

**Western Piedmont
Workforce Development Board**

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

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

*North Carolina Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions
4316 Mail Service Center
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316*

Introduction and Instructions

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

In North Carolina, annually, each Local Area WDB, in consultation with the chief local elected official, is to provide updates to the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan. The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2022 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 and will include required current local policies. The Local Area Plan will support the alignment strategy described in the 2020-2024 NC Unified State Plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the NC Unified State Plan. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's mission is to ensure North Carolinians are better educated, healthier, and have more money in their pockets so that they can live more abundant, purposeful lives. The cornerstone to achieving this goal is to help people get good-paying jobs to support themselves and their families. Through NC Job Ready, Governor Cooper's workforce development initiative, North Carolina is working to build a stronger and better workforce. NC Job Ready is built on three core principles: education and skills attainment are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system. In addition, Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.

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

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

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

North Carolina policy information is available at <https://www.nccommerce.com/jobs-training/workforce-professionals-tools-resources/workforce-policies>. Local Area WDBs should reference the North Carolina [WIOA Unified State Plan](#).

Local Area Plan Submission and Due Date

The Local Area Plan must be submitted through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE), the Division's web-based financial system. The due date is **May 6, 2022**. Each attachment must be submitted and labeled separately in either Word, Excel, or PDF format. Attachments not submitted separately will

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

not be accepted. Forms requiring original signatures may use DocuSign® (or similar) and may be uploaded in WISE. If original signatures are obtained, forms must be mailed (and uploaded in WISE) to the Local Area WDB's assigned Planner at: N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.

I. Local Area WDB overview

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

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

1. Provide the Local Area WDB's official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the WIOA or, if not a Consortium, in the formal request for Local Area designation.
 - If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement. Name document: **Attached: Western Piedmont Jobs Training Consortium Agreement.**
 - If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation. Name document: **N/A.**

2. Provide the Local Area WDB's official name. **Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board**
 - If the Local Area WDB officially changed its name, please attach a copy of the Status of Incorporation, attorney's letter, or other document.

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

Name: Donna T Gilbert	Title & Salutation: Interim Workforce Development Board Director
Organization: Western Piedmont Council of Governments	Address: PO Box 9026 (1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC, 28601). Hickory, NC 28603
Phone number: 828-485-4253	Email address: donna.gilbert@wpcog.org

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

Name: Jill Patton	Elected Title & Salutation: City of Hickory, Councilwoman
Government: City of Hickory	Address: 723 15th Ave NW, Hickory NC, 28601

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

Phone number: (828) 781-1155	Email address: jjpatton58@gmail.com
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5. Provide the name, title, business name, address, phone number, and email address of the individual authorized to receive official mail for the CLEO, if different than question 3. N/A

Name:	Title & Salutation:
Business Name:	Address:
Phone number:	Email address:

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

Name: Anthony Starr	Title & Salutation: Executive Director
Organization: Western Piedmont Council of Governments	Address: PO Box 9026 (1880 2 nd Ave NW, 28601) Hickory, NC 28603
Phone number: 828-485-4272	Email address: anthony.starr@wpcog.org

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

Name: Anthony Starr	Title & Salutation: Executive Director
Organization: Western Piedmont Council of Governments	Address: PO Box 9026 (1880 2 nd Ave NW, 28601) Hickory, NC 28603
Phone number: 828-485-4272	Email address: anthony.starr@wpcog.org

8. Attach a copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date’. Name document: **Uploaded - Western Piedmont Council of Governments Organizational Chart.**

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

9. Provide the Administrative Entity's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and assurance that the 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website www.sam.gov to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].
SAM # 602653529 / 1/11/2022 – 1/11/2023 – Unique Identifier: U449K1DKUEG5

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

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

11. Provide each Local Area WDB members' name, business title, business name and address, phone number and email address on the provided form. The first block is reserved to identify the Local Area WDB chairperson ([form provided](#)). Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. Name document: **Uploaded-Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board List.**

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

If a Local Area WDB list is not in compliance, please provide the current list and state the expected date that a compliant list will be provided (detailing vacant positions).

Use and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names except to clarify those with multiple categories and do not count those names twice. Identify any names representing a dual category with an asterisk (*).

12. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the Local Area WDB in compliance with WIOA Section 107.
The WPWDB staff ensure that any vacancies on the board are presented to the WPCOG Policy board for consideration of their recommendations. Upon adding any WPWDB members, the WPCOG Policy board approves any new member appointment as well as reappointments.

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

13. Attach the Local Area WDB By-laws including date adopted/amended. By-laws must include the required elements found in [Appendix A](#). Name document: **Uploaded – Western Piedmont WDB By-Laws**
14. To demonstrate that the attached Local Area WDB By-laws comply, complete [By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart](#). **Uploaded**

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

15. Describe how the Local Area WDB will make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public. If stating the Local Area Plan will be on the Local Area WDB website, provide link. [WIOA Section 108(d)]
The local plan is made part of the boards meeting agenda items and will be listed on www.westernpiedmontworks.org for the required 30 days for public comment. WP Jobs Training Consortium/CEO and WD Board members will be made aware via meeting and email that the plan is available on the www.westernpiedmontworks.org website for comment. The local area plan will be updated, if applicable, after the 30 day public comment period. Given any revisions stemming from public comment or at request of DWS, the updated plan will be reposted in WISE and uploaded on this page on the website once approved by DWS - <https://www.wpcog.org/mission-strategic-plan> .

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

16. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date.’ Include position titles. Name document: **Uploaded-Western Piedmont Local Area Organizational Chart**.
17. Complete the following chart for the PY2022 Local Area WDB’s planned meeting schedule to include time, dates, and location. *[Expand form as needed]*

Note: All Local Area WDB meetings shall be held in accessible facilities. All materials and discussions should be available in an accessible format upon request as indicated under North Carolina specific requirements detailed in [Appendix A](#). **As of February 24, 2022 WPWDB meeting went back to meeting in person.**

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
8/25/2022	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
10/27/2022	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
12/08/2022	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
02/23/2023	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
04/27/2023	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
<i>*Tentative</i> 05/25/2023	<i>8:30 am</i>	<i>WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1</i>
06/22/2023	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2 nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1

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

Note: Document must have the original signature or DocuSign® (or similar) of the Administrative Entity signatory official. If using original signatures, mail the signed [Certification form](#) to the assigned DWS Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.

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

Note: If using original signatures, mail the [Signatory Page](#) to the assigned DWS Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.

II. Local Area WDB Strategic Planning

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

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

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

The WDB continues to work diligently to create and increase use of social media resources, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok and YouTube as a means to highlight available recruitment events, hot jobs, current labor market information, educational training, and many other workforce opportunities in our four counties (www.westernpiedmontworks.org). This is especially important to the strategy of reaching our youth and young adults, as well as people outside our region. The Western Piedmont area suffered during the recession seeing a steep decline in population. We continue to rebound, but it is imperative that we continue to seek new ways to reach people to entice them to come to the WPWDA to live & work. We continue to look at new ways of reaching people through social media by learning more about new platforms. WPWDB staff have also become well versed in the use of Virtual platforms such as Zoom, GoTo, Microsoft Teams, and Cisco Webex to reach more people for training on writing resumes, job applications, interviewing skills, Credit and Money Management, and an Expungement workshop just to name a few. The Workforce Development Board Director currently sits on various boards and taskforce in all four counties. The focus varies by county, board or taskforce purpose ranging from Furniture, Manufacturing and/or Healthcare training to direct employer engagement, and K-12 parenting outreach. Goals relating to performance accountability measures are an ongoing integrated service

delivery (ISD) leadership team topic. Now that we have two separate sets of goals to monitor and strive to meet, this requires another level of involvement and monitoring. One set of goals focuses on WIOA-USDOL measures, and another performance tracking mechanism focuses on our NCWorks Career Center performance operations, which was developed by our ISD management team. During the past four years, we have seen our performance on our WIOA-DOL goals improve greatly. This is due to the hard work of our Service Provider staff in serving our participants and the multilevel and continual monitoring that has become part of our process at the Service Provider level and the WDB staff level.

All NCWorks Career Center staff are aware that the local performance accountability measures apply to all of us, not just workforce board staff and Service Providers. It will take all workforce team members contributing to the goals in order to meet the expectation. This is also true of the Adult WIOA - DOL goals which apply to both Title I and Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Through ISD, as we empower all center staff and involve everyone, we know this will only improve our customer services levels to each other, and to the community. The Workforce Board Director and Regional Ops Director coordinate and facilitate the WPWDB NCWorks all staff meetings, which are held quarterly, and include training, personal and professional development and team building. The COVID-19 pandemic put a hold on this for a time, but we are beginning to get this on track as in-person training for April 2022 and continue as we move into program year 2022. . In the WPWDB area our NCWorks Career Centers close to the public as 12:00pm every Friday so we can set aside those afternoons for training and industry tours. This develops our overall team, improves business relationships, and increases our capacity to serve the community.

We continue to strengthen our workforce partnerships with K-12, community colleges, local universities, vocational rehab., chambers, EDC's, and behavioral health to help where we can, in upgrading the skills of the workforce and better understand the needs of employers. (This is currently being done by engagement with SHRM groups, employer taskforce, HIRE meetings and both local and regional business services team meetings) In addition, NCWorks Career Center staff are out in the community meeting the customers where they are in local agencies, county libraries and other locations throughout the area. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited some of the activity discussed here, but we see these practices beginning to pick back up. Title I Youth (NEXTGEN) staff work closely with the six local school systems, and are strengthening relationships with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) staff, Adult Basic Education (ABE) staff, and Communities in Schools of Caldwell County. NEXTGEN staff collaborate with the CTE staff on internships, marketing of the NCWorks Career Center to students, and resume development and interviewing. CTE staff make referrals to NEXTGEN when they see a student who could benefit from the intensive services offered by NEXTGEN in order to be successful and reach the goal of high school graduation. The collaboration with CTE staff creates a connection where NEXTGEN Career Advisors can build relationships with current students so that once they graduate high school they will come to the NCWorks Career Center and seek additional assistance with job search, career planning, and scholarships for post-secondary training. The relationships with ABE at the community colleges fosters referrals for those seeking to complete their high school equivalency and who may have additional barriers to employment that the intensive services of NEXTGEN may provide. Another goal of the WPWDB is to encourage lifelong learning with our customers. In the workplace today, skills and knowledge required for jobs is constantly changing due to

changes in technology, equipment, and work environments. NCWorks Career Center staff work with customers to determine their career goals and discuss what it will take to get to the next level on their career path. It is critical to stay abreast of changes in the workplace which may mean improving their resume, or interviewing skills, or it may be seeking additional education such as a third party credential, diploma or an associate's degree. Improving skills and education leads to better wages, resulting in self-sufficiency and a desire to contribute to the community. The goals of the WPWDB will result in an increased educated and skilled workforce for the area and will help recruit new businesses and sustain current ones.

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

The WPWDB continues to enhance and develop our social media presence, newsletters, and website outreach including our core program & services to include local area workforce partner updates. Each year since implementing our broad social media outreach we have seen a significant increase in our in-center recruitment events for employers. Our local area staffing agencies also recruit through us as we assist them with their recruitment, advertising and the ability to get more jobseekers to their events. We have also implemented quarterly After Hours recruitment events which has yielded increased employer and jobseeker turnout. The COVID-19 pandemic had limited our ability to continue some of these activities, however, we continued providing what we could virtually and are now seeing more in person events and that should continue moving forward. Through our outreach efforts we are expanding public awareness of employment, training, education, and support services that are an available service of our career center programs. We continue to try and cross-train all NCWorks Career Center staff and involve other workforce partners when relative. We also seek the prospects from these partner to be trained and have knowledge on their programs and training opportunities. We partner with Voc Rehab every two years for Disability Awareness training (Windmills), and when available encourage NCWorks Career Center staff to participate in area Poverty Simulations. Understanding partners agency resources provides them with the knowledge to assist those with barriers to employment in a more efficient and effective process. NCWorks Career Center staff can use this knowledge to make better referrals for the customer, which removes a level of frustration for everyone involved. We know that Mechatronics, Furniture Mfg., Healthcare, Transportation, Electrical Lineman, and Supervisor Roles are still, key in-demand occupations for employers in our area. The training certification process for these occupations have been addressed and the classes remain full with waiting list growing. Our relationship with our local community colleges is very strong, which allows us to provide information about access to post-secondary credentialing to our workforce through an easy streamlined process at our NCWorks Career Centers. Our realtionships with employers in the area assist us in defining these high demand areas where we need to train workforce and also in regards to

upgrading skills of the employers current workforce through our Upskill Grant (incumbent worker). It has been very beneficial for businesses looking to grow their current employees (Supervisory training) to make room for future workforce, new hires. The WPWDA has developed several Career Pathways and had them certified. The pathways which have been certified include Healthcare (local effort), Energy (efforts of 5 WDBs), Advanced Manufacturing (local effort) and Human Services (efforts of 3 WDBs). The WPWDA works closely with partner programs to start individuals on these Career Pathways and to help them continue moving forward on them. In order to provide the best wrap-around services for customers, we co-enroll with other services (TAA, Adult/DW, Youth, VR, DSS, etc.) to encourage and assist them to successful completion utilizing various available resources unique to each program. Our Career Advisors and partner staff work closely together to prevent duplication but to ensure needs are met in the most comprehensive way.

