Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Western Piedmont Local and Regional Workforce Development Area Plan

Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan for PY 2020 July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024

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

Local Title I WIOA Instructions

Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the local chief elected official, a comprehensive four-year plan. The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2020 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024 and will include all current local policies. The local and regional 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, Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Sections 106 through 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 Workforce Development Boards 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 Workforce Development Boards may reference the North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan.

Plan Submission and Due Date

The Local Plan must be submitted through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE), the Division's web-based financial system. ***The due date is May 11, 2020***. Each attachment must be submitted and labeled separately in either Word or PDF format. Attachments not submitted separately will not be accepted. Forms requiring original signatures may be mailed to the local Board's assigned Planner at: N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Services Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316. Hand delivered documents may be left at 313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120, Raleigh, NC 27603.

I. Workforce Development Board Overview

The Local Area Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division. It is important that this section remain current during the Program Year. Updates should be submitted to the local Board's assigned Division Planner when changes occur.

1. Provide the Local Area's official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (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: **Western Piedmont Jobs Training Consortium. - Uploaded**

2. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Workforce Development Director.

Name: Wendy Johnson	**Title**:Workforce Development Director
Organization:Western Piedmont Council of Governments	**Address**: PO Box 9026 (1880 2nd Ave NW) Hickory, NC 28603
Phone number: (828) 485-4273	**Email address**: wendy.johnson@wpcog.org

3. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Local Area's Chief Elected Official.

Name: Bob Floyd	**Elected Title**: Village Mayor
Government: Village of Cedar Rock	**Address**: PO BOX 1166, LENOIR NC 28645 (2012 Cedar Rock Estate Drive, Lenoir)
Phone number: 828-758-1959	**Email address**: bobfloydjr@floydgroup.com

4. Provide the name, title, business name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official, if different than question 3. **N/A**

Name:	**Title**:
Business Name:	**Address**:
Phone number:	**Email address**:

5. Provide the name, address, telephone 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**: Executive Director
Organization:Western Piedmont Council of Governments	**Address**: PO Box 9026 (1880 2nd Ave NW) Hickory, NC 28603
Phone number: (828) 485-4272	**Email address**:anthony.starr@wpcog.org

6. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official.

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

7. Attach a copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent's organizational chart with an 'effective as of date'. Name document: **Western Piedmont Organization Chart - Uploaded**

8. 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]. **DUNS # 602653529**; **SAM Activation Date 8/19/2019 – 8/19/2020**

9. Provide the name of the local Workforce Development Board's equal opportunity officer who shall be responsible for assuring that discrimination does not occur in its programs or projects. (PS 07-2018) **Elizabeth Hilliard, WDB Staff, Program Coordinator**

Composition of the local Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements have been provided as reference at Appendix D.

10. Provide each Workforce Development Board members' name, business title, business name and address, telephone number and e-mail address on the provided form. The first block is reserved to identify the Board chairperson (*form provided*). Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. Name document: *Local*

Area Name WDB List. See *Appendix D* for Local Area Workforce Development Boards membership requirements. **Uploaded. Western Piedmont Workforce Board list**

Note: Check the block on provided form certifying compliance with required WIOA local Workforce Development Board business nomination process. If the Board membership is not in compliance currently, provide the statement here.

* Use and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names except to clarify those with multiple categories.

The Chief 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 Board shall submit by-laws that clearly demonstrate all WIOA and North Carolina required elements described in Appendix A. Additional by-laws guidance and electronic meeting formats have been provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

11. Attach the Workforce Development Board by-laws including date adopted/amended. By-laws must include the required elements found in Appendix A. Name document: *Local Area Name WDB by-laws*. **Uploaded (will revise based on CEO & WPWDB input and 30 day public comments)**

12. To demonstrate that the attached Workforce Development Board By-laws comply, complete By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart. **Uploaded (will revise based on CEO & WPWDB input and 30 day public comments)**

Sunshine Provision - The Local Board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Local Board, including information regarding the Local Plan prior to submission of the 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 Board. [WIOA Section 107(e)]

13. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public. [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 email that the plan is available on the www.westernpiedmontworks 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, the updated plan will be reposted in WISE.

Public Comment - The Workforce Development Board shall make copies of the proposed Local 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 plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

14. Attach a copy of the Local Workforce Development Board's organizational chart with an 'effective as of date.' Include position titles. Name document: **Western Piedmont WDB Organizational Chart - Uploaded**

15. Complete the following chart for the PY2020 Local Workforce Development Board's planned meeting schedule to include time, dates and location. *[Expand form as needed.]*

Date	**Time**	**Location (include address and room #)**
8/27/2020	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
10/22/2020	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
12/10/2020	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
02/25/2021	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
04/22/2021	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1
**Tentative 05/27/2021*	*8:30 am*	*WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1*
06/24/2021	8:30 am	WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory NC – Conference Room A1

Note: All local Workforce Development Board meetings will be held in accessible facilities. All materials and discussions should be available in an accessible format upon request.

16. 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, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, participants' responsibilities.] Name document: *Local Area Name Certification Form*. **Uploaded (signed copy mailed on 5/13/2020)**

Note: Document must bear the original signature of the Administrative Entity signatory official. Mail the signed Certification form (page 27) original to Division Planner.

17. Submit the original Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) Signatory Page (*form provided*), bearing the original signatures of the Chief Elected Official(s) and the Workforce Development Board Chairman, and attach a copy of the signed document. Name document: *Local Area Name Signatory Page*. **Uploaded (signed copy mailed on 5/13/2020)**

Note: Mail the signed original Signatory Form to the assigned Division Planner.

