

Disaggregated Data Analysis: Performance data is disaggregated by race, gender, and target population to identify disparities and inform equity-focused interventions. Special attention is given to underserved groups, such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and minorities, ensuring equitable access to training and employment services.

Geographic Accessibility: One-stop centers and workforce services are strategically located in areas of high need, with mobile units and virtual services expanding reach to rural and remote communities.

Future Goals and Commitments

The FPB WDB is committed to remaining a high-performing board by continually improving its service delivery model and exceeding performance benchmarks. Future initiatives include:

Expanding Work-Based Learning: Increasing the availability of internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities to improve employment and retention rates.

Strengthening Sector Partnerships: Collaborating with industry leaders to develop training programs that address emerging skills gaps, particularly in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

Enhanced Participant Support. Increasing supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and digital literacy training to reduce barriers to participation.

Conclusion

The FPB WDB's focus on achieving negotiated performance levels, fostering collaboration, and maintaining a commitment to equity and innovation ensures it remains a high-performing board. These efforts support the region's workforce development goals, drive economic growth, and improve outcomes for all participants. By exceeding WIOA performance measures and adapting to the evolving needs of the local labor market, the FPB WDB demonstrates its capacity to deliver effective, impactful workforce services.

2. Additional State Performance Measures

Not applicable

B. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?

Evaluation Activities and Service Delivery Expansion Based on ROI

The FPB WDB continually evaluates service delivery strategies and expands programs demonstrating a strong **Return on Investment (ROI)**. Evaluation activities are designed to measure the effectiveness of current initiatives, inform decision-making, and optimize resource allocation for workforce development programs.

Existing Service Delivery Strategies to Be Expanded

Hybrid Service Delivery Model

- **Overview:** The hybrid model, combining virtual and in-person services, emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and has proven to be a highly effective approach for reaching diverse populations.
- **Impact:** Increased access for job seekers in remote or underserved areas who face transportation, childcare, or scheduling barriers.
- **Planned Expansion:**
 - Investments in user friendly virtual platforms to support job training, career counseling, and hiring events.
 - Continued staff training to enhance delivery of virtual services.
 - Integration of virtual service options with in person center offerings to maximize customer choice and convenience.

Work-Based Learning Programs

- **Overview:** Programs such as internships, apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT) have demonstrated significant ROI by directly aligning participant skills with employer needs.
- **Impact:** High placement rates in industries like healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and construction.
- **Planned Expansion:**
 - Increasing partnerships with local businesses to provide work-based learning opportunities.
 - Allocating additional funding to subsidize OJT and apprenticeship programs, focusing on priority sectors.

Career Pathways and Sector Strategies

- **Overview:** Career pathway programs that align with regional economic drivers have consistently delivered strong outcomes for participants, particularly in high-growth industries.
- **Impact:** These strategies prepare individuals for long-term career advancement and provide employers with skilled labor tailored to their needs.
- **Planned Expansion:**
 - Collaborating with K-12 education, post-secondary institutions, and industry partners to enhance career pathway development.

- Strengthening sector partnerships in industries like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and maritime transportation.

Youth Programs and Out-of-School Youth Initiatives

- **Overview:** Initiatives for out-of-school youth, such as the Career Exploration Academy and Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), have shown substantial benefits in preparing young people for in-demand occupations.
- **Impact:** Increased credential attainment and employment rates among youth participants.
- **Planned Expansion:**
 - Partnering with community colleges and technical schools to broaden access to dual-enrollment programs.
 - Expanding summer youth work experience activities and mentorship programs.

Evaluation Framework

Data Collection and Analysis: Performance metrics are collected through the **HIRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** system and other data platforms. Metrics include job placement rates, credential attainment, employer satisfaction, and participant feedback.

Feedback Loops: Regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings provide qualitative insights from employers, service providers, and participants. Customer satisfaction surveys are used to identify service delivery gaps and areas for improvement.

Reporting and Transparency: Evaluation results are presented to the FPB WDB and program administrators during bi-monthly meetings. Key findings are shared with stakeholders and the public through open meetings and the FPB WDB's website.