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

Upskill Western Piedmont, is an initiative of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board (WPWDB), which offers competitive training grants to businesses in addressing employees' skill gaps, improving employee retention, helping stabilize the business, and increasing the competitiveness of the employee and business. A specific outreach focus for the Upskill WP Training Grant is on businesses that are aligned with growing industries and/or with in demand occupations in our region. These industry sectors include Transportation, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Allied Health, Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical, IT, Hospitality, and Professional/Business Services. Currently the WPWDB does not offer on-the-job training programming due to decreased funding. The Customized Training Program is led mainly by our community college partners. The WPWDB Business Services Representative does partner with the Customized Training Program Coordinator at each of our local community colleges for cost-sharing opportunities to support businesses training needs.

NCWorks Certified Career Pathways are seamless systems of education and training that prepare workers for high-wage, high-demand careers. They are created in collaboration with a team of engaged employers, K-12 school systems, colleges and community partners, and the local area workforce development board. In the WPWDB local area, we have developed the Advanced Manufacturing Career Pathway and the Nursing and Allied Healthcare Pathway. The WPWDB partnered with 5 other WDBs to develop the Energy Worker Pathway. The WPWDB received their NCWorks Commission recognition for a Human Services Career Pathway, in August 2021. This a regionally approved pathway in collaboration with High Country and Foothills WDB.

Development and employer involvement help us sustain sector strategy type engagement since industry/sectors have helped us create the needed career pathways for our local area. The WPWDB Business Services Rep convenes a local area Business Services Team, which consists of business facing representatives from the NCWorks Career Centers, WIOA Title I Service Provider, Voc Rehab, Customized Training Coordinator at the local community college, and the Regional Veteran Employment Representatives. This Business Services team

meets monthly to discuss best practices, challenges, and any new resources to help businesses. The team also works with the State Business Services Unit and the Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) to coordinate and provide layoff aversion services when applicable.

This team also has a coordinated marketing outreach plan to promote and offer services to businesses and job seekers through onsite visits, promotional phone calls, speaking engagements, and K-12 involvement with networks.gov.

The WPWD Business Services Rep also partners with the community colleges apprenticeship representatives to assist business with exploring their talent pipeline strategy. Depending on business needs, the Business Services Rep may refer and connect the business with the community college and the Apprenticeship Program. Business facing staff in the NCWorks Career Center are in constant contact with businesses in the local area discussing the business needs and the skill sets desired for prospective employees. NCWorks staff then work to locate individuals with the appropriate skills and/or discuss training options with customers to develop the skills needed in the area in order to grow the pipeline of talent for local businesses.

Monthly Labor Market information from NC LEAD is shared with local businesses along with the Business Brief and the Quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN), which are publications of the Western Piedmont WDB. These labor market information resources are used to engage and inform businesses on the current state of the local area labor market.

The NCWorks NEXTGEN youth program has a great relationship with the local school systems and works in concert with the Career & Technical Education staff to continue the development along the career pathways following graduation. Work-based learning opportunities are often coupled with training which results in the third party recognized credentials allowing movement on the career pathway and increased wages for youth and young adults.

4. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB coordinates workforce investment activities—including strategies, enhancing services, promoting participation in training programs, and avoiding duplication of services - carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)]

Since WIOA Title II Adult Ed/Literacy and WIOA Title 1 performance measures are more closely aligned, the WPWDB staff have had more conversations with this group to discuss client opportunities. The WPWDB's local community college ABE directors consistently attend the WPWDB meetings every other month. We also share training and recruitment event information. The ABE staff also consistently attend the monthly NCWorks HIRE (Helping Individuals Regain Employment) meetings. We will continue to strengthen this partnership and develop a consistent referral process to each other's programs/services and determine ways that we can better serve individuals and help them achieve success while avoiding any duplication of services through open communications.

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

At this time WPWDB does not have a specific cooperative agreement with local workforce entities such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Detailed in our One-Stop Required Partner MOU we have received input and documented the agreed upon shared accountability areas from partner agencies, especially VR. Vocational Rehabilitation provides all NCWorks Career Center staff with Disability Awareness training on a consistent basis. The VR Business Service Representatives are team members of the Local Business Services Team, and attend our monthly local business services meetings so we ensure we have plans in place for good communication and strategies when contacting and engaging with businesses. The members of this team work together to provide support for business needs and concerns. This support may be in the form of job fairs, smaller hiring events, or specialized services such a customized/incumbent worker training. The NCWorks Career Advisors work closely with other agency counselors when clients are shared between the two agencies or programs to provide the best wrap-around services for the client and to help them achieve success. We work with our partners to share information that enhances the experience of the customer. All NCWorks Career Center staff have the same comprehensive orientation and training concerning center services. We have implemented cross-training of the basic elements of all programs housed in the NCWorks Career Center to ensure the customer is the focus and that they can get basic questions answered from any staff member.

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

The informative and collaborative relationships that the WPWDB has worked to develop with the One-Stop Operator, WIOA Title 1 Service Provider, Wagner-Peyser staff, community colleges, Voc Rehab, Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Goodwill NWNC, other area workforce partners, as well as business/industry, will continue to sustain us as a high performing board. Through our NCWorks Career Centers monthly HIRE meetings, and through the Integrated Service Delivery management leadership conversations, we work to continuously improve all services within the NCWorks Career Centers. We track NCWorks Career Center monthly operations through a comprehensive performance tracking spreadsheet. This data is shared monthly with all NCWorks Career Center staff, and five core key performance indicators (KPI) are posted for public knowledge on www.westernpiedmontworks.org. These core KPI's were determined by the WPWDB performance sub-committee in collaboration with NCWorks Center Managers. Each individual NCWorks Career Centers KPI's are also posted monthly on a bulletin board in the respective center. NCWorks Career Center staff are knowledgeable about how we are performing as the local NCWorks System in the Western Piedmont region.
7. Explain the strategic plan for how the region will respond to national emergencies (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) or weather disasters to serve victims (such as aversion activities) and utilize special grants efficiently throughout the recovery period.

While being at the western end of NC typically does not have us seeing widespread hurricane disasters, the recent COVID-19 pandemic required us to take action in ways we have never had to respond previously. We continue to reflect on how we responded and looking at where we had successes and challenges. The most evident success is how our staff in the WPWDA shifted how they offered services and responded to customers during the pandemic once given approval and tools to do so. Our biggest challenge was the variance in the technology

skills of the staff. The ISD Leadership team worked quickly to provide staff with additional training or assistance with various virtual platforms and other technology. It also highlighted the lack of our virtual capabilities and capacity to provide services by virtual means. We did manage to maneuver into a position to offer virtual services relatively quickly once we determined the needs. Learning from this pandemic, we know there is a need to have our virtual mobility stabilized with increased laptops for all NCWorks Career Center staff to take home or abroad, wi-fi (jetpacks), virtual meeting license and possibly a mobile/vehicle unit to better address a local/state/national emergency. WPWDB has partnered with Foothills WDB, and High Country WDB to provide virtual workforce workshops for the entire Northwest Prosperity Zone. The purpose for this collaboration is to pool resources and reduce redundancy and duplicative efforts in providing needed virtual career services to customers during the pandemic. Virtual services also include services to employers by providing a safe venue to offer virtual recruitment events. Leaning on past and current success, the WPWDB plans to continue virtual services as part of its service delivery products.

8. Discuss the increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage individuals with barriers (include dislocated workers, disconnected youth/high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard to reach communities, individuals with disabilities) to help reconnect the disconnected workforce. More importantly, clarify how success is measured.
In the WPWDA, we work closely with various community partners to increase our outreach to groups who are disconnected from the workforce (dislocated workers, disconnected youth/high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard to reach communities and individuals with disabilities) as well as those who made need career and/or training services to improve their economic mobility. Partners with whom we work include the Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, local area high schools, community resource/service agencies, soup kitchens, and local libraries, etc. Through partnering with these groups to provide information on our services and how they can assist these individuals with their goals allows us to reach into these more difficult to reach groups. We partner with other groups that are involved in the Hispanic and Hmong communities to as well to provide NCWorks information and services. We also have dedicated Career Advisors to work with ex-offenders who have received training specific to working with this group of individuals to get them re-engaged in the workforce. The WPWDB Business Services Representative meets with mental health providers to promote employability workshops to their clients. The WPWDB works with employers to translate their job descriptions and job flyers into Spanish and Hmong language where requested. We partner with Yokefellow of Caldwell County which is a community-based nonprofit organization assisting those who are low-income, homeless, ex-offenders, etc. We host job fairs for customers of Yokefellow and the surrounding Caldwell community and provide services to those who are in need and have little or no income. WPWDB/NCWorks is also partnering with the City of Hickory Library to provide career services at the Ridgeview Branch Library. This branch is located in an area of the city that has been historically underserved and predominately African/American. This allows us to serve this community where they are and help remove some barriers such as transportation and face to face engagement. We have learned that in some areas we need to be more mobile and/or virtual to serve the region. Success can be defined in a variety of ways. Once a person fully connects with NCWorks and enrolls in basic career services or training, this may help a customer in obtaining a job that pays a self-sufficient wage. Successful completion of a training program, work experience

and obtaining a job in a field they desire are signs of the success of our program. Another gauge of success is in referrals from our customers. We know word-of-mouth is the greatest marketing tool and when we have customers refer family and friends to NCWorks because of the service they received, that is definitely a success.

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

The WPWDB has had a long history of partnership with the three NC Community Colleges in our local area. Those include Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College and Western Piedmont Community College. Over the years, and based on the need, we have had community college staff stationed in our NCWorks Career Centers, and/or we have had NCWorks Career Advisors on their campus. They have presented job getting workshops and/or taught computer classes as a few examples. All three are training providers for our Title I participants, who are eligible for training services and offer a variety of training programs from short term courses leading to a certification, or to long term where they can earn an Associate's Degree. The WPWDB also has a relationship with Lenoir Rhyne University which is an independent college in our area, and we are looking forward to a future Appalachian State University Campus here in Hickory. We have often partnered with the community colleges on grants, the most recent example being the Finish Line Grant. We are collaborating with all three community colleges to assist those student who had emergencies that may have caused them to drop out of their education program for financial reasons. The Finish Line Grant provided funds for students in that situation that were over 50% complete in their program.

Lenoir Rhyne has assisted with job fairs in the past and currently has a representative who serves on the Workforce Board. Catawba Valley Community College and Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute also have representation on the Workforce Board. In addition, we have worked with various other UNC institutions and community colleges in the Northwest Prosperity Zone to develop certified career pathways. These provide a pathway for individuals to understand and hopefully engage with a local career that is in demand. Some may attain their ultimate goal right away, where others may chose to take it one step at a time, and all the institutions and workforce staff are able to assist.

All three community colleges and Lenoir Rhyne University have an increased focus on equity and inclusion and provide training for all staff and instructors/professors. The Department of Commerce and the Division of Workforce Solutions, as well as our One-Stop Operator, is also focused on ensuring that all customers in our NCWorks Career Centers receive equitable treatment and customers are aware that our services are inclusive of all people. The WPWDB ensures that all staff have received and will continue to receive training in this area.

10. Please describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local and regional Economic Developers. **We work with our local EDCs, Chambers of Commerce and community colleges to ensure that we identify challenges and collaborate where each partner can help address the issues. There is collaboration between the WPWDB and local Economic Developers and with the Regional Economic Developer (EDPNC), Bill Slagle. The WPWDB/NCWorks management team attends meetings to ensure we have a finger on the pulse for workforce challenges, potential job growth issues, and business expansions. A resource of the WPWDB is the quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter that provides up to date workforce information on**

areas such as the civilian labor force, housing demands, communiting patterns, educational attainment....etc. The Business Brief is a newly created monthly resources that provides current labor market information about the local area. The Business Brief is distributed to employers and workforce partners. Currently the WPWDB is working on a comprehensive State of the Workforce Report that will provide insight and strategies for helping address local labor force and education challenges. HKY4Vets is a program built by the Catawba County EDC, Chamber, NCWorks and local veterans groups to market our region to veterans and those transition military that are seeking a great place to work, live and play.

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

WPWDB engaged with 15 new/expansion economic development projects in the previous program year. The type of Workforce Services depend on the needs of the business and may differ from one business to another. Workforce services provided include recruiting services, hosting job fairs, listing and promoting jobs, offering work-based learning opportunities, training services, and providing labor market information.