II. Local Area Strategic Planning

Each local Workforce Development Board (WDB) shall develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local Plan. The local Workforce Development Board is required to the keep the Plan up to date and fluid as events and funding changes occur which may require local area responses. Local 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 these 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 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. With low unemployment rates, Boards continue to have a shortage of middle-skilled level workers. As a Board and workforce system, Boards 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, Boards are paving the way for an even stronger economy through sector partnerships and career pathways initiatives.

1. Describe how the local Workforce Development Boards and partners address local challenges for job growth and business expansions?
   In each of Western Piedmont Workforce Development Boards (WPWDB) representative county (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba) the NCWorks Career Center manager sets up and host a county monthly HIRE (Helping Individuals Regain Employment) meeting. Workforce partners such as the community college, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Christian Ministries, Regional Housing Authority, and other non-profits attend these monthly meetings to address local challenges to both job seekers and businesses. In Burke and Caldwell large county job fairs continue to be coordinated annually. Later in PY19 the NCWorks Career Centers began "After Hours" hiring events so that the underemployed and/or families with small children could get to a hiring event later in the evenings with fewer constraints. The jobseeker turn out has been very good, with one of the events in Catawba (January) having 86 jobseekers and 9 employers.
   The WPWDB Upskill Grant (Incumbent Worker Grant) is helping with job growth and retention, as it allows businesses to train their current workforce in areas like Supervision/Leadership so those employees can be promoted as more long term experience employees retire. This makes room for entry level positions, and better prepares incumbents to move into supervisor roll with some level of preemptive training. (This testimonial was provided by Debra Lail, HR Manager at Steele Rubber, "By developing the skills and techniques of our employees in training roles

to train co-workers through effective communications, understanding the learner, applying the appropriate teaching methods, and successful instructor-learner relationships. With a third of our employee's eligible for retirement within a few years, we will have a group of qualified trainers to ensure continuity and support for ongoing knowledge transfer." --Debra Lail, Human Resource Manager.)

2. Provide a description of the Workforce Development Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)]

   The WDB has worked diligently to create and increase use of social media resources, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, 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 have rebounded some, but it is imperative that we continue to seek new ways to reach people to entice them to come to the WPWDB to live & live. We continue to look at new ways of reaching people through social media by learning more about SnapChat and TikTok to see if either, or both, are online media we want to add to our outreach toolbox. 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 operations, which is 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 partly due to having a new contractor in place, and the multilevel and continual monitoring that has become part of our process at the contractor 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 contractors. 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. In the WPWDB 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. 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 area and in order to help recruit new businesses and sustain current ones.

3. Considering the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning Section III, describe strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the Local Area to achieve the strategic vision and goals. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(F)]

Currently the economy is being directly, and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Prior to March 1, 2020 the regional economy was thriving and expanding. We anticipate by the end of 2020, and/or once control of the pandemic has taken place, that a positive resurgence in the economy will happen. At this moment NC unemployment rate is approximately 12% due to the influences of COVID-19. The continued changes and advancements in technology and automation will drive the demands for increased knowledge and skills needed to meet employment demands in all sectors.

Working with our K-12, community colleges, chambers of commerce, economic developers, and businesses will give us direct insight to both learners and industry needs. The WPWDB strategic plan PY18-21 focuses on stakeholder/partnership development, workforce intelligence and economic development. All of these goals directly align with continued career pathway development and outreach; broader workforce intelligence data that can be shared digitally and more frequently; The WPWDB members represent employers from a broad range of leading industries that need workers with the training, skills and dedication to produce important products and services for a global marketplace. For each, we will help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance the local area's workforce capabilities.

4. Describe Local Area's workforce development system, including identifying the programs included in the system, and how the Workforce Development Board will work with the entities administering core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment and provision of services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). [WIOA Section 108(b)(2)]

   The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area (WPWDB) consist of a number of partner agencies and programs that diligently work together to serve our community. In addition to the Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner Peyser) programs which are offered in our NCWorks Career Centers, we work closely with other WIOA partner programs including Vocational Rehabilitation and the Adult Basic Education department of the local community colleges. Representatives from these programs, in addition to representatives from other local workforce partner agencies and non-profits, participate in the HIRE meetings, which are held in each county in the WPWD area. These meeting are used to drive conversation and collaboration to serve customers as needed with a team approach. In addition, the NEXTGEN Career Advisors work very closely with the six secondary school systems in the WPWDB and have a great working relationship with the Career & Technical Education staff. They collaborate on internship possibilities and work closely to meet the needs of students who may need the NEXTGEN services to achieve success. Other local workforce partners include faith based, non-profit organizations, social services agencies and other agencies that have a workforce component.

   To support alignment and provision of services, analysis of the following is conducted and/or reviewed: regional economic conditions, the knowledge and skills

needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, the employment needs including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, utilizing two crucial reports that are spearheaded by the WPCOG and the WPWDB. One analytical study is the 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) report. The data from this report guides us in addressing the employment needs of employers of in-demand business sectors in our local area. The WPWDB has identified and certified three career pathways for our in demand industries including healthcare, advanced manufacturing and energy. In addition, the WDWB Director serves on other committees and workgroups where community and employer concerns are discussed and solutions sought to make improvements for the citizens and the business community.