Planned Enhancements to Evaluation Activities

Advanced Data Tools: Continued use of advanced analytics platforms, such as FutureWorks (if available), Lightcast, and participating in pilot programs with data providers such as EconoVue provide us the additional resources and data feedback to continually assess our past and current actuals to better prepare for the future and to track outcomes and measure ROI more effectively.

Collaboration with Partners: Partnering with educational institutions and industry groups to align evaluation criteria with regional economic goals.

Continuous Improvement Cycles: Integrating feedback from evaluations into the planning and execution of future workforce programs.

Conclusion

By expanding service delivery strategies with proven ROI, the FPB WDB ensures resources are allocated effectively to meet workforce needs. These enhancements not only support participants in achieving sustainable employment but also strengthen partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, driving economic growth across the region.

2. What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?

Curtailing or Eliminating Service Delivery Strategies with Minimal ROI

The FPB WDB is committed to ensuring that its resources are utilized effectively to achieve measurable outcomes and align with regional labor market demands. Based on the **LWDA 10 Four-Year Local Plan and its modifications**, the WDB continuously evaluates service delivery strategies. Programs and initiatives that fail to meet performance benchmarks or align with the region's economic priorities are restructured or discontinued, ensuring resources are directed toward high-impact strategies.

Strategies Identified for Curtailment or Elimination

Programs Not Aligned with High-Demand Occupations

Training programs targeting occupations in declining industries or those with limited job prospects have shown minimal ROI.

Action Plan: Continually evaluate investments maintaining awareness of declining sectors or occupations. Be ready to pivot funding toward emerging industries and occupations offering sustainable wages and long-term growth.

Low-Engagement Standalone Services: Standalone career services, such as resume-building workshops or basic job application assistance, have not consistently driven participant engagement or resulted in meaningful outcomes.

Action Plan: Integrate standalone services into comprehensive career pathway models and sector-specific strategies. Expand innovative service delivery methods, such as the hybrid service model successfully implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Redundant Administrative Activities: Inefficient processes in intake and case management create unnecessary barriers and redundancies in service delivery.

Action Plan: Leverage the **HiRE system** (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) to streamline intake, co-enrollment, and service tracking across programs. Eliminate duplicative data collection by integrating technology platforms and improving collaboration among WIOA partners.

Underperforming Youth Initiatives: Youth programs that lack targeted components or work-based learning opportunities have delivered limited success.

Action Plan: Phase out youth programs with persistently low completion and placement rates. Focus on successful models such as the **Career Exploration Academy** and dual-enrollment programs.

Physical Locations with Low Utilization: Maintaining underutilized physical centers has proven inefficient, particularly in areas with limited demand.

Action Plan: Consolidate low use centers and expand virtual service options to increase accessibility for remote and underserved populations. Continue leveraging mobile service delivery options and satellite offices, such as the **United Way Prosperity Center and The Learning Center in Port Sulphur**, to bring services directly to participants.

Rationale and Methodology for Curtailment

ROI Analysis: The FPB WDB uses performance data from platforms like **HiRE** and the **Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS)** to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Metrics such as job placements, credential attainment, and employer satisfaction are analyzed to determine ROI.

Alignment with Strategic Goals: Programs are assessed for alignment with regional labor market needs and pathways to high-wage, high-demand occupations. Initiatives that fail to support these goals are prioritized for restructuring or discontinuation.

Stakeholder Feedback: Input from employers, participants, and community organizations is critical in identifying areas for improvement. Feedback ensures that decisions reflect the needs of businesses, job seekers, and the broader community.

Conclusion

By focusing on programs with measurable impact and curtailing those with minimal ROI, the FPB WDB ensures efficient and effective resource allocation. This approach aligns with WIOA priorities, supports regional economic development goals, and addresses the needs of local businesses and job seekers. Through continuous evaluation and stakeholder engagement, the FPB WDB maintains its commitment to delivering high-quality, results-driven workforce development services.