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

Pathway Name	Partner WDBs	Year the pathway was developed	Number of trainees (to date) who have utilized the pathway
Healthcare		2018	396
Energy	Foothills WDB, High Country WDB, Gaston WDB, Centralina WDB, CharlotteWorks	2019	8
Advanced Manufacturing		2017	74
Human Services	High Country WDB, Foothills WDB	2021	33

13. In addition to facilitating the development of career pathways, also describe the review process for in-demand career pathways to determine if new pathways are needed, or if current pathways should be updated or removed based on the needs of the industry.
 - a. Include plans for new career pathways.
There are no immediate plans for a new pathway.
 - b. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders' (DPI, community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates. **In the WPWDA, we have worked diligently with our education partners to develop career pathways that are in demand in our local area. This has been critical in aligning our efforts. We have distributed information for our K-12 partners to use and/or make available for students. It is also available for use with other groups in the community.**
 - c. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts. **As mentioned above, working a group to develop and promote selected career pathways has kept us from duplicating efforts in our area.**

14. Provide a description of Local Area WDB's capacity to provide workforce investment activities to address education attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields - strategies for awareness and cultivation efforts to increase access to education and postsecondary credentials and certificates, availability of learn-and-earn opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, summer employment) and supportive services for hard-to-reach communities. **The WPWDA staff make it practice to know and understand where a person is in their life currently and what their goals are for the future. Staff are able to identify and discuss labor market information with customers related to industries whose jobs are in high-demand and offer self-sustaining wages. It is through individual career counseling in the NCWorks Career Centers that staff engage with customers concerning their employment goals. Oftentimes this means additional training which may come through recognizing the need for high school diplomas or equivalent and/or additional educational attainment through certifications, diplomas or associate degrees. NCCareers.org is a great website particularly in learning about jobs, wages, education and Reality Check to help youth realize if their career interest will provide the lifestyle they want. Providing LMI information and utilizing information found in NCWorks.gov, NCCareers.gov and community college websites allow for setting a plan to move along a career pathway with increasing attainment of educational goals along the way to ultimately reach the customer's selected goal. The WPWDA has certified pathways in Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, and Human Services. All of these pathways contain careers that are in high demand in the area and also pay wages leading to self-sufficiency. Developing these pathways involved a collaboration and partnership across many entities and geographical areas. Promotional materials are used to promote these pathways. Between NCWorks staff, community college staff, and other partner staff, customers are made aware of work-based learning opportunities for their selected training programs including internships and apprenticeships. Also, for young adults who are seeking the career path for them, there are paid internships for them to explore work environments to help solidify their career path and move them toward educational options for moving into positions of more responsibility, pay and benefits. Our NCWorks scholarships are available for those who are low income, have barriers to employment or need to enhance their skills to get to the next level. There are support services available for some populations (including youth adults, single parents, ex-offenders and those with disabilities) to assist them with**

overcoming some of their barriers so they can experience educational and employment success.

- a. Explain strategies that include NextGen, NCCareers.org and any awareness models for success.

In the NEXTGEN program, staff work with the young adult through assessments, conversations and even job shadow opportunities to identify areas of interest and discuss their current and future goals. They also discuss various levels of education and experience which will allow a person to move along the career path of interest. They may also move the young adult from a job shadow opportunity to a work experience where they can do hands on work and learn even more about the day to day activities of the job. Sometimes, either following the job shadow or the work experience, the young adult may need to reassess their desired career field. NCCareers is a great tool for our NEXTGEN participants, especially Reality Check. It is an eye-opener for them as to how much salary they will need to support the lifestyle they want to live. There is also a large amount of career, wage and LMI data there to assist them with making career decision. We have seen successes where our NEXTGEN participants have received entry level training through education and/or through work experience to start their careers and then in a year or so, they return for assistance from the Adult/DW program to move along the career path to the next level where they can make a more sustainable wage.

III. NCWorks Commission

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

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

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

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

1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local employers and informs them of the wide array of business services offered. Include how the Local Area WDB ensures collaboration with other employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as Vocational Rehabilitation,

Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor, Re-Entry, and Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery.

Outreach includes, but is not limited to face-to-face contacts, reports that are mailed and/or hand delivered and/or social media. We collaborate with economic development agencies, Chambers of Commerce, SBTDC, community colleges, public school districts, and other community agencies to promote and market solutions that meet the business' needs. Utilize a strategic marketing mix for outreach, via multiple platforms such as, but not limited to, email blasts, surveys, direct mailings, postcards, billboards, flyers and posters, press releases, and social media, public service announcements, presentation to local organizations, and other suitable venues to identify business needs and offer business services. Our outreach material is business-focused and business-driven with clear, concise, and professional messaging to ensure the informaotin is easily understood and viewed. We collaborate with our workforce partners to promote business services to Local Area businesses. The WPWDB local Business Services team meets monthly to discuss best practices, challenges, and any new resources to help businesses. The members of the WPWDB Business Services Team consists of business facing staff from the local WDB, NCWorks Career Centers, WIOA Title I Service Provider, and Vocational Rehabilitation, Customized Training Coordinator at the local community colleges, and the Regional Veteran Employment Representatives. The WPWDB do partner with the community colleges apprenticeship representatives and the ApprenticeshipNC Apprenticeship Coordinator to assist business explore talent pipeline strategies. The WPWDB Business Service Representative also shares information on the characteristics of the local workforce to businesses. Monthly Labor Market information from the NC LEAD is shared with local businesses along with the Business Brief and the Quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN) which are publications of the Western Piedmont WDB. In 2019 Western Piedmont convened regional agencies and organizations whose focus and mission were to support formerly incarcerated individuals (Re-Entry). This effort was eventually given the name the Western Piedmont Reginal Reentry Initiative. For the next couple of years this large group met quarterly to discuss and address needs around housing, transportation, legal aid and the all around support need to help the justice involved reentry society in a positive and product manner. A regional resource guide is maintained by WPWDB and is available on the website <https://www.wpcog.org/reentry>. At the moment this initiative is in holding pattern due to the Department of Commerce Reentry specialist slot not being filled, and the WPWDB Strategic Initiatives Coordinator slot also being empty. Both slots had staff that left their respective agency. We hope to resuscitate this valuable group in the near future.

The WPWDB Director, the WPWDB Business Services Representative, NCWorks Career Center Managers and Employer Services Staff, and the Veteran Employment Representatives all engaged with businesses and make appropriate employer referrals to Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor staff, and Veteran Services depending on business needs. The WPWBD Director and Business Services Representative has met with the NCAgriculture Services Representative to discuss partnership and collaboration in terms of referrals. The WPWBD Director and Business Services Representative are aware and has engaged with NC Department of Commerce on Foreign Labor. The WPWBD Director and Business Services Representative are willing partners to promote and create opportunities for Foreign Labor. The WPWBD is an active partners with the Catawba Economic Development Corporation and the Catawba Chamber of Commerce in the HKY4Vets program to promote jobs to transitioning veterans and their family. The WPWBD and staff of the NCWorks Career Centers and the regional Veteran Representatives do partner and

collaborate with veteran agencies to promote the annual Veteran Stand Down that provide services and support to local area veteran population and their family.

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

The members of the WPWDB Business/Employer Services Team consists of business services representatives from the local WDB, NCWorks Career Centers, Title I Service Provider, Vocational Rehabilitation, Customized Training Coordinator at the local community colleges, and the Regional Veteran Employment Representatives. The WPWDB Business/Employer Services team meets monthly to discuss best practices, challenges, and any new resources to help businesses. The local WPWDB Business/Employer Services Team is lead by the WPWDB Business Services Representative. The WPWDB Business Representative is tasked with administering the Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training), providing labor market information, and making referrals to partner agencies that have resources to meet the business needs. The WPWDB Director, the WPWDB Business Services Representative, NCWorks Career Center Managers and Employer Services Staff, and the Veteran Employment Representatives all engaged with businesses and make appropriate employer referrals to Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor staff, and Veteran Services base on business needs.

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

Western Piedmont has consistently worked to increase NCWorks brand awareness even though our budgets continue to decrease. We have increased this awareness through low cost means of using social media outlets: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and recently the development of Youtube Channel. We work to ensure our workshop and recruitment flyers are professional looking and reflect the NCWorks American Job Center logo, in conjunction with the logo our Workforce Development Board.

4. Describe how the Local Area WDB and the partners identify and address local challenges for job growth and business expansions.

We work with our local EDCs, Chambers of Commerce and community colleges to ensure we identify challenges and collaborate where each partners strength addresses the challenges. Our region, as is many others, is experience a shrinking labor force due to the aging workforce and early retirement. This started well before the pandemic, and has become more of challenge because of the pandemic. Our WPWDB/NCWorks management team attends meetings to ensure we have a finger on the pulse for workforce challenges, potential job growth issues, and business expansions. A resource of the WPWDB is the quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter that provides up to date workforce information on areas such as the civilian labor force, housing demands, communiting patterns, educational attainment....etc. The Business Brief is a monthly newsletter that provide current labor market information about the local area. The Business Brief is distributed to employers and workforce partners. Currently the WPWDB is working on a comprehensive State of the

Workforce Report that will provide insight and strategies for the addressing local labor market challenges.

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

5. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB provides new and innovative solutions to support the growth of the local workforce system.

The WPWDB was thinking about technology tools for virtual services prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. The pandemic pushed this to the forefront and we began seeking ways to serve our customers in a virtual world. We have secured virtual platform licenses to provide virtual services to customers. We are fortunate to have a number of staff who were able to jump in and also to assist others with technology to provide needed services. This is an area that the WPWDB plans to continue to develop as we have found many customers have responded positively to some services being offered virtually. We have confidence that this will allow the reach of NCWorks to expand and we will be able to serve more customers effectively. One area where we have observed a great acceptance of the virtual platform is with our workshops. We have consistently had larger numbers of customers participate in virtual workshops than when doing them in person in the NCWorks Career Center. Currently, we have partnered with two other WDBs, Foothills WDB and High Country WDB, to provide virtual workshops for the entire Northwest Prosperity Zone. This collaboration has allowed us to pool resources to be cost effective and reduce redundancy and duplicative of virtual services.

6. Is the Local Area WDB engaged in work-based learning? If so, please describe how the Local Area WDB is engaged in work-based learning projects with local employers.

In the WPWDA, work-based learning is provided to young adults through the NEXTGEN work experience program. The BSR at the WDB level works in conjunction with the NEXTGEN BSR to outreach to businesses in the local area making them aware of the program. Many of our local employers have been accepting of the program and working with the young people. The NEXTGEN BSR works with the businesses and young adults to find a good fit for both parties. He stays in contact with both to ensure success for all. The NEXTGEN BSR works with other NEXTGEN Career Advisors to place their participants into a work experience based on their interest or previous training. If a potential participant is only in need of work experience to get work ready due a lack of any work experience, the NEXTGEN BSR provides case management services as well as work experience services for those participants. The NEXTGEN BSR also works with our non-profit partners to provide work experience opportunities for participants who may have never worked or have had bad work history. These partners work with the participant to coach them so that they can get work ready and move into a training program or a work experience.

IV. NCWorks Career Centers

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

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

1. Identify PY 2022 NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Tier 1, Tier 2, Affiliate, and Specialized sites; On-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth service provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use the PY 2022 NCWorks [Career Center Chart](#). [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)] Name document: **Uploaded: Western Piedmont PY 2022 NCWorks Career Centers.**
2. Provide the name(s) of the current service provider(s), date, and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to four years).

Service Provider - NC Division of Workforce Solutions

Public Notice – Letter of Intent to Bid	January 4, 2021
Letter of Intent Due	February 4, 2021
RFP Release Date (if necessary)	February 22, 2021
Proposal Deadline (if necessary)	March 19, 2021 by 4:00pm
Formal Review of Proposals (if necessary)	Begins March 22, 2021
WPWDB Notice of Selection	April 22, 2021
Contract Negotiations	April 26, 2021
Contract Start Date	July 1, 2021

The request for Letters of Intent was issued on January 4, 2021. Letters of Intent must be submitted no later than 4:00pm on February 4, 2021. Acceptable Letters of Intent must include the following:

- **The county(ies) to be served**
- **What type of organization is intending to bid**
- **Where the agency, or consortium is located**
- **Acknowledgement that the period of performance is July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022**
- **The LOI is signed by the authorized signatory for the agency/consortium**
- **The completed and signed LOI is received at the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board offices by the required time/date.**

A RFP was provided to the entities that submitted a Letter of Intent prior to 4:00pm on February 4, 2021. The RFP was to be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on March 22, 2021. The selected One-Stop Operator is selected for one year with the option to renew contract for up to three years. One RFP was submitted and the Division of Workforce Solutions was named as the One-Stop Operator.

3. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)] **The WPWDB NCWorks Career Centers provide a host of workforce programs that prepare our local area citizens for employment, and builds retention for our employers. Work within the NCWorks Career Center is focused on the following functional areas: Welcome, Skill Development, Employment Services, and Employer Services. The Western Piedmont Local Area NCWorks Career Center system is made up of three comprehensive centers (Burke, Caldwell, & Catawba Counties) of which all three are Certified NCWorks Career Centers. There is one small branch office in Alexander County housed in one office space in the Alexander DSS Office. Two WIOA Title 1 Service Provider staff rotate time at the CVCC Alexander Center for Education (ACE) to help assist customers. Each of the NCWorks Career Centers offers service to our customers through an integrated service delivery model. NCWorks Career Center staff offer comprehensive career services to customers who visit the centers. They receive a NCWorks Orientation which covers the services available within the Center. The orientation further discusses training and scholarship opportunities available through the Center, as well as information about workshops, labor market info, and recruitment events. Once the customers understand the services of the career center they are then able to better discuss their options and career desires. NCWorks Career Center staff can use both online, written and verbal career assessments to get a thorough determination of the customer's situation and their immediate needs. When the assessment shows that the customer has skills, abilities and aptitudes for work, they proceed to resume preparation and job search activities. If the assessment shows a lack of work experience, skills and/or abilities to find self-sustaining employment, then the customer can be referred to training opportunities. Once eligibility and suitability for training is determined, the customer may enter more intensive evaluations and assessment to find the training that best suits their situation. Training opportunities are available for occupations that are in high demand in the local area. They may also be available in other areas if the customers are willing to relocate to an area where the occupation is in demand.**
 - a. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults.
All customers receive the same initial services as defined above. If we determine that a person has barriers to employment that need to be explored and overcome, then they move to some more intensive services such as completing some assessments to determine immediate needs, being referred to other partner agencies to attend to one or more barriers, and working on a Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to develop a visual plan for success. Some adults may stall in an area where they need additional encouragement and support from staff to move forward. Then the customer may decide that they need additional education to make a sustaining wage or they may have immediate skills and/or needs that require them to go to work as soon as possible.
 - b. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers.
After receiving the initial services mentioned above, more intensive services may be offered. Many dislocated workers have skills to go immediately to work. They may only need assistance with putting a resume or cover letter together or perhaps doing some mock interviews to prepare for job search. However, sometimes the skills they

have are obsolete or perhaps now require a degree or certificate to obtain work in the same field or to obtain a job close to the same pay level as they had. In these cases, education/training would be a discussion to determine what is needed to get them back into the workforce at a wage close to where they were when they left. These services may involve scholarship discussions, training options and how they will sustain themselves and their families while obtaining training/education. If other barriers are found in more intensive discussions then staff may make referrals to partner agencies for assistance and work together to overcome those barriers with the customer.