Current labor force and labor market trends is provided monthly by LEAD and shared via the www.westernpiedmontworks.org website so that the local area can stay informed. The WPWDB also helps provide the quarterly Economic Indicator Newsletter (EIN) which is available digitally. The employment needs of employers in the region is extracted and analyzed from www.ncworks.gov along with face to face meetings with employer groups and educational institutions to tweak and make changes as demanded by growth in automation and the demand for enhanced skill levels.

5. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Workforce Development Board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable. [WIOA 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.

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 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. In regards to short term trainings and certifications, our Upskill Grant (incumbent worker) has been a gold mine for businesses looking to grow their current employees (Supervisor training) to make room the future of their workforce, new hires.

6. Describe the Workforce Development Board's use of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(B)].
The WPWDB's use of our Upskill Grant (Incumbent Worker) has helped local area businesses train their current senior employees in areas such as Leadership and Supervision, which helps make room for entry level new hires. Currently we have eight Upskill Grants in process and a few more waiting for confirmation and company agreements. Our goal is to administer at least 10 Upskill Grants a year (Jan—Dec).
The WPWDB BSC meets with the relative community college customized training director and the interested business to determine how each agencies funding can be best utilized to serve the business in the most applicable way. This creates a strengthened partnership amongst all, and eliminates any issues with confusion/competition. This type of collaboration also helps each program stretch funding in order to assist more businesses.
Due to continued WIOA funding cuts we stopped processing OJT's and have focused only on Upskill. We feel this is a bigger area of demand for businesses and a better use of training funds.
The WPWDB's BSC coordinates monthly meetings with business facing staff from the NCWorks Career Centers and includes Voc Rehab business service staff. This provides a greater reach of information and knowledge across partners of what the pulse is in the business/industry sector.

We continue to promote our career pathways, and will look to evaluate those this year and next. Western Piedmont partnered with five other WDB's to create an Energy Career Pathway. This was the first multi-board pathway in NC with immense energy sector input.
In December 2019 Burke County was invited to participate with McDowell, Polk and Rutherfordton on a Next Generation Sector Strategy Partnership for western manufacturers. The first full meeting of this regional group including support partners and manufacturers was held in 11/21/19 with over 20 businesses in attendance. The Western Manufacturing Partnership Alliance has been meeting consistently and has created sub-teams to work on issues expressed by the regional manufacturers: Marketing/Promoting; Building Foundation Skills at K-12 (training); Business to Business Networking.

7. Describe how the Workforce Development Board coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5]
WPWDB promotes entrepreneurial skills training based on knowledge from the community college's Small Business Center, and through our relationship with the SBTDC. The current Business Edge program has helped strengthen our relationships with area businesses and the SBTDC. We also promote from our website the various entrepreneur/startup trainings. Through our Upskill Grant we have been able to provide training with a few small companies, and promote that fact to other apprehensive small business. We are also supportive of our partner Catawba Valley Community Colleges (Alexander & Catawba Counties) newest #startupcatawba entrepreneur support system. https://supportedly.com/sye-nc/startup-catawba/

8. Describe how the Workforce Development Board enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5)]
The Workforce Development Board collaborates with ApprenticeshipCatawba to help promote apprenticeship as a viable talent development resource to help businesses develop talent that meet current and future workforce needs. The WPWDB BSC engages with businesses to discuss workforce needs and promote apprenticeship where applicable. When a business expresses interest for more information about apprenticeship, the BSC will coordinate with the Regional Apprenticeship Consultant and Coordinator to provide services.

9. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A). [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)] In addition, specifically describe the coordination and delivery of services to businesses to include the following [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)]:
Upon receiving a WARN the BSC will contact the applicable business to discuss and identify resources and services to meet the needs of the business and its employees as a result of the layoff process. The BSC will coordinate with the NCWorks Career Center staff, and other workforce partners consisting of the community college, Vocational Rehabilitation, Legal Aid of NC, the county Department of Social Services, and other relevant community partners to provide services to the impacted

employees. A customized recruitment event may be held to offer job opportunities to impacted employees.

a. Systems that are used to determine economic trends and partners within your Early Warning Network to help identify those businesses that are expanding and/or struggling. **The WPWDB leverages the partnerships with economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, community colleges, and industry leaders for information on economic trends and conditions. NC Commerce Business Services Unit searches and generates reports from their business-related software, Lexis Nexis, on North Carolina's companies that may be at-risk. The reports are sent to the local Workforce Development Board to engage the businesses and provide services where needed, many times in partnership with the SBTDC.**

b. Local resources that are provided to help struggling businesses avert or prevent layoffs, and. **The WPWDB BSC will coordinate with the relative economic development staff and Business Edge Counselor (with the SBTDC) to provide consultation and resources to help the business avert potential layoffs and/or provide financial counseling**

c. Explain coordination with TAA to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services. **The NCWorks Center TAA Coordinator will make referrals to the BSC for job opportunities for TAA graduates. The BSC will assist with career exploration of opportunities with the TAA graduates and refer job ready candidates to potential employers.**

10. Provide a description of plans, strategies and assurances concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the Local Area through the NCWorks Career Center system. Include how improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of services are/will be achieved. [WIOA Section 108(b)(12)]