3. What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?
 - What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollments?
 - What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?

New Service Strategies to Address Regional Educational and Training Needs

The FPB WDB has implemented innovative service strategies to address the region's evolving educational and training needs, focusing on initiatives that demonstrate a promising return on investment (ROI). These strategies leverage data-driven insights and innovative delivery models to enhance program outcomes, expand access for underserved populations, and align training programs with local labor market demands.

Expanding Integrated Education and Training (IET) Models

IET models combine foundational education, workforce preparation, and occupational training into a streamlined, unified program that accelerates participants' readiness for employment. Through partnerships with community colleges, the FPB WDB has scaled up programs offering Integrated HISET preparation and job-specific certifications in fields like healthcare, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. These programs focus on high demand certifications that lead directly to employment in priority industries. By reducing training time and improving job placement rates, IET programs deliver strong ROI while addressing workforce shortages in critical sectors.

Enhancing Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programs

Work-based learning programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT), offer participants valuable real world experience while meeting employer demands for skilled

labor. The FPB WDB has expanded apprenticeships in construction, IT, and healthcare to address labor shortages and foster stronger retention. Small and mid-sized businesses benefit from wage reimbursement incentives, which encourage greater participation in OJT programs. These efforts not only strengthen participant advancement and retention in high-growth industries but also improve employer satisfaction by tailoring training to their specific workforce needs.

Virtual Learning Platforms

Online learning programs provide participants with flexibility and accessibility, particularly for those in rural or underserved areas. The FPB WDB has partnered with platforms like Coursera and edX to deliver industry-recognized certifications in fields such as data analytics, cybersecurity, and healthcare administration. Hybrid models combining online modules with in-person labs or mentorships are also being introduced. These virtual learning initiatives offer cost-effective training solutions and expand access for participants facing geographic or scheduling barriers, delivering strong ROI and meeting the demands of the digital age.

Dual-Enrollment and Career Pathway Programs

The FPB WDB collaborates with K-12 schools, community colleges, and employers to create career pathways that provide students with early exposure to in-demand fields. Dual-enrollment programs in IT, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing allow students to earn college credits or credentials while still in high school. These programs are complemented by mentorship and career exploration workshops, which prepare youth for seamless transitions from education to employment. The increased participation and credential attainment among youth in these programs reflect their effectiveness and ROI.

Collecting Data to Measure ROI and Identify Barriers

To ensure continuous improvement, the FPB WDB collects both quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate program outcomes and address barriers to participation. Metrics such as credential attainment, employment rates, and earnings are used to assess ROI, while participant feedback and employer input provide insights into program relevance and accessibility. Analysis reveals barriers such as limited program awareness, financial constraints, geographic challenges, lack of childcare, and low digital literacy, all of which are addressed through targeted strategies.

Cost-Effective Approaches to Overcoming Barriers

Transportation Assistance

The FPB WDB partners with transit agencies and nonprofits to provide bus passes, ride-share vouchers, and mileage reimbursements (if available and accessible), ensuring participants can access training and employment opportunities. Mobile service units deliver training directly to remote communities, reducing transportation barriers for rural residents.

Childcare Support

Affordable childcare is provided through subsidies and collaborations with local childcare providers and Head Start programs. On-site childcare services at training centers further support working parents, enabling greater participation in workforce programs.

Financial Support

The FPB WDB uses Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to cover tuition and certification costs, while stipends for books, uniforms, and exam fees reduce financial burdens. Streamlined application processes ensure participants can access these funds quickly and efficiently.

Digital Access and Literacy

To address the digital divide, the FPB WDB provides access to laptops and tablets, to participants in need. Basic digital skills workshops empower participants to navigate online learning platforms, enhancing their ability to complete virtual training programs successfully.

Community Engagement

Targeted outreach campaigns raise awareness of training programs among underserved populations. Partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations amplify the reach of these campaigns, ensuring that more individuals are informed about available opportunities.