- c. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth.
While youth may come to us in the NCWorks Career Center, many come initially through connections and partnerships with either K-12 education or Adult Basic Education at the community colleges. For those who are currently in secondary school, staff work with them on career goals and discuss continuing education plans and or work plans. Staff may do presentations on NCWorks and the services available as well. Once these students graduate, they come to the NCWorks Career Center to receive assistance with plans they may have been discussing for a year or so. Some students have a need or desire to go into the workforce and at that point staff work with them to determine interest, abilities, and desire to complete a work experience to build their skill level to move into the workforce. Some may have not only completed a diploma, but a post-secondary certificate such as CNAI and are ready to go to work and begin their career. Those completing their high school equivalency or Adult High School diploma also need to make a decision about continuing on an educational path to get to their desired career or to enter the workforce immediately. Working with young adults to determine where they are and where they want to go is crucial to their future success. Using tools in NCWorks.gov and NCCareers are very helpful in painting a picture of what a career path may look like and what training/education it will entail. Staff also discuss any barriers to work with the young adults to overcome any they identify.

4. Describe how Local Area WDBs determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.
When an individual comes to the NCWorks Career Center, staff will assist them with basic career services. If they (staff) determine through working with the individual that additional skills are needed and training may be required, they then refer them to Title I staff to determine eligibility and suitability for a training program. NCWorks Career Center staff determines the need due to the inability of the individual to obtain employment, or to obtain employment at a self-sufficient wage, or at a wage equal to what they were making prior to their unemployment. NCWorks Career Center staff may specifically refer individuals who are under-employed, or who have been long-term unemployed, to WIOA Title 1 for training services as well. However, a NCWorks Career Center Career Advisor referral is not required. An individual may self-refer if they deem themselves as unable to obtain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency, or if they have been long-term unemployed. Further assessment as listed above will determine if this is true.

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

Customers utilize NCWorks Career Center services for job search and placement. They may attend workshops which, provide employability skills training and job search assistance. They may also utilize center staff assisted services for resume preparation and job search and referrals. These services may be needed if the customer is unemployed and searching for a job, or if they are currently employed and need additional counseling to improve their employment situation. WPWDB has requested that each NCWorks Career Center Manager meet with staff and put together a call back plan for in-center customers. (For example: On Friday afternoons when the center is closed to the public, each staff person will take time to call back at least two customers each, to see how their visit was, and how we can be of continued assistance.) These follow up calls are a jobseeker service measure WPWDB tracks on the monthly career center operations performance spreadsheet.

For customers who receive training services through the Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker scholarships, follow-up for a period of 12 months after finding unsubsidized employment is required in the WPWDB unless the customer opts out of these services. During this time, NCWorks Career Centers offer follow-up services for customers to include career counseling regarding finding employment where applicable.

6. Describe how

- a. New NCWorks Career Center staff (DWS, service providers, and partner staff) are trained in the integrated service delivery system model (include a training timeline). **The WPWDB provides the [NCWorks Employee Handbook](#) for new employees coming to work in our NCWorks Career Centers. The NCWorks Employee Handbook also incorporates material from the “Welcome to Workforce” training material (provided by the NCWorks Training Center) so that new employees can complete the local training, and the state training in tandem. Detailed information about the ISD functional teams, and how they operate in the career center is included in the training guide. A checklist for each ISD area identifies critical activities of each team which, can be used by a new NCWorks Career Center staff person until they are comfortable with the activities of a particular team. A training checklist is found in the NCWorks Employee Handbook. When a new hire takes place, they receive the training checklist and they check off items as they complete them. There is a general section to be signed off by the NCWorks Center Manager which includes; introductions to center staff, phone coverage, how to answer phones, take messages, overview of forms used in the office, and emergency procedures. There is a section for each functional team which is to be signed by the team leader. Items in these sections include; directions on the sign-in process, list of community partners, referral process for partners, basic orientation to the Title I/TAA program, scholarship committee process, enrollment in Wagner-Peyser and Title I, virtual recruiter, and how to complete/review customer profile and background information in [ncworks.gov](#). Once it is signed off by the NCWorks Center Manager and Functional Team Leaders, the new center staff member also signs and dates it and it the signature signed form is held by the center manager. The employer of record will provide center staff development opportunities including on-site training, off-site training and conference attendance as related to the position for**

which they are hired. The expectation is that new center staff should be complete the training checklists within the first two (2) weeks of being on the job. After completing the training checklist, the new center staff person should spend time working in each functional team to learn the basics, before settling into the team in which they are assigned.

- b. Long after the initial start date does staff have full access to [NCWorks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov)? New employees receive initial basic training on [ncworks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov) prior to receiving access to the live system. There is a checklist for the basic [ncworks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov) training items and when the checklist is completed then a Request for Access can be completed and submitted for a user name and password to the case management capabilities in the [ncworks.gov](https://www.ncworks.gov) system. The expectation is that new center staff should be complete the training checklists within the first two (2) weeks of being on the job. Then they should spend time working in each functional team to learn the basics, before settling into the team in which they are assigned.
 - c. The staff development activities reinforce and improve the initial training efforts. The WPWDB holds a high regard for center staff development. Each Friday the Western Piedmont local area NCWorks Career Centers close at Noon to allow for career center staff training and team building activities. The Board Director and/or ROD provides training once or twice a year on topics that are important to the integrated delivery model such as team building, customer service, conflict management, etc. The NCWorks management leadership team celebrates successes during these trainings as well. In addition, the Northwest Prosperity Zone holds a virtual training once a month incorporating all staff from the Foothills WDB, the High County WDB and the Western Piedmont WDB.
 - d. Describe the specific training that staff receive around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Northwest Prosperity Zone has a training scheduled in April 2022 titled Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 101. This training is being lead by Betty Marrow-Taylor, Chief DEI Officer, with the Department of Commerce. There are also a number of trainings on the NCWorks Training Center website that are related to Diversity and Inclusion. These are trainings that staff will have the opportunity to view on Friday afternoons when the NCWorks Career Center is closed.
7. Briefly explain coordination with the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services.
- In the Western Piedmont Workforce Area, the TAA Coordinator and the Title I Career Advisor work together to provide wrap around services for their participants when they are eligible for both programs. They then work together to provide those services and clearly define which program will provide which services to prevent duplication. When these individuals complete, they may then refer them to the employment services team members or Business Services Representative for assistance in obtaining a position related to their training and which will lead to self-sufficiency.**
8. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Centers serve military veterans.

The Western Piedmont Local Area is committed to providing prioritized services to military veterans and their families. The local NCWorks Career Center staff works closely with Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) as well as with Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists to insure that there is a wide variety of services available to military veterans' and their families. It is vital for the NCWorks Career Centers to insure that local business and employer representatives are aware of a variety of Veteran related subsidies and incentives designed to encourage and accelerate the employment of military veterans. The Western Piedmont NCWorks Career Centers also participate in regional Stand Downs in order to provide services for veterans. The WDB and NCWorks Career Center staff assist and help coordinate the region's Homeless Veterans Stand-down events. In the Western Piedmont local area the [HKY4Vets](#) is a program built by the Catawba County EDC, Chamber, NCWorks and local veterans groups to market our region for work, life and play. The program is working hard to make our area veteran friendly and worth the move for veterans to bring themselves and their families to the western region of NC.

9. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Center serve persons with disabilities.
NCWorks Career Center staff receive Disability Awareness training on a regular basis to learn and develop skills to use when assisting customers who have disabilities. The NCWorks Career Centers are ADA compliant and welcoming for customers with disabilities. The Western Piedmont local area career centers have a long history of collaboration with the local Vocational Rehabilitation and work together to provide needed wrap-around services for the customer and their success. Community colleges and secondary schools have tools and processes in place to work with Career Advisors and students for success in training as well.

10. Briefly describe the integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers and how the Local Area WDB staff and staff within the NCWorks Career Center coordinate outreach strategies and services to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services.
Outreach includes, but is not limited to face-to-face contacts, handouts, or electronic media. Collaborate with economic development agencies, Chambers of Commerce, SBTDC, Community Colleges, public school districts, and other community agencies to promote and market solutions that meet the business' needs. Utilize a strategic marketing mix, via multiple platforms such as but not limited to email blasts, surveys, direct mailings, postcards, newspaper advertisements, billboards, flyers and posters, press releases, and social media, public service announcements, presentation at local organizations, and other suitable venues to identify business needs and offer business services. Our promotional materials are business-focused and business-driven with clear, concise, and professional in appearance, ensuring that promotional materials are consistent and available electronically through the WPWDB's website. We collaborate with our workforce partners to promote business services to Local Area businesses. The Business/Employer Services team meets monthly to discuss best practices, challenges, and any new resources to help businesses. The members of the WPWDB Business Services Team consists of business services representatives from the local WDB, NCWorks Career Centers, WIOA Title I Service Provider, and Vocational Rehabilitation, Customized Training Coordinator at the local community colleges, and the Regional Veteran Employment Representatives. WPWDB do partner with the community colleges apprenticeship representatives to assist business explore talent pipeline strategy. The WPWDB Business Service Representative

shares information on the characteristics of the local workforce to businesses. Monthly Labor Market information from the NC LEAD is shared with local businesses along with the Business Brief and the Quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN) which are publications of the Western Piedmont WDB. These labor market information resources are used to engage and inform businesses on the current state of the labor market for the local area. The WPWDB Business Services Representative assists businesses in understanding vital business information of the local workforce area as pertain to local workforce demographics. The WPWDB Business Services Representative provides industry wage rate analysis information about the local workforce to local businesses. WPWDB works and assist with the Regional Agricultural Services Coordinator on job referrals.

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

The linkages between boards and NCWorks Career Centers are already strong since WIOA Title 1 gives boards planning, oversight, and guidance of the One-Stop operations. Other linkages we focus on is the RESEA/EAI programs being carried out in the NCWorks Career Centers and the Ad/DW service providers working to be cross-trained on those programs. With the recent COVID19 pandemic, calls about unemployment insurance claims continue to be received in the NCWorks Career Centers.

Unemployment Insurance issues and questions are directed to <https://www.ncesc1.com/main/login.asp> or the DES Customer Call Center at [1-888-737-0259](tel:1-888-737-0259), but also give staff an opportunity to let these customers know what the NCWorks Career Centers have to offer them.

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

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

Name document: **Uploaded: Western Piedmont Services Flowchart 2022.**

13. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. [WIOA Section 121(b) (A) (iii)]
Name document: Uploaded: **Western Piedmont One Stop MOU.**

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

- a. the review process and the frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service; and
The formal management team/leadership from the WPWD NCWorks Career Centers meet monthly to determine the success of the career center and ensure that quality customer service and continuous improvement are reviewed in a consistent manner, and necessary changes are put in place. The August 2019 retreat allowed

the management team to set a vision for challenges now, and over the next five years. We also engaged in how we can be proactive, and tactical, in meeting those challenges head on. The pandemic brought some of those challenges to the forefront and had to be dealt with immediately in light of the situation.

The NCWorks Career Centers are monitored annually by the WPWDB staff. In the WPWDB area DWS is our contracted One-Stop Operator, and therefore, specifically, the quality of customer service and center operations are assessed during this time by reviewing customer files in nworks.gov and observing center operations. During monitoring, the NCWorks Career Centers are monitored for certain components including activity codes including a 102 – Initial Assessment code which should be accompanied by a case note providing information regarding the immediate needs of the customer and what is needed to assist in them reaching their goals, general case notes, and local and federal performance goals and measures of the NCWorks Career Center. Any monitored technical discoveries are shared with the ROD and the center management team so they can make corrections and provide feedback in a timely manner.

- b. the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)] [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

Both WIOA Title 1 Service Provider and Wagner-Peyser Career Center partners are co-located, and cross-training is continuous, almost monthly based on workloads and scheduling. All NCWorks Career Center staff rotate to cover the different ISD areas such as Welcome, Skill Development, Employment and Business Services. Partner agencies like Voc Rehab and/or SCSEP (older adult) may have dedicated staff at a career center, working in Welcome and/or assisting customers with resume writing and nworks.gov registration. DWS-Wagner Peyser provides computers, printers, copiers, paper at no cost at the Catawba Career Center. WDB service Service Providers lease computers for their staff from DWS at Burke. The community college provides service Service Providers with computers at Caldwell and Alexander. Upon request, workforce partners like those listed above may also provide jobseeker training on topics like: Resume Prep, Disability Awareness, Interviewing, Financial Budgeting,....etc.