In the WPWDB, NCWorks Career Center management team meets monthly. This group includes the Workforce Development Board Director, Regional Ops Director, Workforce Development Board Program Administrator, the Career Center Manager and/or Assistant Manager for each comprehensive center, and the Program Manager for the Title I Contractor. It is during this meeting that each center has the opportunity to discuss anything challenges/highlights in their respective career centers, as well as to share ideas on how to improve their career center services in order to provide solid customer service and avoid duplication of services. In addition, this provides a time to discuss center operation performance measures, ncworks.gov data entry, and continuous improvement opportunities for Ad/DW/Youth and Wagner-Peyser services. Developing continuous improvements for our local workforce system is another benefit of the NCWorks management leadership meeting regularly. Each NCWorks Career Center management team has regular meetings with all career center staff to update them on changes, ask for

continuous improvement ideas, and to offer encouragement and/or training. Friday afternoons have been set aside for more comprehensive NCWorks Career Center staff meetings, and/or training for them to improve their skill sets and improve service to the customer, and/or employer tours. WPWDB attempts to have quarterly meetings that include all NCWorks Career Center staff from our three comprehensive career centers, and includes board staff. These meetings provide the opportunity to review of our career center performance goals and determine improvement opportunities; it allows time for professional development of the teams and team building exercises; provides a time to share best practices and look at ways to improve our services for our customers, both jobseekers and employers; and we recognize NCWorks Career Center staff that have gone above and beyond demonstrating leadership values (these are the values set up through the STARs leadership training).

11. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities 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 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 are 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.

12. Provide a description of cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Workforce Development Board 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 services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of NCWorks Career Center staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at 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 VR, but in our One-Stop Required Partner MOU we have input and shared accountability from partner agencies, especially Voc Rehab. Voc Rehab provides all NCWorks Career Center staff with Disability Awareness training on a consistent basis. The Voc Rehab business service representatives also attend our monthly local business services meetings so we ensure we have plans in place for good communication and strategies when contacting employers.

13. Provide a detailed description of the competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts in the Local Area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16)]
    Uploaded: Local Area Procurement Policy. https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

The WPWDB follows the local area Procurement and Contracting Policy, issuing RFP's every three years for Title 1 Services with annual extension possibilities in between. For One-Stop Operator, we issues a RFP every four years with annual extension possibilities in between.

14. Provide a brief description of the actions the Workforce Development Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board, 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, Title 1 Contractor, 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 ISD 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.

III. Regional Strategic Planning

North Carolina is defined by an expansive geography that covers over 53,000 square miles and spans from the mountains in the west, to the piedmont region in the state's center to the coastal plain region in the east. This expansive geography contributes to the state's diverse mix of rural communities, small towns, cities, metropolitan areas and regional economic centers, each with its own unique industrial composition. Part of North Carolina's economic development strategy includes organization of the state's 100 counties into eight multi-county regions called Prosperity Zones, which are intended to help ensure economic growth across all areas of the state, by leveraging regional economic, workforce and educational resources. Overlaying the eight prosperity zones are North Carolina's 23 Local Workforce Development Board areas that facilitate the delivery of workforce services to the state's citizens and employers.

Local Workforce Development Boards are to continue, or begin, formal interaction based on regional geography aligning with labor market areas. The following regional configurations will be used for submission of this Regional Plan:

- *Western Region: Southwestern and Mountain Areas WDBs;*
- ***Northwest Region: High Country, Western Piedmont, and Region C WDBs;***

- *Piedmont Triad Region: Piedmont Triad Regional, Guilford County, DavidsonWorks, and Regional Partnership WDBs;*
- *Southwest Region: Centralina, Charlotte Works, and Gaston County WDBs;*
- *North Central Region: Kerr-Tar, Durham, and Capital Area WDBs;*
- *Sandhills Region: Lumber River, Cumberland County, and Triangle South WDBs;*
- *Northeast Region: Rivers East, Northeastern, and Turning Point WDBs; and*
- *Southeast Region: Eastern Carolina and Cape Fear WDBs.*

1. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; as well as conditions that contribute to potential layoffs and closures and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)]. **See Uploaded Attachment_Regional Strategic Planning Q1 Response**

   'a)Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations data report is attached and titled as listed above in the response to Q1.
   Currently the economy is being directly, and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Prior to March 1, 2020 the regional economy was thriving and expanding. We anticipate by the end of 2020, and/or once control of the pandemic has taken place, that a positive resurgence in the economy will happen.
   'b) The continued changes and advancements in technology and automation will drive the demands for increased knowledge and skills needed to meet employment demands in all sectors. Eligible training providers such as our community college partners are already updating curriculum and adding relevant equipment to prepare tomorrow's workforce. This report, *The New Foundational Skills of the Digital Economy ("The foundational human, digital, and business skills that will be needed in the digitally intensive economy of the future are already in high demand today."*) sheds light on the continued, and increased impact of how technology will drive significant changes in how we train and prepare the workforce.

   The workforce development boards are made up of 51% private sector businesses, therefore business involvement is a constant. Not only do we receive input and engagement from our workforce boards, each local area is involved in on-going career pathway development, which requires business involvement. Both Region C and Western Piedmont have developed and helped grow solid manufacturing sector partnerships. Manufacturing is one the main drivers for our local economy.

2. Describe how the regional strategic vision aligns with the NCWorks Commission's 2019-2021 Strategic Plan.
   The vision of the Future Workforce Alliance (FWA) is to:

   (NCWO Commission Goal 1 alignment) Help businesses and employers meet their current and future workforce needs by using WIOA Title 1 funding to support and

increase in demand occupational training opportunities; help not only youth, but, adults, dislocated workers, and those with barriers; build skills for long-term careers by marketing and increasing exposure to career pathways; promote our NCWorks Career Centers as the go-to source for jobseeker job preparation, and business retention/recruitment; strengthen the local economy and develop the talent pipeline through continued focus on the advantages of upskilling; provide job seekers the opportunity for advanced educational attainment that will provide meaningful careers and improve their quality of life so they can become self-sustaining.