Expected Outcomes

By implementing these innovative strategies and addressing systemic barriers, the FPB WDB aims to achieve measurable outcomes, including:

- Increased enrollment and completion rates in training programs.
 - Improved employment and retention rates in high-demand sectors.
 - Greater equity and accessibility for underserved populations.
 - Enhanced employer satisfaction with a skilled and job-ready workforce.
-

Conclusion

The FPB WDB's strategic focus on ROI-driven improvements ensures that educational and training programs are impactful, inclusive, and responsive to the region's economic needs. Through targeted initiatives and cost-effective solutions, the FPB WDB strengthens its ability to prepare participants for sustainable careers while supporting employers with a highly skilled workforce. These efforts contribute to a thriving and resilient regional economy.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LOCAL

This section includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121(c)(2)(iv))

A. Fiscal Management

1. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i) (§ 679.560(b)(14)).

Entity Responsible for the Disbursement of Grant Funds

The **St. Bernard Parish Government Workforce Programs Department** serves as the fiscal agent for the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). This entity holds the primary responsibility for the administration, disbursement, and oversight of WIOA federal award funds in the local area. Its role ensures that all financial activities related to WIOA are conducted in strict compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**, **Federal Registers**, **Uniform Guidance**, **State Directives**, and **Workforce Development Board (FPB WDB) policies**.

Responsibilities and Key Functions

Administration and Disbursement of Funds: The fiscal agent administers all formula and discretionary WIOA funds, including those allocated for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, as well as discretionary grants awarded to the local area. Funds are disbursed to service providers, subrecipients, and partners in accordance with the **Local Workforce Development Board's strategic plan** and the **Annual Budget Plan** approved by the Chief Elected Official (CEO).

Financial Systems and Controls: The fiscal agent employs robust financial systems designed to ensure effective fiscal management and accountability:

Tracking Grant-Related Activities:

- **Authorizations and Obligations:** Monitors funds authorized for use and tracks obligations to ensure no overspending occurs.
- **Unobligated Balances:** Identifies and reallocates unspent funds to ensure timely and effective utilization.
- **Expenditures and Income:** Tracks all expenditures and program income to guarantee funds are used exclusively for authorized purposes and program goals.

Internal Controls: Implements a system of checks and balances to safeguard against fraud, waste, and abuse. Ensures adherence to the fiscal policies outlined in the **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200)**.

Budget Preparation and Oversight

Annual Budget Development: Budgets for all WIOA Title I programs, including formula allocations and discretionary funds, are prepared annually. Budgets align with WDB priorities, local labor market needs, and regional economic development goals.

Financial Monitoring: The fiscal agent conducts periodic budget reviews and reconciliations to ensure expenditures align with program objectives and regulatory requirements. Annual financial reports are submitted to the FPB WDB, the CEO, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), providing transparency and accountability.

Compliance and Reporting: Ensures compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations governing the use of WIOA funds. Submits required financial reports to the LWC and federal agencies, detailing fund usage, program outcomes, and audit results.

Importance of Fiscal Agent Role

The fiscal agent plays a pivotal role in maintaining the integrity and efficiency of workforce development programs. By ensuring that funds are managed responsibly, the St. Bernard Parish Government Workforce Programs Department helps to:

- Optimize the impact of workforce development initiatives on local job seekers and employers.
- Support the achievement of WIOA performance goals, including job placement rates, credential attainment, and skill development.
- Maintain public trust and accountability by demonstrating prudent use of taxpayer dollars.

Conclusion

As the fiscal agent, the St. Bernard Parish Government Workforce Programs Department ensures that WIOA funds are administered and disbursed effectively to advance workforce development in the local area. Through its robust financial systems, compliance mechanisms, and alignment with strategic priorities, the fiscal agent safeguards the integrity of WIOA programs and contributes to their overall success.

2. Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (§ 679.560(b)(15)).

Local Procurement Policies and Competitive Procurement Process

The FPB WDB adheres to stringent procurement policies in accordance with **Louisiana State Contract and Procurement Policies (Title 34)** and local regulations. These policies ensure that all contracts and subgrants meet federal, state, and local requirements under the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**. The FPB WDB's procurement process emphasizes transparency, fairness, and accountability, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to achieve workforce development goals.