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

Since www.nworks.gov is a shared job search and data management tool of both required Wagner-Peyser staff and Ad/DW/Youth staff, all the NCWorks Career Center staff utilize it for intake and case management for all customers: jobseekers and businesses. Over the years, career center partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Goodwill Career Connections staff and community college HRD staff have received nworks.gov training and can help assist jobseeking customers with resumes and job search opportunities simply from the customer view.

We also use virtual integrated technology such as Zoom, GoTo meetings and Microsoft Teams. These tools are used to: Engage with WIOA scholarship participants; Hold center management teams meetings; and using nworks.gov Live Chat feature, engage with customers using the virtual one-stop MIS system. Virtual Workshops are provided

weekly using virtual technology. NCWorks Career Center Staff assist customers to register to attend the virtual workshops. The virtual workshops are presented by NCWorks Career Center Staff and workforce partners.

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

The WPWDA uses data from Futureworks and NCWorks.gov to monitor and track performance measures for jobseekers. The Program Administrator reviews the data in FutureWorks at every update to track DOL performance measures and ensure we are on track to meet our goals. Various reports from NCWorks.gov are also pulled monthly and tracked through our Monthly Center Performance Report. This spreadsheet is reported to the local management team so that we track services and operations within our NCWorks Career Centers. The report is also shared with staff and used as a point of discussion in center staff meetings. This helps us identify successes and challenges that to be addressed, and it provides a vision for continuous improvement. In regards to business services we purchased a license to utilized Salesforce software which gives a granular view of the engagement we are providing to businesses. We also utilized nworks.gov reports to keep an extra hand on what is happening, or not happening locally. The Monthly Center Performance Report include employer service code tracking, recruitment events we held and/or helped support, as well as WARN notices reported.

Since we began tracking center operations (2015), we have noticed a stead decrease in in-center visits even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, we have done more outreach in the communities and enhanced our virtual services ability, particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to brainstorm ways to serve customers both in-person and virtually as we move forward from the pandemic.

V. Employer Services

1. Please briefly describe the efforts of the Business Services Representative and/or Employer Services staff in the following areas:
- a. Utilizing regional and local employer data to inform priorities.
The WPWDB Business Services Team analyzes and reviews regional and local data to formulate resources and services that meet current business needs. Labor Market Information including labor participation rate, available labor pool, unemployment rate, and employment trends are used to develop strategies that assist businesses in meeting their recruiting and training needs. By providing them monthly labor market information from the NC LEAD, the Business Brief and the Quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN) they can determine recruitment and retention strategies that might work for their business. The WPWDB Business Service Representative assists businesses in understanding vital business information of the local workforce area as pertain to local workforce demographics. The WPWDB Business Service Representative provides industry wage rate analysis information about the local workforce to local employers as requested.

- b. Making regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services.

Recently the WPWDB Director and Business Services Representative held a meeting with the regional representatives from NC Commerce Agricultural Services to discuss collaboration and business referrals. The meeting provided an opportunity to learn about each agency's goals and service areas. The meeting served to strengthen the relationship between NC Ag Services and the Workforce Development Board and foster future partnership in serving Ag businesses in the Local Area. The WPWDB Director, the WPWDB Business Services Representative, NCWorks Career Center Managers and Employer Services Staff, and the Veteran Employment Representatives all engaged with businesses and make appropriate employer referrals to Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor staff, Veteran Services based on business needs.

- c. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

We work with our local EDCs, Chambers of Commerce and community colleges to ensure that we help identify challenges, and collaborate where each partners strength can help address those challenges. There is collaboration between the WPWDB and the local Economic Developers as well as the Regional Economic Developer (EDPNC), Bill Slagel. The workforce demographics of the region are changing. Our industries are more diversified that require new skills for workers. The WPWDB/NCWorks management team attends meetings to ensure we have a finger on the pulse for workforce challenges, potential job growth issues, and business expansions. A resource of the WPWDB is the quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter that provides up to date workforce information on areas such as the civilian labor force, housing demands, communiting patterns, educational attainment....etc. The Business Brief is a monthly newsletter that provide current labor market information about the local area. The Business Brief is distributed to employers and workforce partners. Currently the WPWDB is working on a comprehensive State of the Workforce Report that will provide insight and strategies for the addressing local labor market challenges. The HKY4Vets is a program built by the Catawba County EDC, Chamber, NCWorks and local veterans groups to market our region for work, life and play. The program is working hard to make our area veteran friendly and worth the move for veterans to bring themselves and their families to the western region of NC. Local EDCs do reach out to WPWDB seeking workforce services to new and existing businesses. Workforce services provided are recruiting services, hosting job fairs, listing and promoting jobs, offering work-based learning opportunities and training services, and providing labor market information. The WPWDB partners with, and is an active stakeholder with local chambers of commerce, economic developers, community colleges, universities, and K-12 public school systems. The Board does regularly update and inform partners on the availability of Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training) and NEXTGEN Work Experiences for youth 16-24 years old, and labor market information. There is a spirit of collaboration among the partners to share information and leverage individual organization's resources and strengths. One example of a good partnership in promoting work-based learning is through the Upskill WP Training Grant. The

Community College Customized Training Coordinator and the Business Service Representative of the Workforce Development Board conduct joint business visits and offer training solutions. The WPWDB do collaborate with economic developers and chambers of commerce to provide recruiting and training services for existing and new businesses in the region. The WPWDB Business Services Representative attends the Catawba Chamber of Commerce's Morning Brew to promote business services to the Chamber's business members.

d. Including Historically Underutilized Businesses.

WPWDB Business Services Team provides services to all businesses in the local area with an emphasis on small businesses and economically distressed industries. In partnership with DWS Business Services Team, one example of business services outreach was where we provided direct phone call follow up in our local area to reach out to the hospitality and tourism industry during the pandemic. We reached out to businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry to gauge their business climate and offer services. Business Services Representatives regularly attend local chamber and EDC business events. The WPWDB Business Services Team also works to assist entrepreneurs and minority-owned businesses by referral services to the Small Business Center at the Community College, the Small Business & Technology Development Center, and to State resources. The WPWDB Director is involved in Catawba County NAACP workforce taskforce, and is helping to ensure workforce service are more readily known and available.

2. Please describe the efforts of the Local Area WDB staff, Employer services staff and career center staff have made to deliver business services on a regional basis in the following areas:

a. Utilizing regional and local economic data to inform priorities [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)].

Monthly Labor Market information from the NC LEAD is shared with local businesses along with the Business Brief and the Quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN) which, are publications of the Western Piedmont WDB. These labor market information resources are used to engage and inform businesses on the current state of the labor market for the local area. We work to assist businesses in understanding currently labor force trends that might impact their decision around growth and expansion. These workforce data and trends not only help businesses, but also provide foundational for the local WDB in developing priorities. What are the growth industries? Which industry is declining? What is the demographic of the region? Does the region have the necessary skills for businesses to thrive? Does the region have educational institutions to develop the skills for businesses? What skills is needed in the future? All of these questions are important in the development of WDB priorities through the analysis of regional and local economic data.

b. Collaborating with employer-facing partners such as Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services to meet employer needs and jobseeker recruitment efforts.

WPWDB Director and Business Services Representative held a meeting with the Regional Representatives from NC Commerce Agricultural Services to discuss collaboration and business referrals. The meeting provided an opportunity to learn about each agency's goals and services area. The meeting served to strengthen the relationship between NC Ag Services and the Workforce Development Board and to

foster future partnership in serving Ag businesses in the Local Area. The WPWDB Director, the WPWDB Business Services Representative, NCWorks Career Center Managers and Employer Services Staff, and the Veteran Employment Representatives all engaged with businesses and make appropriate employer referrals to Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor staff, Veteran Services based on business needs.

- c. Providing local and regional Rapid Response services, including identifying struggling and at-risk businesses and providing services to help avert layoffs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(8)]
In 2020, business services representatives from the Northwest Prosperity Zone consisting of the three WDBs, High Country WDB, Foothills WDB, and the Western Piedmont WDB collaborated in a coordinated business engagement activity. A total of 45 businesses in the hospitality industry were contacted. The findings indicated how COVID-19 had impacted their business, the barriers/challenges they were facing, and what they needed to reopen or keep their business operating. Resources and services were offered to businesses in the region to assist them in keeping their businesses operational. WPWDB collaborates with other WDBs in promoting and marketing hiring events for the entire region that enable the recruiting businesses to reach a wider talent pool. WPWDB Business Services Representative works with the DWS Business Services Unit to assist struggling and at-risk businesses via the Business Edge program.
3. Please describe employer-focused partnership efforts in the areas of education and training and economic development in the following areas:
 - a. Enhancing the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.
Currently, WPWDB does not offer On-the-Job Training. WPWDB does offer the Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training) and NEXTGEN Work Experience for eligible youth 16-24 years old. There is a spirit of collaboration among the partners to share information and leverage each individual organization's resources and strengths. One example of a good partnership promoting work-based learning through the Upskill WP Training Grant. The Community College Customized Training Coordinator and the Business Service Representative of the Workforce Development Board conduct joint business visits and offer training solutions. The WPWDB does collaborate with economic developers and chambers of commerce to provide recruiting and training services for existing and new businesses in the region. The WPWDB Business Services Representative attends the Catawba Chamber of Commerce's Morning Brew to promote business services to the Chamber's business members. Business facing in our NCWorks Career Center are in constant contact with businesses in the local area, discussing the business needs and the skill sets needed by their prospective employees. NCWorks Career Center Staff work to locate individuals with the appropriate skills or discuss training options with customers to develop the skills needed in the area for local businesses. The WPWDB partners with the community colleges apprenticeship representatives to assist businesses in exploring their talent pipeline strategy. The WPWDB Business Service Representative shares information on the characteristics of the local workforce to businesses. The WPWDB Business Services Representative is an active member of the

Apprenticeship Collaborative Team that meet quarterly to discuss continual partnership and best practices.

- b. Coordinating and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(5)]
The WPWDB Business Services Representative partners with the Small Business & Technology Development Center and the Small Business Centers at the local community colleges to provide referral services to small business owners or entrepreneurs who want to start a business. The WPWDB Business Services Representative also shares available state resources from groups such as the EDPNC Small Business Support Team, NC Department of Commerce, Federal SBA, and higher education institutions.
- c. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].
The WPWDB partners with, and is an active stakeholder with our local chambers of commerce, economic developers, community colleges, universities, and K-12 public school systems. We work to regularly update and inform partners on the availability of Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training) and NEXTGEN Work Experiences for youth 16-24 years old, and labor market information. There is a spirit of collaboration among the partners to share information and leverage individual organization's resources and strengths. One example of a good partnership in promoting work-based learning is through the Incumbent Worker Training Grant. The Community College Customized Training Coordinator and the Business Service Representative of the Workforce Development Board conduct joint business visits and offer training solutions. The WPWDB does collaborate with economic developers and chambers of commerce to provide recruiting and training services for existing and new businesses in the region. The WPWDB Business Services Representative attends the Catawba Chamber of Commerce's Morning Brew to promote business services to the Chamber's business members. The WPWDB business facing staff the NCWorks Career Center are in constant contact with businesses in the local area discussing the business needs and the skill sets needed by their prospective employees. NCWorks Career Center staff then work to locate individuals with the appropriate skills or discuss training options with customers to develop the skills needed in the area for local businesses. There is a partnership between the WPWDB and the local Economic Developers and with the Regional Economic Developer (EDPNC) to collaborate in serving new and expanding businesses. The partnership enables a greater understanding that our workforce demographics in the region is changing, and increased skill sets are needed. Our industries are more diverse and require new skills for workers.

VI. Performance

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

- Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit

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

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

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

area, as well as internal operational factors that may impact the Local Area WDB's performance.

The WPWDB dealt with low unemployment until there was a spike in unemployment due to the Covid 19 pandemic. We saw more dislocated workers during this time, but many looked to short-term training to get them back into the workforce as quickly as possible. The spike in unemployment steadily decreased over the time since the shutdown and is moving toward pre-pandemic levels. Many jobs are still readily available and we continue to see that our most prominent customers were Adult program customers, with greater barriers. With more customers with barriers to employment, the NCWorks Career Center staff have had to shift their scope of work from just assisting with job searches and prep, to assisting with helping customers learn how to break through their barriers. This has been positive for our center staff and has pushed them to embrace building relationships with partners and customers. For youth (NEXTGEN), the unemployment rate for them continues to be relatively high. This has worked in our favor since employers are looking for employees and are more open to taking time to give young people a chance at work experience. This has allowed many opportunities for our NEXTGEN participants to obtain paid internships in industry sectors in which they are interested in pursuing, such as healthcare, manufacturing, automotive and warehouse/logistics. Although work experience slowed during the shutdown, it slow started to gain ground again providing very beneficial for our participants in that many are either hired by the company where they intern, or due to the experience they received through the internship, they were hired by another company in the same industry. As with the adult participants, the NEXTGEN participants have some type of barrier(s) that has to be broken through, or dealt with by the participant. This has always been the case with the WIOA Youth program, and those Career Advisors are very good at advising and encouraging our NEXTGEN participants to success.

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

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

The observation in the Western Piedmont was an increase in the number of dislocated workers due to COVID-19. These individuals were seeking either employment or short-term training in areas that remained in high demand and then return to work as quickly as possible. We also continued to see adults who had barriers that needed to be addressed as we had experienced in previous years. When working with dislocated workers, there are generally not a number of barriers to deal with prior to dislocated works enrolling in training or seeking employment. With adult individuals with barriers, there is a need to determine the barriers, address the barriers and then move into training or job search. The Career Advisor working with these individuals must help these individuals break through these barriers and encourage them in their endeavors. We did see a larger number of youth who could also be classified as dislocated workers. This is not generally the case of youth that are enrolled. These individuals had fewer or no barriers to overcome and were ready to either enter work or enter training. They had work experience and some developed skills.