(NCWO Commission Goal 2 alignment) The FWA Workforce Board members represent employers from a broad range of leading industries that need workers with the training, skills and dedication to produce important products and services for a global marketplace. For both, we help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance North Carolina's workforce capabilities. This includes working collaboratively with our local community colleges as well as other training providers to convene honest communication with business leaders and assess training that truly enhances their workforce as well as increases a jobseeker's employability. The Incumbent Worker Grant (Upskill) is a major asset of the WPWDB. Upskill is a competitive training grant for businesses in addressing employees' skill gaps, improving employee retention, helping stabilize the business, and increasing the competitiveness of the employee and the business. Through this effort businesses: Improve Productivity and Increase Competitiveness; Retain Key Talent and Expertise; Reduce Employee Turnover.

Each WDB in the FWA region has various industry led initiatives that have helped create needed training opportunities in in-demand occupations. Currently a Western Region Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (WRAMP) is being developed by McDowell, Polk, Rutherfordton, and Burke Counties. The WRAMP came about as result of a technical assistance grant from DWS where a consulting group, Next Generation, trains and develops teams to better lead industry sector partnerships with a different approach. The Furniture Industry is also driving industry sector training and marketing for its demand. All three workforce boards in the FWA region have certified career pathways in: Healthcare, Manufacturing and Energy Services.

(NCWO Commission Goal 3 alignment) The FWA meets at least twice a year in person, with multiple conference calls throughout as well. Last year we held our first FWA (regional) NCWorks Career Center all staff meeting, which included a half day of meeting one another and sharing best practices. The NCWorks Training Centers leadership academy "Successful Teams Achieve Results (STARs) is on its third class and each class has included all staff from the FWA region.

The full Western Region, with Mountain Area and Region C leading the charge, applied for an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER Grant.

Currently the proposal requests $50,000 in funding from ARC for Technical Assistance to support the development of a regional "WNC Works: Recovery to Careers" strategy that will lead to both increased cooperation and coordination between organizations assisting recovering addicts return to stable work situations, as well as the development of a POWER Implementation grant application. The ultimate outcome will be an increase in the number of eligible workers successfully re-entering the workforce after recovering from opioid addiction.

(NCWO Commission Goal 4 alignment) Each WDB in the FWA region has a required One-Stop Partner MOU and IFA that works as a great convening tool to discuss and ensure that multiple workforce and education agencies have collaborative goals to meet the demands of business and meet the needs of a diverse jobseeker population. The FWA region strives to market the relevant integrated services within our NCWorks system, which includes the re-notification of the updated NCWorks brand. The FWA board staff have worked diligently to update local marketing material to reflect the new brand, and ensure consistency with hard copies and social media outreach.

In the past, asking for innovative support to provide NCWorks Career Center staff with laptops and wireless capabilities was not well received, with privacy issues being the main response. With the recent (March 2020) COVID-19 impact, allowing them to telework, and be mobile/virtual in their efforts to effectively help our jobseeker and business customers, has brought about a renewed since of innovation when it comes to technology accessibility outside a NCWorks Career Center. Not only now, but in the future, virtual mobility in the community will be a key necessity to ensure the relevancy of the NCWorks System, especially in rural areas like the FWA region.

For the past few years system effectiveness has been collected by Eval Group and shared with the local workforce boards and NCWorks Career Center staff. At the moment we will continue to utilize Eval Group.

Please find below (Illustration 1) the FWA Region Business Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 11/2017 – 4/2020;