Key Features of the Competitive Procurement Process

Competitive Basis: The FPB WDB ensures that contracts for WIOA Title I services are awarded through a fair and transparent competitive process:

Requests for Proposals (RFPs):

- The FPB WDB issues RFPs to procure services for critical workforce development functions, including One Stop System Operators and training providers.
- RFPs clearly outline the scope of services, performance expectations, and evaluation criteria to guide potential bidders.
- Prospective providers are required to submit detailed proposals that demonstrate their ability to meet the performance accountability measures set forth in WIOA and the local workforce plan.

Selection Process: Contracts are awarded to providers that best meet the criteria outlined in the RFP and demonstrate the capacity to deliver high-quality services. Emphasis is placed on selecting providers that address regional labor market demands and participant needs, ensuring alignment with the FPB WDB's strategic goals.

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals are evaluated against rigorous criteria to ensure providers can deliver measurable outcomes and meet local workforce demands:

Service Quality: Proposals are assessed on their ability to provide effective services, including HISET attainment, skills training, career counseling, and job placement. The ability to meet or exceed WIOA performance metrics, such as employment retention and credential attainment, is a key factor in the evaluation.

Alignment with Regional Needs: Priority is given to providers offering services aligned with high-demand sectors in the local labor market, such as healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing. Proposals that demonstrate strong partnerships with eligible training providers, employers, and community stakeholders are preferred.

Equity and Accessibility: Proposals must detail how they will ensure equitable access to services for underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, and youth.

Sole-Source Exceptions

In rare instances, the FPB WDB may award contracts on a sole-source basis under specific conditions:

Documented Need: Sole source contracts are permitted only when an insufficient number of eligible providers respond to an RFP or when the services required are highly specialized and unavailable through competitive means.

Approval Requirements: Sole-source contracts must be justified with documentation and approved by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) to ensure accountability and transparency.

Monitoring and Accountability

The FPB WDB implements robust monitoring and accountability measures to ensure that contracted services comply with WIOA requirements and local policies:

Contract Monitoring: Contracts are regularly reviewed to assess provider performance against established benchmarks, such as participant enrollment, completion rates, and employment outcomes. Providers must submit regular progress reports detailing their activities, outcomes, and any challenges encountered.

Audit and Oversight: All contracts are subject to periodic audits and expenditure reviews to ensure fiscal responsibility and alignment with FPB WDB strategic goals. Monitoring findings are presented to the FPB WDB's Executive Committee and CEO, who take corrective action if necessary.

Ongoing Practices

The FPB WDB maintains a continuous cycle of improvement through periodic procurements and strategic oversight:

Recompeting Contracts: Contracts for key services, such as the One-Stop System Operator, are re-competed at regular intervals to ensure providers remain responsive to changing workforce needs. This practice fosters innovation and accountability among service providers.

Stakeholder Engagement. The FPB WDB collaborates with local stakeholders, including employers, community organizations, and training institutions, to refine procurement practices and ensure alignment with regional goals.

Transparency in Procurement: Procurement decisions and awarded contracts are publicly documented to promote transparency and public trust in the FPB WDB's resource management.

Conclusion

The FPB WDB's procurement policies and competitive process are designed to ensure that resources are allocated to providers capable of delivering high-quality, outcomes-driven workforce services. By adhering to federal and state guidelines, leveraging competitive practices, and implementing robust monitoring systems, the FPB WDB upholds its commitment to fiscal responsibility, continuous improvement, and the success of WIOA funded initiatives. These efforts ensure that the local workforce system remains efficient, equitable, and aligned with the needs of participants and employers.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

1. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii)).

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

The FPB WDB is dedicated to ensuring that all facilities, programs, and services within the one-stop delivery system are accessible to individuals with disabilities, in compliance with **WIOA Section 188** and the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990**. This commitment is demonstrated through adherence to accessibility standards, investment in adaptive technologies, and the provision of staff training to address the diverse needs of participants.