- c. Discuss how your Local Area WDB's industries and business sector have been impacted by COVID-19.

All industries in the Local Area have been impacted by the novel COVID-19 virus to some degree. Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Retail Trade are the largest industry in that order. Essentials businesses continue to operate with safety protocols in place to provide a safe work environment for its employees. Non-essential businesses in Manufacturing and Retail may have implemented one or a combination of measures such as temporary layoffs/furlough, reduced work hours, adjustment to work schedules, offered work-from-home opportunities, and other measures to maintain safety for their employees, control the spread of the virus, and follow State health guidelines. The retail/hospitality industry was the hardest hit out of all industries and may be the slowest to recover. With the positive outlook on the economy, businesses are struggling to recruit. To assist businesses recruiting in a safe manner, the WPWDB is leveraging technology to host virtual recruitment events and promote job flyers through our social media platforms.

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

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

The Western Piedmont area looks at many aspect of performance. We track performance of Title I Service Providers through a profit calculator identifying number entering training, credentials achieved, job placements and measureable skill gains each quarter. For youth program, job placements is replaced with work experience expenditures. There are targets for each quarter and an overall target at year-end. This maintains focus for WDB staff and Title I staff throughout the program year and influences our DOL performance. In addition,

the program administrator reviews FutureWorks each time the system is updated with new data to see where we are and if additional measures need to be taken to ensure meeting our Department of Labor goals by the end of the program year. If measures need to be taken, there are reports in FutureWorks and networks.gov that can assist with identifying if there are missing credentials or measureable skill gains that need to be added. In FuturesWorks, the predictive reports are helpful for credential attainment and measureable skill gains. In networks.gov, there are numerous reports to pull but specifically the credential report. Follow-up is required for all cohorts. We attempt to stay on top of the employment goals for 2nd and 4th quarter through those contacts and if someone is not working, we seek to assist them in finding employment as quickly as possible.

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

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

If not on track to meet yearly performance indicators goals, we want to know that as soon as possible by checking reports in FutureWorks often. At that point we look at what is happening in our local area to see what may be affecting our performance indicators to see if there are things we can do to improve throughout the remainder of the year. We check data entry into networks.gov to ensure that data is being keyed timely and accurately and look in depth at predictive reports. If there are a number of new staff members, then training may be the main issue and training reviews should be done as soon as possible to make improvements prior to the year end. We discuss the role of all NCWorks Career Center staff in the Adult performance measures, and the importance of building relationships with customers so that they will return to the center when they lose a job, or want to move along their career pathway, or improve their financial position by searching for career advancement providing staff the opportunity to assist with employment options.

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

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

In the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area, we share performance information with staff at all levels on a regular basis. It is important that front line staff know where they are related to performance and what the goals are for their program area. Performance is shared with management staff each time data in FutureWorks is updated. We talk about performance at least monthly, and quarterly. When necessary, specific Title I Program meetings are held with the Program Manager and the Program Coordinator to discuss ways

to improve performance. We believe that working for the best of each customer will result in good performance outcomes for our local area. Case managers can watch the performance indicators to know when it may be necessary to review for accurate data entry for credentials and measureable skill gains. Affecting change on the employment indicators is a little more difficult. One way staff can address these indicators is through required follow-up for their programs. During follow-up calls, ensuring that the participant is working is important and if they are not employed then it becomes important to assist them with finding new employment. It is important for us to stay focused on many levels of performance both for program and operations, so that all NCWorks Career Center staff are mindful of those impacts when working with customers in the career center and participants in the programs.

(**Note:** This question should address how frequently [monthly, quarterly, etc.] performance information is shared and by what method/medium [e.g. print-out, electronically, verbally through meetings, etc.], how the performance information shared may differ for the various levels of staff at the Local Area WDB, and specifically for case managers, how performance data is shared with them and how they, in turn, use this information in their roles.)

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

Collecting data from participants for the Measureable Skill Gains allows Career Advisors to better manage participant grades and progress, so that steps can be taken to advise a participant if their grades start to fall. Career Advisors may recommend tutoring, or if a personal situation is interfering, perhaps ask if they need to drop a class and pick it up the following semester instead of failing a course and having an adverse effect on their GPA. The Service Provider's Program Manager reviews reports in NCWorks.gov to track various performance measures including MSG. The WDB Program Administrator utilizes predictive reports in FutureWorks to see where contacts need to be made, but generally the Career Advisors stay on top of this during their monthly meetings with their clients since this is a real-time measure and occurring while the participant is active. Requesting grades for MSG each semester allows Career Advisor to track the success of the participant through to credential attainment. This is particularly important for the longer curriculum programs. The WDB Program Administrator also ensures, when doing weekly monitoring, prior to exit that participants have a MSG for the year where applicable.

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

6. Describe how and when eligible training providers are reviewed at the local level and how customers are informed they have choices in choosing their providers.

Training providers are reviewed for eligibility when they initially apply to provide training services for the Western Piedmont Workforce Development area. To be approved in the WPWDB and receive WIOA Title 1 funds, the training provider must be listed on the

Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) and the Local Training Provider List (LTPL), which is maintained and available on NCWorks Online. If a training provider is not listed, they may apply using the NCWorks Online ETPL module at www.ncworks.gov. In order to be approved by the WPWDB, the training provider must be approved by providing the information requested and following the process outlined in the Eligible Training Provider Guidelines. Beginning July 1, 2022, DWS will approve training providers for the State ETPL. Once approved for the State ETPL, then WPWDB staff will certify and approve for the WPWDA. The WPWDA will provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for training programs that support a career pathway for the customer in growing, in-demand and/or priority industry sectors identified on the WPWDA approved Occupational Training List. In instances where it can be determined that training will result in increased earnings and career pathway opportunities, ITAs can be issued to those training programs. Potential WIOA participants are referred to ncworks.gov, to search for applicable training providers. If they are interested in a training provider or program that is not approved by the local area, they may request that the training provider/program be added and/or approved by the WPWDB according to the WPWDB Policy Statement “Occupational Trainings, Individual Training Accounts and Cost Tracking Process Policy” dated August 16, 2021. <https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements>

7. Define what “significant number of competent providers” means in the Local Area WDB. Include whether the Local Area WDB uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers. Attach if a separate policy. **Western Piedmont ETPL Policy. Uploaded Beginning 7/1/2022, eligible training providers must first be on the State ETPL before they can be certified and approved at the local area. The NC Division of Workforce Solutions will approve training providers for the State ETPL. In the WPWDA, we review our WDB approved training list bi-annually to ensure that the list contains jobs that are in demand in our local area or within a commuting distance of our area. We also ensure that there are eligible training providers in our local area or, in some cases, within a commuting distance of our area to provide the training programs that have been approved by the WPWDB. Performance measures of the training provider are reviewed when the provider applies to be added to the State ETPL. (beginning July 1, 2022)**

VII. Equal Opportunity

1. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. [WIOA Section 188]
Title 1 Service Providers shall make efforts to provide employment and training opportunities, and services on an equitable basis throughout all WIOA Title 1 funded programs and/or activities. Such efforts shall include but not be limited to: outreach efforts to broaden the composition of the pool of those considered for participation; employment; to include members of both sexes; the various race/ethnicity and age groups, and individuals with disabilities. Title 1 Service Providers must maintain sufficient records to document that programs and participants are selected equitably. All programs, to the maximum extent possible, shall contribute to the elimination of sex stereotyping, architectural barriers, and artificial barriers to employment and training. All Job Training Plans and applications will be evaluated for compliance with these requirements and for any adverse effects on equal opportunity. Outreach efforts may include, but are

not limited to: 1) advertising the programs and/or activities in media, such as social media outlets, newspapers or radio programs that specifically target various populations; 2) sending notices about openings in programs and/or activities to schools or community service groups that serve various populations; and 3) consulting with appropriate community service groups about ways to improve outreach and service to various populations.

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

Uploaded - Western Piedmont EO Complaint Grievance Procedure

3. Describe the methods used to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated.
WPWD Local Area updates are made as soon as notification is received from USDOL, or state level updates. Those updates are immediately brought to the attention of all NCWorks Career Center staff through email notification, and during quarterly meetings. Updates of the Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure are posted on the WPWD Local Area website and addressed to all center staff and Service Providers during the annual Local Area Equal Opportunity training. Inclusion of the EO is the Law Notice and the Participant's Rights documents are provided to every individual who goes through the application/eligibility determination process; Inclusion in the Local Area Plan and in the Requests for Proposals. As Local Area WPWDB staff monitor the Service Providers, EEO policies and procedures are reviewed to confirm the Service Provider is in compliance with the Local Area's EO policy. <https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements>

VIII. **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

1. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services.
 - a. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers.
The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area has a history of providing quality WIOA Title 1 programs for Adults and Dislocated Workers. The NCWorks Career Center staff do not just manage their case, or only advise their participants, they also help develop and grow a relationship with them. The relationship component is critical to keeping the participants engaged, and in helping to maintain contact and collect information that is required. Another strength found in the WIOA Title 1 programs is being able to place our participants who have received training into a training related job. Our Career Advisors are diligent in trying to help and advocate for those who have received training services. Everyone's goal is for participant to be placed in full-time employment.
 - b. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]
One area in which we can improve includes promoting training for the most in-demand jobs in the area. There is a huge need for advanced manufacturing skills, furniture making, healthcare certification, truck driver training and construction trades. Our Career Advisors do a good job career coaching those who are receiving

training, but as a whole, the NCWorks Career Centers continue to struggle with having difficult conversations and selling the services available through our NCWorks system. All NCWorks Career Center staff should be promoting in-demand industries, and jobs for training and employment by understanding the environment in which they work, the required skills and/or education, wage potential, and career path opportunities. This would benefit our local employers, our participants and our economy. The training needs for this area have been addressed with the development of short term training classes at the local community colleges. We have the ability to build capacity in these programs by promoting these training programs to our participants and the community. Our goal is to provide continued training and support for all NCWorks Career Center staff so they can be better career advising with customers, and they know when and how to provide more intensive career services.

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

Below is the dateline for the RFP process completed in 2022 for services beginning in PY2022:

RFP Public Notice	January 18, 2022
RFP Release Date	January 25, 2022 at www.westernpiedmontworks.org
Proposal Deadline	February 25, 2022 by 4:00pm
Formal Review of Proposals	Begins March 3, 2022
WPWDB Notice of Selection	April 28, 2022
Contract Negotiations	May 2, 2022 or when PY22 budget allocations are received.
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2022

Ross Innovative Employment Services was approved as the service provider for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs of the WPWDB on April 28, 2022 at the WPWDB meeting. The option is to extend services each year for up to three years if the service provider is meeting all obligations and there are no issues with the selected service provider's operation of the program. The next full RFP release if that is the case will be in 2025 for services to begin PY2025.

- a. Identify any service provider contract extensions.
No extension, this year was the release of the full RFP.

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

3. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract (one-four years).

Public Notice – Letter of Intent to Bid	January 4, 2021
Letter of Intent Due	February 4, 2021
RFP Release Date (if necessary)	February 22, 2021
Proposal Deadline (if necessary)	March 19, 2021 by 4:00pm
Formal Review of Proposals (if necessary)	Begins March 22, 2021
WPWDB Notice of Selection	April 22, 2021
Contract Negotiations	April 26, 2021
Contract Start Date	July 1, 2021

The request for Letters of Intent was issued on January 4, 2021. Letters of Intent must be submitted no later than 4:00pm on February 4, 2021. Acceptable Letters of Intent must include the following:

- The county(ies) to be served
- What type of organization is intending to bid
- Where the agency, or consortium is located
- Acknowledgement that the period of performance is July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022
- The LOI is signed by the authorized signatory for the agency/consortium
- The completed and signed LOI is received at the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board offices by the required time/date.

A RFP was provided to the entities that submitted a Letter of Intent prior to 4:00pm on February 4, 2021. The RFP was to be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on March 22, 2021. One RFP was submitted and the Division of Workforce Solutions was named as the One-Stop Operator. The option is to extend services each year for up to three years if the service provider is meeting all obligations and there are no issues with the selected service provider's operation of the program.

4. Attach the Local Area WDB's Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider list effective July 1, 2022 using the PY 2022 [Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List](#) provided. Name document: **Western Piedmont PY 2022 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List. Uploaded**
5. Describe the Local Area WDB's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include high level goals, outreach strategies, services delivery, and expected outcomes. **It is the WPWDB's vision to serve Adults and Dislocated Workers who are eligible, and in need of the WIOA Title 1 programs. Utilizing these funds for training and support services will help improve participant's economic mobility and self-sufficiency opportunities. The WPWDB has changed the language of how a person obtains the funding, which raises expectations and improves the outcomes of our future participants. A scholarship review is completed by multiple staff members. This removes the subjectivity of one person's opinion and replaces it with a team decision, making it more objective as it broadens the scope of view based on the experience of each team member. Our goal is for everyone to succeed in their training and employment goals. In order to do that, our Career Advisors must be diligent in their evaluation and assessment of the needs of an individual. They also must consider their past experiences, career goals and the career path that may become part of their (participant) future. While there are sometimes**

obstacles or difficulties that derail the best laid plans, the Career Advisor becomes the voice of reason to help the participant through difficult times. The Career Advisor should be a cheerleader and celebrate the successes with the participant, both small and large. Each participant is unique and will require a unique employment plan with varying goals and objectives. Our services should be customer centric. The outcomes will include the completion of a training program resulting in a certificate, diploma or degree, finding employment in the training area, and making a wage that will provide self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. In addition, they should be aware of the career path for the job and what the opportunities there may be for the future.