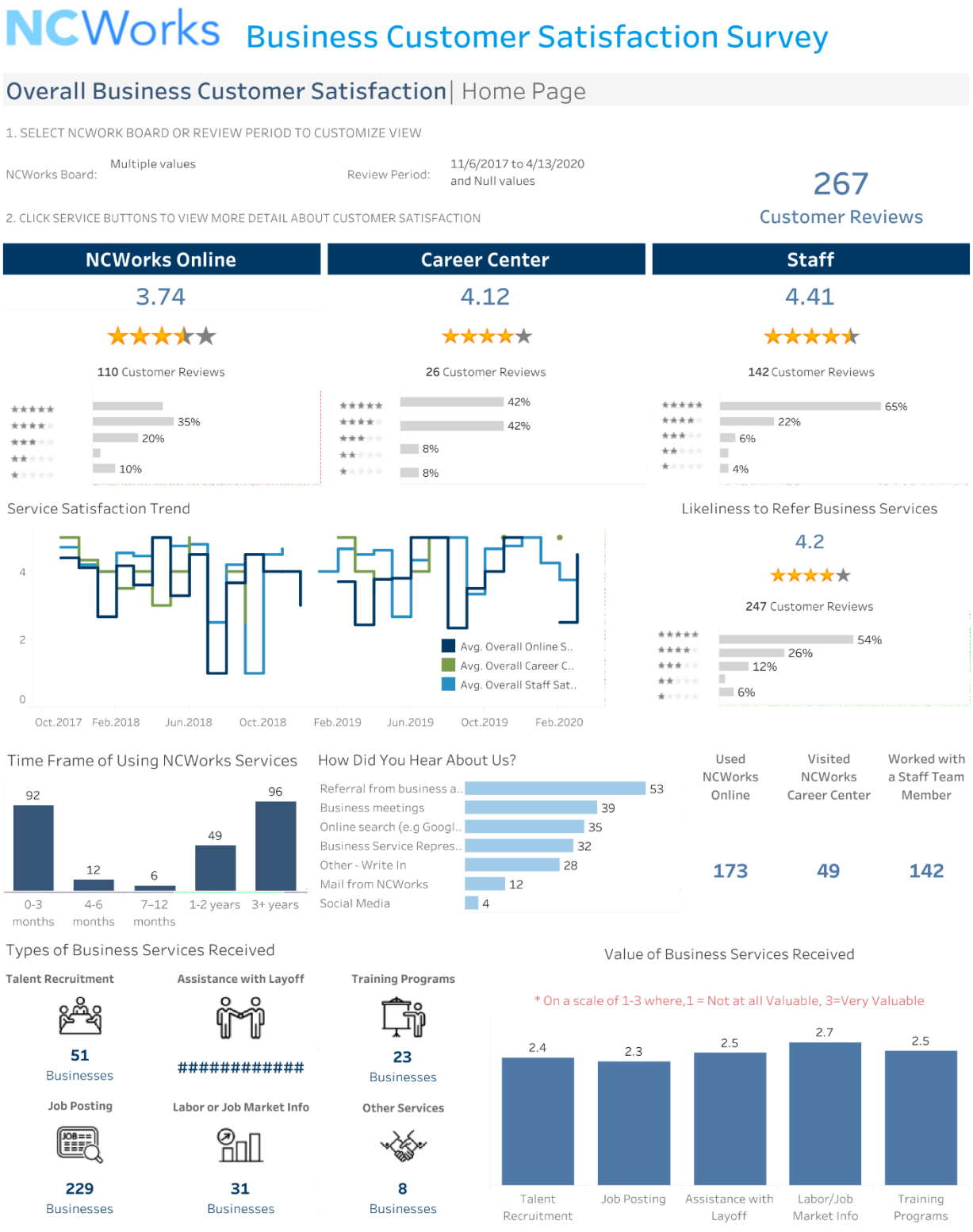

Illustration 1

Please find below (Illustration 2) the FWA Region_Overall Eval Group_Overall Initial Customer (jobseeker) Experience Satisfaction Survey Results 11/2017 – 4/2020;

Illustration 2

3. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(C)]. **Uploaded Attachment_Regional Strategic Planning_Q3 Response**

The main response to Q3 is included in the attachment. Since the type of barriers to employment varies, ongoing engagement with Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education programming, English as a Second Language, formerly incarcerated, and

Older Adults that wish to work is strengthened by local area meetings held through the NCWorks Career Centers, the Workforce Board members and the annual One-Stop Required Partner MOU/Infrastructure Funding agreement processes.

4. Describe strategies, used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(i)(ii)].
   The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board partners with economic developers, community colleges, Chambers of Commerce, and industry leaders to identify small businesses and in-demand sectors occupations. One of our workforce development resources is our Upskill Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training). The Upskill Training Grant is designed to offer funding assistance to small businesses and high-growth and in-demand industry sectors for incumbent worker training. This training grant offers funding resources to assist businesses with their strategies to develop talent so they can meet their current and future workforce needs.
   Local area business service teams stay up to date and engaged with businesses in order to understand the business needs and help them (business) develop labor market intelligence that will guide their recruitment and retention efforts. Tools such as the LEAD Workforce Board Labor Market Overview, Data from EMSI and the Western Piedmont Economic Indicator Newsletter support business needs and strategies.

5. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].
   Each of the FWA member workforce entities regularly meets with local economic development entities to assess their needs, discuss projects and provide support and encouragement related to both new recruitment efforts and existing industries. The FWA is completely committed to developing and maintaining relationships with Economic Development partners in order to best meet business customer needs.

6. Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region is/will address needs identified. Include a description *and* map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Section 108(b)(11)].
   Most of the FWA are rural areas and local transportation is one of the biggest challenges. While it has improved, still in most cases mass transit does not exist. Many rural counties have local transportation authorities that may be utilized when necessary, however, often the cost of utilizing these services is prohibitive.

   Below is data showing commuting statistics for the 15-county region. ***Data compiled from the 2018 NW Prosperity Zone Data Book by NC LEAD, Source US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD).***

	Employed in County, Live Outside	Live in County, Employed Outside	Employed and Live in County
Alexander	5,668	10,266	4,483
Alleghany	1,362	1,954	1,514
Ashe	2,333	4,628	3,950
Avery	3,243	3,167	2,065
Burke	13,288	19,111	12,305
Caldwell	9,700	19,905	12,283
Catawba	44,484	29,262	35,833
McDowell	7,272	9,991	8,232
Mitchell	2,294	3,086	2,055
Watauga	9,210	6,538	10,170
Wilkes	8,709	11,858	11,906
Yancey	1,393	3,554	1,998

7. Describe how the region coordinates with area secondary education, community colleges and universities to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(10)].