Ensuring Physical Accessibility

Accessible Facilities: The FPB WDB conducts regular assessments of all One-Stop Centers to ensure full compliance with ADA standards. These facilities are designed to accommodate individuals with mobility challenges, sensory impairments, and other disabilities.

Key Features:

- ADA-compliant entrances with ramps, wide doorways, and automatic doors.
- Accessible parking spaces close to building entrances.
- Restrooms with features such as grab bars, adjustable sinks, and sufficient space for wheelchair users.

Ongoing Facility Upgrades: Accessibility audits are conducted annually using Section 188 compliance tools to identify any physical barriers. If barriers are discovered, corrective actions are prioritized and documented, ensuring that facilities remain inclusive and user-friendly for all participants.

Providing Programmatic Accessibility

Inclusive Program Design: The FPB WDB ensures that all workforce programs and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities by incorporating inclusive practices. Services and materials are adapted to meet individual needs, including the provision of:

- Large-print materials for individuals with visual impairments.
- Alternative formats such as Braille and audio recordings.
- Interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments or limited English proficiency.

Assistive Technology: Each One-Stop Center is equipped with a variety of assistive technologies to enhance programmatic accessibility. Examples include:

- Height-adjustable workstations and ergonomic furniture.
-

- Screen readers like **Job Access with Speech (JAWS)**, which allow visually impaired participants to navigate job search platforms.
- New accessibility tools that have been added to HIRE that offers spoken audio throughout sections and that can also be used in conjunction with the over two dozen language options
- Real-time captioning and video relay services for participants with hearing impairments.

Virtual Service Access: Recognizing the need for remote accessibility, the FPB WDB ensures that its online platforms, such as **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)**, are fully compatible with assistive tools. This ensures that individuals with disabilities can engage with services virtually, from job searches to career counseling.

Building Staff Competence Through Training

Training Programs for Accessibility: The FPB WDB provides ongoing training for frontline staff and administrators to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to serve individuals with disabilities effectively.

Key Training Topics:

- ADA compliance and WIOA Section 188 requirements.
- Effective communication strategies for working with individuals with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities
- Use of adaptive technologies and tools to enhance service delivery.

Collaboration with Disability Experts: Training programs are developed in partnership with organizations like **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)** to ensure best practices are followed. Disability experts provide hands-on demonstrations of assistive technologies and strategies for addressing specific participant needs.

Strengthening Accessibility Through Partnerships

Collaboration with Key Partners: The FPB WDB works closely with **LRS** and other local organizations to enhance accessibility and expand the range of services available to individuals with disabilities.

Joint Initiatives: Co-enrollment programs with LRS that integrate vocational rehabilitation services with WIOA-funded activities. Employer outreach campaigns to promote inclusive hiring practices and workplace accommodations.

Employer Engagement: The FPB WDB actively engages with regional employers to create pathways to employment for individuals with disabilities. Employers are provided with training on ADA compliance and technical assistance for implementing workplace accommodations.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Annual Compliance Reviews: The FPB WDB conducts annual reviews of both physical and programmatic accessibility to ensure adherence to ADA and WIOA Section 188 requirements. Findings from these reviews are presented to the FPB WDB Executive Committee, and corrective actions are implemented where needed. Participant feedback is also collected to identify areas for improvement.

Feedback and Adaptation: Surveys and focus groups with participants and community stakeholders help the FPB WDB refine its accessibility measures. This continuous feedback loop ensures that the workforce system evolves to meet the needs of all individuals.

Conclusion

The FPB WDB's approach to physical and programmatic accessibility reflects its commitment to equity and inclusion. Through rigorous adherence to ADA and WIOA Section 188 requirements, the integration of adaptive technologies, and continuous staff training, the FPB WDB ensures that individuals with disabilities can fully access and benefit from workforce services. These efforts create a welcoming, inclusive environment that empowers participants to achieve their career goals and contribute meaningfully to the local economy.

2. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities (§679.560(b)(13)). This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Executed Cooperative Agreements and Integration Efforts

The FPB WDB coordinates service delivery across providers through executed cooperative agreements, ensuring integration and accessibility within the local one-stop system. These agreements emphasize cross-training, resource sharing, and enhanced collaboration to meet the diverse needs of all participants, including individuals with disabilities.

Framework for Integration and Collaboration

The FPB WDB facilitates a seamless and customer-centered service delivery system by promoting collaboration among core partners, including Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Wagner-Peyser, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), Adult Education, and other federally funded programs. These agreements are essential for:

- **Streamlining Service Delivery:** Partners share resources and coordinate activities to minimize duplication and ensure comprehensive access for all participants.
 - **Improving Accessibility:** Cooperative agreements mandate compliance with Section 188 of WIOA and ADA requirements, ensuring equitable access to facilities, programs, and technologies.
-

Key Elements of Cooperative Agreements

Cross-Training of Staff: Cross-training initiatives equip staff with the knowledge and skills to serve participants from various programs effectively. Partners, including LRS, conduct joint training sessions to enhance staff understanding of assistive technologies, vocational rehabilitation, and disability accommodations.

Use and Sharing of Information: Shared data systems, such as the HiRE platform, streamline case management and referrals across programs. Agreements include protocols for safeguarding participant data while enabling seamless information sharing for co-enrollment and follow-up services.

Cooperative Efforts with Employers: Partnerships with employers focus on promoting inclusive hiring practices and creating customized employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. LRS collaborates with local employers to provide on-the-job training, job shadowing, and supported employment services.

Coordinated Outreach and Marketing: Agreements outline shared outreach strategies to engage underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, and youth. Examples include community events, joint employer engagement efforts, and targeted campaigns highlighting available workforce services.

Monitoring and Accountability

The FPB WDB and its partners monitor the implementation of cooperative agreements to ensure alignment with federal, state, and local goals. Annual reviews and updates are conducted to:

- Assess compliance with WIOA and ADA mandates.
 - Identify opportunities for improvement in service delivery.
 - Document progress toward shared objectives and participant outcomes.
-

Future Enhancements

The FPB WDB is exploring additional opportunities to strengthen collaboration and service integration:

- **System Orientation:** Developing a standardized orientation process across all partners to ensure consistent messaging and participant engagement.
 - **Technological Enhancements:** Implementing electronic common intake systems and virtual training platforms to improve accessibility and efficiency.
-

Conclusion

Executed cooperative agreements are the cornerstone of the FPB WDB's strategy for delivering integrated, accessible, and participant-focused services. By fostering collaboration, sharing resources, and prioritizing accessibility, these agreements ensure that all individuals, especially those with disabilities, have equitable access to the full range of services offered through the one-stop system. These efforts contribute to a workforce system that is both inclusive and responsive to the needs of local employers and job seekers.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

- I. Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30- day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19))

Description of the 30-Day Public Comment Period

The **First Planning District Workforce Development Board (FPD WDB)** ensures transparency and community engagement by conducting a **30-day public comment period** prior to the submission of the local plan, consistent with **WIOA Section 108(d)**. This process allows input from a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations, ensuring that the plan reflects diverse perspectives and meets the needs of the community.

Public Notification and Access to the Plan

- **Online Availability:** The draft version of the local plan is made available on the FPD WDB's official website (www.triparishworks.net) for public review.
 - **Public Notice:** Notifications are placed in local newspapers across the tri-parish area, informing the public of the availability of the plan and inviting comments. The notices ensure that stakeholders, including underserved and underrepresented groups, are aware of the opportunity to contribute.
-

Stakeholder Engagement and Input

Partner Involvement: Regular meetings with partner agencies and economic development entities are utilized to gather feedback and ensure alignment with their plans and objectives. All partner agencies receive an initial draft of the plan with requests for input, feedback, and suggestions for inclusion in the final draft.

Community Participation: Input is actively solicited from representatives of businesses, labor organizations, and educational institutions. This ensures that the plan reflects the needs of employers, workers, and training providers. Comments are received from stakeholders representing diverse community groups, including organizations serving individuals with disabilities, veterans, and individuals with barriers to employment.