It is the goal of the WPWDB to reach out to those who are in the most need of assistance to improve their education and/or skill sets. This is done for Adults by developing relationships and partnerships with agencies where these individuals may frequent. This may include, but not be limited to, the Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, and Probation and Parole, etc. For Dislocated Workers, we work with the Rapid Response unit to get information to those that are being affected by lay-offs or closures. However, the Rapid Response unit only gets notifications if a larger number of employees are affected. NCWorks Career Advisors develop relationships with employers in the local area, as well as with other public agencies, so that they are aware of our dislocated worker services should they ever need them. Often, when a company becomes aware of a need to downsize or layoff, they will contact the WPWDB and/ or one of our NCWorks Career Centers to seek those services for their employees who are being affected. It is WPWDB's desire for the community to be aware of all that we can offer to employers and individuals. We continue to offer all NCWorks Career Center staff, training on areas where it can increase their skills in working with customers and in turn continue to improve on customer service in the centers. Continued center staff development will always be key to service delivery and positive outcomes.

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

As mentioned above, it is the goal of the WPWDB to reach out to those who are in the most need of assistance to improve their education and/or skill sets. This is accomplished through the relationships we have built with partners where these individuals may frequent. This may include, but is not limited to, the Department of Social Services, Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Probation and Parole and other non-profit agencies who service this population. For the WPWDB since 2019, between 75% - 85% of our Adult participants have fallen into this priority of service level.

7. Describe follow-up services provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers.
In the WPWDB, follow-up services for Adults and Dislocated Workers are required. Follow-up services begin when the participant begins unsubsidized employment and continues for 12 months following the first day of employment. These services are available through the NCWorks Career Centers and may include counseling regarding the workplace, career guidance and/or assistance with job search and/or LMI information. Adults and Dislocated Workers do have the option to opt out of these services if they so choose.

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

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

The WPWDB Program Administrator monitors files that are soon to exit on a weekly basis to ensure that the file is ready to exit and that final details are in the file such as credentials, measurable skill gains and employment information. The Soon to Exit report is pulled for files exiting in 15 days or less. Pulling this report allows issues to be caught quickly and ensures that performance is on track. The Program Administrator conducts monitoring quarterly on a wider scale. Two files are randomly selected from each caseload and is monitored for activities, communications and policy compliance. This ensures that we can offer technical assistance and make corrections on an ongoing basis, and not just once a year. Lastly, the program administrator monitors files annually. This is an in-depth monitoring of a larger pool of files. The annual monitoring is the formal monitoring for which the service provider receives notice and a written report of issues and/or where technical assistance is needed. During both the quarterly and the annual monitoring, phone calls are made to 20% of the participants selected for the respective monitoring to ensure that they received acceptable customer services and the services to which they are entitled. (On the monitoring, that is the quarterly monitoring, it is 2 files per case manager so it is approximately 16 files per quarter or about 50 per year. Then add annual monitoring of 20% of the total caseload. That takes us to 80 - 100 files monitored every year. We are monitoring a lot of participant files every year and that isn't including reviewing basically all files before they exit. The WPWDB Program Administrator selects 2 per Career Advisor for quarterly monitoring so it is consistent across all Career Advisors. We are monitoring over 60% of our participants per year currently.)

The North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions requires that local area staff monitor the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs annually. The WPWDA Financial Monitor completes the required annual monitoring monthly and annually according to the Financial Monitoring Policy. The Financial Monitor reviews financial operations for compliance inclusive of technical assistance and corrective actions.

Please refer to the uploaded Program Monitoring Policy and Financial Monitoring Policy.

<https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements>

IX. Youth Services

USDOL provides funds to states who in turn provide local workforce areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting out-of-school youth and in-school youth with one or more barriers to employment prepare for post-secondary education and employment

opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. USDOL and North Carolina’s priorities are:

- *Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – A minimum of 75% of the Youth funds allocated to Local Area WDBs, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide services to OSY;*
- *Work Experience – Not less than 20% of Youth funds allocated to the Local Area WDB, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide paid and unpaid work experiences; and a*
- *Focus on Partnering – Co-enrollment encouraged where appropriate with Title II and IV.*

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

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions Corp is the Title 1 service provider for youth services in addition to adult and dislocated worker services. They provide both in-school and out-of-school services for youth in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. Each county has innovative partnerships in place with social service agencies in all the counties that will provide referrals for the in-school program. Relationships have been built with Career & Technical Education staff, guidance counselors and other workforce/education partners involved in other unique programs provided in the school system such as Communities in the Schools, Young Men of Integrity, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc. These relationships have resulted in connecting with students who may need intensive services to be successful. In addition, to providing services for in-school participants, it paves a way for future assistance for students in the event that they drop-out or graduate, and need intensive services to complete their high school diploma or equivalent or to find employment that leads to self-sufficiency through paid internships or post-secondary training. In the NEXTGEN Youth program, Career Advisors complete a thorough objective assessment to determine the eligibility of the student for WIOA Title 1 services, and if there are any additional needs to be addressed. Basic skills are assessed through school records and/or reading and math assessments. Other assessments may be completed as necessary. All NCWorks Career Advisors are required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

Youth Workforce Activity	For Persons with Disabilities?	Brief Assessment/Model Used	Success Rating
Occupational Skills Training and Alternative Secondary School Services and drop-out recovery services	Yes	Local community college who are also held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with	Very Good

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

		disabilities are provided as required by the ADA.	
Enrolled in Traditional High School	Yes	Public Schools are held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities are provided as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	Very Good

2. Describe how the Local Area WDB’s broad Young Adult (NextGen) Program design is unique to include:

a. providing objective assessments;

When an individual is interested in the services of the NEXTGEN program, they are first evaluated for eligibility, and then complete an objective assessment. WPWDB utilizes the objective assessment located in nworks.gov. This allows us to collect varied information about the individual and determine their immediate needs. Referrals can then be made to partner agencies for immediate needs that NCWorks cannot meet. The objective assessment also allows us to identify barriers and determine the services that may be needed and required for the participant to be successful in the program. This may include career exploration, work skills, or basic skills services which are needed to increase basic/educational skills, workplace skills, and/or additional training for specific career pathways.

b. supportive services needed; and

The objective assessment identifies what support services may be needed for the participant. If parenting, perhaps it is childcare, or for many of our young adults the need is transportation. In the WPWDB, we offer a variety of support services for NEXTGEN participants including transportation, childcare, clothing, uniforms, shoes, etc. that are required for employment. Other services may be met by referrals to partner agencies including food, housing, etc.

c. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)]

A thorough review of the education records, test scores, placement tests, etc., is completed to determine basic skill levels and identify where additional assistance is required for the young adult to be successful in completing their educational and employment goals. When an educational record is not available, or does not clearly identify if there are basic skill needs, the young adult is referred to the community college for a basic skills test such as TABE or CASAS. Additionally, the participant’s career interests and abilities are assessed in nworks.gov and these results are used to drive conversation about career opportunities for each participant. The Career Advisor and the participant look at and discuss labor market information, educational requirements, location of jobs, etc. to determine the best career fit for the participant.

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

The Career Advisor discusses local area career pathways and the jobs which are in line with the career pathway, as well as the education that it might take to get to various attainment levels. Career Advisors also use LMI information to inform young adults of job availability in the area, and what expected wage ranges might be for those careers. This information is used to assist the young adult in determining his/her goals for their future. In addition to educational needs, employment skills are also addressed and if applicable, a paid internship may be set up. The paid internship provides an opportunity for the young adult to gain some experience to the workplace and the work environment of the career pathway they have selected. The ISS is unique for each individual although when individuals are trying to reach similar goals their needs may be very similar.

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

When a young adult is enrolled in a training activity, it becomes the goal of NEXTGEN Career Advisors to ensure the young adults success in all ways possible. In order to do this, Career Advisors have to remain engaged in the young adults life and be the encourager and cheerleader for them. Incentives are available for those who succeed in completing their high school diploma or equivalency, as well as, those who successfully complete post-secondary training programs. However, our experience is that incentives alone don't necessarily result in success, but being engaged with a Career Advisor in a mentor-type relationship does. The incentive is the carrot to get them started, but the relationship provides the desire to succeed.

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

After exit from all programs, all NEXTGEN participants are required to receive 12 months of follow-up services. The type of follow-up and the frequency of follow-up is based on the needs of the participant during the one year following their exit from the program. Follow-up services continue to support the participant as they move forward and take on the roles and responsibilities of an adult. The follow-up services are provided as needed to support a successful transition for the participant, and the completion of program goals for positive performance outcomes.

Some youth and young adults will need more frequent and intensive follow-up services than others. Follow-up should occur quarterly at a minimum. All follow-up services are recorded in ncworks.gov by adding "F" activities and case notes as appropriate. These activities include: referral to community resources, tracking progress on the job, assistance securing better paying job, and assistance with job/work related problems, etc.

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

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

In the WPWDB in-school young adults are generally served in their respective school system and out-of-school young adults are served mainly through our Tier 1 NCWorks Career Centers. NEXTGEN Career Advisors are flexible and will meet the young adult at other places if need be such as the community college, library or other workforce partner locations. Some NEXTGEN Career Advisor have set hours at the community college locations.

7. Attach the Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider’s chart, effective July 1, 2022, using the PY 2022 [Youth Service Provider List](#) provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. Name the document: **Uploaded PY 2022 Western Piedmont Youth Service Provider List.**
8. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs was completed, to include any contract extensions.

Below is the dateline for the RFP process completed in 2022 for services beginning in PY2022:

RFP Public Notice	January 18, 2022
RFP Release Date	January 25, 2022 at www.westernpiedmontworks.org
Proposal Deadline	Feburary 25, 2022 by 4:00pm
Formal Review of Proposals	Begins March 3, 2022
WPWDB Notice of Selection	April 28, 2022
Contract Negotiations	May 2, 2022 or when PY22 budget allocations are received.
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2022

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions was approved as the service provider for Youth services for the WPWDA on April 28, 2022 at the WPWDB meeting. The option is to extend services each year for up to three years if the Service Provider is meeting all obligations and there are no issues with the selected service provider’s operation of the program. The next full RFP release if that is the case will be in 2025 for services to begin PY2025.

9. Provide the Local Area WDB’s approach to meeting the required 75% minimum (NextGen) youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design. [WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)] (CPS 09-2021)
The WPWDB has traditionally spent a majority of the total youth budget on Out-of-School youth. Considering the expansion of the eligibility criteria, and age of out-of-school youth that may be served, spending 75% on Out-Of-School youth has not been an issue. The increase to 24 years old in itself allows us to offer services to more individuals and the dropping of the low income requirement for some of the eligibility barrier groups has allowed us to serve more individuals as well. While we thought that marketing and recruiting would be challenging, the NCWorks Career Center staff have done a great job referring customers in the 21-24 age bracket to the NEXTGEN program. We continue to seek referrals from partner agencies for certain barrier groups like offenders, high school dropouts and parenting youth. Having NEXTGEN Career Advisors in the centers to talk to customers who may fall into the youth age range and meet the eligibility criteria has been very valuable. They can discuss the services which are available to help the young

person(s), and prepare them to become job ready, which has proven to be the most crucial step for recruiting those in the 21-24 age range.

An unexpected benefit to being in the local area school systems is that NEXTGEN Career Advisors can make presentations to high school classes and be active in the schools for in-school youth so that now many of them are aware of the NCWorks Career Centers and the services they offer. This knowledge, we hope, will help them find their way to the centers either after they graduate, or if they unfortunately end up dropping out of high school. They generally have the name of a NCWorks Career Advisor to seek out when arriving at the center, which makes them more comfortable in coming in for services.

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

Work experiences may be subsidized or unsubsidized and may include the following:

- **Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the school year;**
- **Pre-apprenticeship programs;**
- **And Internships and job shadowing;**

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions, Title 1 service provider for NEXTGEN services in WPWDB has budgeted \$107,098 for work experience. The stipend/wages generally range from \$10.00 - \$18.00 per hour. Wages are determined based on the entry level pay at the company for the same type of work. The WPWDB focuses on using the budgeted amount on wages as much as is possible.

WPWDA has consistently met the 20% minimum of funds spent on work experience.

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

The WPWDA has a dedicated full-time NEXTGEN Business Services Representative (BSR) at the Service Provider level. Our NEXTGEN BSR provides services to employers and provides case management to participants whose main goal is work experience. The NEXTGEN BSR and Career Advisors work very closely to ensure that communication and expectations are clear for all participants interested in work experience opportunities.

The WDB level BSR shares information concerning the NEXTGEN work experience program with employers and also works closely with the NEXTGEN BSR on making those connections. This is beneficial by providing additional exposure for the work experience program.

12. Does the Local Area WDB have a re-entry program for young adults? If yes, please briefly describe it.

The WPWDA does not have a specific re-entry program for young adults. However, as with all other barriers, the Career Adviors work diligently to help justice involved young adults to overcome barriers and reach their educational and career goals.