The Workforce Development Boards in the High Country, Region C and Western Piedmont have worked together as members of the Future Workforce Alliance (FWA) for a number of years. Each of the FWA Workforce Development Boards benefit from regular collaboration and consistent communication with local community college providers. Currently there are eight community colleges in the FWA service region that are members of the N.C. Community College System (Isothermal, Cleveland, McDowell, Mayland, Wilkes, Western Piedmont, Caldwell, and Catawba Valley). The prevalence of these institutions of higher learning allows the FWA providers to collaboratively work in developing training programs that support high growth occupations, and in building career pathways that can support local business needs and foster growth. It also allows the FWA to regularly act as a convener to share ideas and program of instruction examples between training entities, thus ensuring that there is an effort to minimize duplication. We have engaged in ongoing communication with community college providers to build and monitor training programs for viability and effectiveness. Furthermore, the FWA remains very involved with public school officials on a regular basis. These conversations allow for career pathway development to be targeted at specific sectors, and to insure that all applicable representatives are involved in the planning and execution of building such initiatives. STEM West continues to promote science, technology and math in the secondary schools by providing tours, doing summer camps and events and providing opportunities for teachers to tour businesses and see STEM at work in industry. It (STEM West) also provides opportunities for teachers to develop partnerships with local businesses for classroom projects and presentations. The STEM West initiative involves many of

the school systems in the FWA area. Another significant accomplishment for the FWA area is the announcement of, and ground breaking for the western campus of the NC School of Science and Math, to be built in Morganton, NC. This is significant because it will bring increased STEM focused educational resources and attention to the FWA region. The NC School of Science and Math in Durham, NC has had positive and sustainable effects on that area, and we expect the same to occur in the west as we look forward to the opening of the school in the next year or two based on funding availability.
Recently many of the FWA educational and business partners and other community stakeholders worked with the Western Region to develop an Energy Career Pathway to help meet the increasing need for workers in various positions in the energy sector. The FWA will continue to leverage and value educational partners and stakeholders in an effort to always be developing and evolving career pathway strategies for students, jobseekers, and business customers.

8. Provide details on how the region addresses workforce issues specifically related to its a) cities and/or towns; b) suburban areas; and c) rural areas.
The FWA covers a total of 15 of the 100 N.C. Counties. As a result, there continues to be a wide range of diversity regarding socio-economic, demographic, and logistical challenges. While the majority of the FWA service area is recognized as being in rural communities, there are developing cities and towns scattered throughout the entire region. Despite these differences, the FWA is currently experiencing exponential growth in the Manufacturing, Allied Health and Hospitality/Tourism sectors. As a result, the FWA is able to continue to identify and replicate best practices wherever possible. Examples include programs to address soft skills issues throughout multiple areas, by offering workshops in the NCWorks Career Centers and in partnership with our community colleges. It is through these relationships that the FWA and associated staff can stay informed about local challenges, develop and maintain regular communication with jobseeker customers and continuously assess and identify workforce issues in a variety of areas.
The FWA Workforce Boards have an advantage of knowing and understanding the cities, towns, suburban areas and rural areas outlying workforce issues because we are housed within councils of government. Through this relationship we have immediate knowledge of business expansion needs from the community development block grants; housing needs from Section 8 housing; transportation and data analysis that can assist us and other workforce partners to be better prepared to address specific workforce needs beyond what the NCWorks Career Centers can provide.

9. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Centers serve military veterans.
The FWA is committed to providing prioritized services to military veterans and their families. The FWA 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 to the FWA 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 FWA also participates in regional Stand Downs in order to provide services for veterans. The WDB's work with, 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.

10. Provide details on how the region is prepared to respond to serve victims of national emergencies or hurricane disasters.
    While being at the western end of NC typically does not have us seeing widespread hurricane disasters, the recent COVID-19 pandemic is requiring us to take action in ways we have never had to respond. We have not had time to reflect on the many lesson's learned from this situation because it is still ongoing and could be for the rest of 2020. Once all NCWorks Career Center staff return to their respective offices, and the ability to meet in person is more readily available, we will work as team to retool the lesson's learned and determine how to best proceed.
    At best, it has highlighted the lack of our virtual capabilities and capacity to provide services by virtual tactics. Learning from this pandemic, I hope in the future (we will update the plan next year with fresh ideas) we 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. We have responded as best we could with what we have.

IV. 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 Workforce Development Board under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Led by a private sector chair, the 33-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.

*The NCWorks Commission developed its **2019-2021 Strategic Plan** based on four overall goals:*

GOAL 1: Prepare workers to succeed in the North Carolina economy by increasing skills and education attainment.

Education is the foundation to a strong workforce. As the skill requirements of jobs increase and change rapidly, businesses need to find people with the right skills for the jobs they create, and North Carolinians need access to training so they can be ready for those jobs.

1. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to prepare workers to succeed in the North Carolina economy by increasing skills and education attainment. Think about the myFutureNC goal of increasing the total number of ***additional*** post-secondary credentials by 400,000 by the year 2030. What strategy does the local Workforce Development Board have to support this goal?)
   The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board is committed to helping create opportunities for new jobs that will require education beyond a high school diploma and enable people to gain knowledge and skills for entry into a career that can offer long term economic mobility solutions to future workforce needs; utilizing WIOA Title 1 funds to help achieve the goal of 2,000,000 North Carolinians obtaining a high quality postsecondary degree and/or credential by 2030; engage local and regional education and business partners to communicate the need for higher quality postsecondary education, which will serve to eliminate the gap between the skills employers need and the training jobseekers can obtain; casting a wider net of NCWorks success stories, especially those supported by the youth program, NEXTGEN to demonstrate how increased training adds to economic mobility.

2. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to promote access to job training for high-demand fields.