Comment Review and Plan Modification

Incorporating Feedback: Comments received during the 30-day period are reviewed, and revisions to the plan are made where appropriate to address concerns and improve alignment with stakeholder priorities. A formal written response is provided to all commenting parties, indicating whether their feedback was incorporated and explaining the rationale for any feedback not included.

Submission to the State: Following the public comment period, the final draft of the plan, along with all received comments and responses, is submitted to the **Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)** for review and approval.

Ongoing Commitment to Engagement

The FPD WDB views the local plan as a living document, open to future revisions based on ongoing stakeholder feedback and evolving workforce needs. The public comment process fosters collaboration and ensures that the local plan remains relevant and responsive to the community's priorities.

Conclusion

The structured 30-day public comment process ensures inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness in the development of the local workforce plan. Through proactive outreach and collaboration, the FPD WDB integrates diverse stakeholder input, creating a workforce system that supports economic growth and equitable access to opportunities.

2. Provide a summary of the public comments received and how this information was addressed by the CEO, partners and the Local Board in the final plan.

Summary of Public Comments Received and Response by CEO, Partners, and the Local Board

The First Planning District Workforce Development Board (FPD WDB) provided a 30-day public comment period, during which the draft local plan was made available online and notices were placed in local newspapers to invite feedback from the public, including representatives from business, education, and labor organizations.

At the conclusion of the 30 day public comment period, no additional comments were received from the public.

Throughout the development process, the CEO, partners, and the Local Board engaged proactively with key stakeholders through regular meetings and direct outreach, incorporating early feedback into the draft plan prior to its public release. As no new comments were submitted during the formal comment period, no further modifications to the draft were necessary.

The final plan reflects the collaborative input gathered during its development phase and remains aligned with the workforce needs and priorities of the region.

3. Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.

Plan modifications are conducted in alignment with state and federal guidelines. The Board reviews local labor market data and program performance metrics annually to determine if adjustments to the plan are necessary. Proposed modifications are subject to the same public comment process as the original plan, ensuring transparency and stakeholder engagement.

REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES

By signing the Regional / Local Plan, all signatories attest that:

1. They submit this plan on behalf of the region and the local areas within that region;
2. The planning was done with leaders throughout the region and represents the collective thinking of those regional representatives;
3. The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge;
4. The regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region;
5. They will operate the local system in accordance with the regional plan, their respective local area plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules.

Local Area Name: First Planning District Workforce Development Board/LWDA 10

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: Michael B. Cooper, President

Signature and Date: _____

Address: 21490 Koop Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471

Telephone Number: 985.898.2700

E-Mail Address: mcooper@stpgov.org/ DBWindom@stpgov.org

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: Mindy Nuno Airhart

Signature and Date: _____

Address: 321 Bayou Rd, Saint Bernard, LA 70085

Telephone Number: 504 682 8800

E-Mail Address: Mindy@sse-la.com

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Director: Suzanne B. Torregano

Signature and Date: _____

Address: 317 North Jefferson Ave., Suite 213, Covington, Louisiana 70433

Telephone Number: 985-875-9275

E-Mail Address: storregano@triparishworks.net

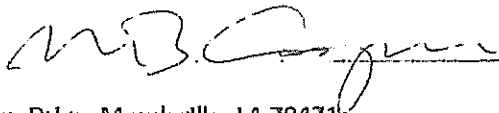
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Local Area Name: First Planning District Workforce Development Board/LWDA 10

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: Michael B. Cooper, President

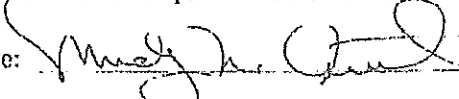
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Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: Mindy Nunez Althart

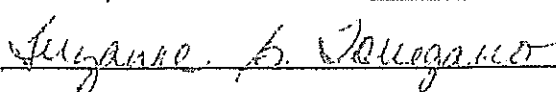
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