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

- a. Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies.
The WPWDB has a strong relationship with our local area Title II partners. The WPWDB staff and the Title II partners meet at least twice a year, often to discuss the boards WIOA Plan and the Title II plan to ensure we are in alignment to support each other and our services. This has enhanced our alignment and allowed us to leverage subject matter experts where applicable with appropriately identified clients. Our referral process across the partnership has also benefited both parties and clients. Title II staff also attend the HIRE meetings regularly to share information.
- b. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies.
The WPWD has built a strong collaborative partnership with our local VR offices over the years. The VR business services representatives actively participate in our local business services meetings; assist with recruitment events; utilize networks.gov with their clients and are a constant attendees at our HIRE meetings.
- c. Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as Local Area WDB's and the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]
Integrating adult education with occupational education, training and workforce preparation, as well as the creation of career pathways for youth is an on-going goal for WPWDB. These areas are built into the WIOA 14 elements, which will streamline the service delivery to youth. As we have certified our areas industry specific career pathways, leveraging occupational education, training and workforce preparation is becoming easier to implement and demonstrate success.

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

The WPWDB does offer incentives for NEXTGEN participants. See the Youth Incentive Policy attached.

If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include:

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

Name document: **Western Piedmont NEXTGEN Incentive Policy. Uploaded**

Note: Federal funds may not be spent on entertainment costs.

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

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

The ultimate goal of the WPWDB as it applies to WIOA Title 1 is long term employment. Therefore, our entire program is designed to get young adults into employment, beginning with obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent then working with them to determine their career path. This may include job shadowing in areas of interest, post-secondary training, and/or learning soft skills through both classroom training in employability skills, such as “Working Smart” or secure a community partner to assist. Several of the NEXTGEN Career Advisors are trained to facilitate the “Working Smart” curriculum which teaches work related proficiencies that employers have identified as essential workplace skills.

Paid internships (work experience) help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. The purpose is to provide the young adult with the opportunities for career exploration and skill development and is not to benefit the employer, although the employer may, in fact, benefit from activities performed by the youth. NEXTGEN Career Advisors use LMI data to talk to young adults about opportunities that can be found in our local area. They discuss in-demand opportunities and the training required for such jobs. The NEXTGEN Business Services Representative works with local businesses, especially small businesses, and non-profits to set up paid internships. Youth funds may be used to pay wages and related support costs for work experiences in the public, private, for-profit or non-profit sectors when an employee/employer relationship has been established (as determined under the Fair Labor Standards Act), and where the objective assessment and Individual Service Strategy indicate that a paid internship (work experience element) is appropriate. The NEXTGEN Business Services Representative is responsible for working with the Career Advisors and young adults in securing the positions for paid internship opportunities. The Career Advisors plan activities to allow exposure to various industry sectors of in-demand jobs in the area. Internships at non-profits are set up when a young adult has no work experience and then they proceed to a paid internship at a local business in an industry that interests them. If the young adult has previous work experience they will generally be placed with a business in which they have interest. Businesses have been very open to having young adults participate in work experiences, and some have hired the young adults at the end of the internship. Overall, we have had success in the WPWDB in placing our NEXTGEN participants into unsubsidized employment.

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

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

No

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

The WPWDB continues to have a formal Youth Council to promote youth development as a broad public responsibility and to seek ways to serve youth in

Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. The WPWDB will provide oversight and approval of all activities of the Youth Council. The WPWDB will provide oversight to planning, operational, and any issues relating to the provision of services to youth. Youth Council updates and activities will be part of WPWDB discussions and agenda items throughout the year.

- b. If yes, please provide a response to the following: N/A
 - a) Provide the committee’s purpose/vision.
 - b) Provide the committee’s top three goals or objectives for PY 2022.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - c) List of members to include members’ agency/organization, one of which must be a community-based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. Provide the Committee’s Chair information in the first block (who must be a Local Area WDB member.) Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Committee Members. [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)] and,
- c. Complete the following chart for the PY 2022 Youth Committee’s planned meeting schedule to include dates, time, and location. *[Expand form as needed.]*

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)

X. Local Area WDB Innovations

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

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
Finish Line Grant	Used to provide assistance to community college students who were over 50% complete with their training and had an emergency expense that could possibly derail them and result in the student being unable to complete successfully	October 2018 - present	4050 Statewide Initiative Funds	CCC&TI, CVCC, & WPCC

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

The WPWDB has partnered with the City of Hickory to reach out to the Ridgeview Community, an identified underserved area. We have partnered with the City of Hickory and other community partners to provide services in that area. We provided a job fair in the area including employers located in the community or within close proximity of the community. We had 20 people to attend, which all involved felt was a good number. There are plans in the works for another job fair in the late spring-early summer to try to capture those who are graduating high school, college or completing other educational programs. NCWorks staff have been stationed in the community one day a week for a couple of months. We have not experienced much traffic at that location to date. We will continue to evaluate and determine the best way to serve those in the community whether through traditional means or non-traditional means moving forward.

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

NEXTGEN Career Advisors meet the young adults where they are, and work with the young adult to provide wrap-around services to lead to success. By doing so, they allow the participant to determine their needs and the level of service that is to be provided. Ultimately, this increases the opportunity and career exploration that every young adult needs! As with the adult/dislocated worker program, Career Advisors develop those relationships which encourage success of the young adult and is evidenced in meeting our performance goals and in seeing former youth participants return to the career center for additional services when they need them. Please see the Success Story in regards to participant, Sumetha. It has been uploaded to WISE.

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

The Future Workforce Alliance (Western Piedmont, High Country and Foothills WDBs) has been working collaboratively with Brian Lane, Northwest Prosperity Zone Regional analyst, to determine training needs for the regional workforce/career center staff. He helps provide training to all the three workforce boards career center/board staff on key areas w/ networks.gov, and programmatic areas such US DOL measures, Understanding UI, Customer Service....etc. We have also partnered with the Dept of Commerce Reentry Specialist to offer regional virtual expungement classes to needed individuals. The fact that training is offered to all center staff across three workforce boards, increases skill levels of staff members consistently, and results in offering better customer service to those served in the centers due to understanding the workforce system as a whole, as well as more about each of the individual WIOA programs. The Western Piedmont Workforce is providing virtual job getting workshops for its own local area as well as for High County and Foothills. This is a efficient and consistent process for administering workshops when we are all currently feeling the effects of staffing decreases within our career centers.

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

One example of a good partnership in promoting work-based learning is through the Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training). The Community College Customized Training Coordinator and the WPWDB Business Service Representative conduct joint business visits and offer training solutions. The outcome from this partnership with the Customized Training Program is to provide more training services to more businesses by leveraging funds from both the Upskill WP Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training) and the community college's Customized Training Program. Catawba Valley Community College and WPWDB have engaged and partnered together to provide training services to 5 businesses. Cost sharing is a best practice that enables both programs to serve more businesses.

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

The WPWDB was thinking about technology tools for virtual services prior to the COVID 19 pandemic. The pandemic pushed this to the forefront and we began seeking ways to serve our customers virtually. We are currently using Cisco Webex to provide virtual workshops to customers. We are fortunate to have a number of staff who were enthusiastic to learn and were willing to jump in and use this virtual software to help teach the workshops. We have consistently had large numbers of customers participate in virtual workshops (10 – 100+) versus when doing them in person in the NCWorks Career Center. Currently, we have partnered with two other WDBs, Foothills WDB and High Country WDB, to provide virtual workshops for the entire Northwest Prosperity Zone. This collaboration has allowed us to pool resources to be more cost effective and reduce redundancy and duplicative of virtual services. This is an area that the WPWDB plans to continue offering to customers as we have found many customers have responded positively to career services and workshop being offered virtually. We have confidence that this will allow the reach of NCWorks to expand and enable us to serve more customers effectively.

7. Describe how the Local Area WDB's inform other Local Area WDB's of best or promising regional workforce practices.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated our use of technologies to serve our customers virtually. We are currently using Cisco Webex to provide virtual workshops to customers. We are fortunate to have a number of staff who were enthusiastic to learn and were willing to jump in and use this virtual software to help teach the workshops. We have consistently had large numbers of customers participate in virtual workshops (10 – 100+) versus when doing them in person in the NCWorks Career Center. Currently, we have partnered with two other WDBs, Foothills WDB and High Country WDB, to provide virtual workshops for the entire Northwest Prosperity Zone. This collaboration has allowed us to pool resources to be more cost effective and reduce redundancy and duplicative of virtual services. This is an area that the WPWDB plans to continue offering to customers as we have found many customers have responded positively to career services and workshops being offered virtually. We have confidence that this will allow the reach of NCWorks to expand and enable us to serve more customers effectively.

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

Based on recent feedback from our private sector workforce board members, and local area businesses, around the need to be better informed about labor force trends and changes, we developed a monthly Business Brief snippet. The Business Brief is mailed out monthly (the inaugural edition went out in February 2022) to a business specific distribution list via constant contact. It is no more than two pages long and focuses specifically on our local area. For many years we have also provided business with labor market intelligence from NC LEAD, along with WPWDBs quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN). These labor market information resources are used to engage and inform businesses on the current state of the labor market for the local area. The WPWDB Business Services Representative shares information on the characteristics of the local workforce to businesses. The WPWDB Business Services Representative assists businesses in understanding vital business information of the local workforce area as pertain to local workforce demographics. One

positive result from this is that more and more businesses are asking for and finding value in our labor market information.

XI. Program Year 2022 Local Area WDB Plan Required Policy Attachments

1. The following policies are *required* to be attached as separate documents in WISE as part of the PY 2022 Local Area Plan. The Local Area Plan is not complete without these documents. Name each document: Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name.

- In the first column, state if the policy is attached or why it is missing and when it can be expected. If two of the policies have been combined, please make a notation.
- In the second column mark “Yes” **only** if the policy has been changed/revised since PY 2021 and requires a review for PY 2022 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
- Do not add an empty document in WISE as a “placeholder”.

Required Local Area WDB Policies	Attached (Yes/No). If no, why?	Revised for PY 2022 (Yes/No) and needs review
1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy	No	n/a
2. Competitive Procurement Policy	Yes	Yes
3. Conflict of Interest Policy	Yes	Yes
4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures	Yes	Yes
5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I	Yes	Yes
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	Yes	Yes
7. On-the-Job Training Policy	No	n/a
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	Yes, both Program and Financial Monitoring Policies	Yes, both Program and Financial Monitoring Policies
9. Priority of Service Policy	Yes, one for Veterans and Spouses and one for Adults	Yes, for both
10. Youth Work Experience Policy	Yes	Yes

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

11. Supportive Services Policy	Yes, one for Adults/DW and one for Youth (NextGen)	Yes, for both
12. Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures & Monitoring Schedule	Yes, included in Program Monitoring Policy	No

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

2. Designate whether the following local *Optional Policy* is included and used at the Local Area WDB and is included in the Local Area Plan or write “N/A” implying “Not Applicable”, if the Local Area WDB does not have this policy and; therefore, does not use these services.
 - In the second column mark “Yes” *only* if the policy has been changed/revised since PY 2021 and requires a review for PY 2022 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
 - Do not add a blank document in WISE as a “placeholder”.

If “Yes”, load the policy as a separate document. Name documents: *Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name*. [Example: IWT Policy – Yes. Attached as *Board Name IWT Policy*.]

Optional Local Area WDB Policies	Yes- the Local Area WDB has a policy or N/A (Not Applicable)	Revised for PY 2022 (Add Yes or N/A for this column)
1. Local Area WDB Guidance for Local Incumbent Worker Grants	Yes	Yes
2. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy	N/A	N/A
3. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy	N/A	N/A
4. Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy	Yes	Yes
5. Local Area WDB Guidance for Finish Line Grant	Yes	Yes

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

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Dollar Amounts	\$5,000 Annually and \$8,600 lifetime
Time Limits	2 years or less (or by special permission)
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor’s, other)	Associate’s Degrees, Diplomas, Continuing Education Certificates or Third Party recognized Credentials/Certificates
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for	Approval of Western Piedmont Program Administrator Required. Occupational Training, Individual Training Accounts and Cost Tracking Process Policy www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

training that may be allowed	
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Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short-term, etc.)	Semester, short-term
Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.)	Uniforms, shoes, physicals, exams, required tools of the trade such as stethoscopes, automechanic tools, electrician tools, auto mechanic tools, etc.
Other	

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

Transportation	Childcare	Supplies <i>(include examples)</i>	Emergency <i>(include examples)</i>	Other <i>(include examples)</i>
Youth Only – Public/Private Bus Tickets, Carpool/Van Fees, Taxi/Uber/Lyft fees (emergency situations only) and gas cards based on miles of travel to training site(s)	Childcare paid to the childcare provider for up to 2 children and up to \$350 for 1 child or \$550 for 2 children per month.	Youth only – clothes, shoes or other items required for work experience or unsubsidized work.	Car repairs, tires if needed to pass inspection, rent, utilities or other emergency items that are not recurring expenses.	

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

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

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

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

Appendix C
Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

- Priority of Service Policy
- Youth Work Experience Policy
- Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy
- Local Area WDB Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures and Monitoring Schedule
- Local Area WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy (*optional*)
- Local Area WDB Guidance on Finish Line Grants (*optional*)
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Customer Flow Chart
- Local Area WDB Guidance for Finish Line Grant (*optional*)

* Mail signed and unfolded *originals* to assigned DWS Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316. DocuSign® (or similar) signature pages may be uploaded in WISE.