The WPWDB staff will monitor the programs and training providers that are being utilized in the Adult, Dislocated Worker and/or Youth programs to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the workforce and the skill needs of employers in our local area. The WPWDB reviews and updates a list of high demand occupations in our local area every two years. The list is reviewed and updated based on new high demand jobs, and jobs that may no longer be in high demand in our local area. If a position is not on the list, WIOA Title 1 funds will not pay for that particular training area unless local demand can be shown. When speaking with customers in the NCWorks Career Center staff provide and discuss LMI information, which includes information about the hot jobs and industries, as well as, occupations, which have been found to have high demand in the WPWDB. The WPWDB staff maintain training providers in ncworks.gov. We allow customer choice in training providers, but the training provider and program must be approved. If an individual is planning to relocate to another area, or willing to commute to another area, we will consider approval for training that is in high-demand in other workforce board areas. After the initial approval of a training program, the program must be reviewed and re-approved at least every two (2) years. When the programs come up for review, they are reviewed for job demand within the local area, graduation rate, and successful job placement for completers/graduates of the program. If those criteria are met, the program gains re-approval. If there are issues with any one of those areas, the provider would be contacted for information prior to re-approval and the re-approval may then be in jeopardy of being removed. If multiple programs for the same provider are not re-approved, then the provider could be removed from the approved provider list. Potential WIOA Title 1 participants are referred to NCWorks on-line to search for 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 Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board according to the WPWDB Policy Statement "Approval of Additional Training Providers/Programs" dated July 1, 2015. The WPWDB has three (3) community colleges in addition to, for-profit training providers. With this level of coverage, the WPWDB finds that we have a significant number of competent providers. Should a particular training area not be covered by an already approved training provider, there is a policy to add training providers and/or programs.

3. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to increase access to education for individuals with barriers.

   Through customer one-on-one's in the NCWorks Career Center(s), individuals with barriers can quickly be assessed, and directed to the best integrated service that will specifically help them with employment. If barriers exist that our NCWorks Career Center staff are not equipped to handle, the customer is referred to an appropriate agency to assist them more effectively. In some cases, we work in tandem with partnering agencies to provide wrap-around services for those individuals to best ensure their success. In our current workforce climate, we have worked with a number of clients with barriers and been able to see them succeed in their career path through basic career services, intensive services and training services

depending on the need of the customer. NCWorks Career Center staff will continue to work diligently to assist with these populations now, and in the future. When training services and/or education is needed, we work with the training providers to ensure that the individual is provided what they need to be successful in the classroom, and to ultimately to find employment. Each community college allows for accommodations as needed to assist those with certain barriers. There are also community partners who provide resources as well such Voc Rehab, Western Region School for the Blind, the School for Deaf, and social services just to name a few. Barriers could include, but are not limited to having a disability, being a single parent, being a foster child, being homeless and being justice involved. Each having their own unique set of obstacles or difficulties.

GOAL 2: Create a workforce development system that is responsive to the needs of the economy by fostering employer leadership.

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.

4. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board makes local employers aware of the wide array of business services offered.
   The WPWPDB publishes business services available to businesses on our https://www.wpcog.org/businesses business webpage. The Business Services Consultant (BSC) uses promotional materials for the Upskill Western Piedmont Training Grant. The BSC also provides updates to businesses about the NCWorks Career Centers employer services, and shares the Business Resource Guide that includes available information and resources to help businesses meet their workforce needs.

5. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to enhance work-based learning projects to a broader range of local employers.
   The WPWDB promotes and offers NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience, and the Upskill Training Grant opportunities to businesses with talent development needs. We will continue to use our social media platforms, workforce newsletters and success stories to broaden and strengthen our employer/business relationships on learning/retention projects.

6. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the local Workforce Development Board?
   Following WIOA Title 1 and local WPWDB By-Laws, the Western Piedmont Jobs Training Consortium provides input and recommendation(s) for WPWDB vacancies. The WPWDB Director also provides workforce updates at WPCOG policy board

meetings to ensure the four county chief elected officials are made aware of business needs and changes.

7. Does the local Workforce Development Board currently have any sector partnerships established with local or regional businesses? If so, please cite an example.
   In December 2019 Burke County was invited to participate with McDowell, Polk and Rutherfordton counties on a Next Generation Sector Strategy Partnership for Western NC manufacturers. The first full meeting of this regional group including support partners and manufacturers, was held in 11/21/19 with over 20 businesses in attendance. The Western Manufacturing Partnership Alliance has been meeting consistently and has created sub-teams to work on issues expressed by the regional manufacturers: Marketing/Promoting; Building Foundation Skills at K-12 (training); Business to Business Networking. This is an on-going partnership that we hope to grow and strengthen over the next few years.

GOAL 3: Promote replication of creative solutions to challenging workforce problems by supporting local innovation.

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.

8. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board provides new and innovative solutions to support growth of the local workforce system.
   The WPWDB/NCWorks Career Centers partners with the local community colleges to offer work-based learning opportunities to businesses. Businesses can obtain higher quality training and add more employees to the talent development training projects through the cost-sharing support of the community colleges Customized Training Program, and the Upskill Western Piedmont Training Grant. The local area's NEXTGEN Youth paid internship program has also been a successful solution for businesses who wish to help young people become part of the workforce.
   The WPWDB also works with the regional SBA and SBTDC representatives to support businesses, and inform them on available funding and training support opportunities.

9. Has the local Workforce Development Board received any (Federal, State or Local) funding for local innovative projects? If so, please list these grants. **No.**

GOAL 4: Promote system access, alignment, integration, and modernization.

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.

10. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to increase NCWorks brand awareness.
    The WPWDB has worked hard to establish robust social media outlet engagement in order to increase awareness of the NCWorks System services and brand. WPWDB boosts one of the most active social media and outreach campaigns in the state. We have 825 followers on Facebook; 578 followers on Twitter; 375 on Instagram. In 28 days (March 16 – April 12) - our Facebook Reach (The number of people who saw any of your posts at least once) was over 31,000. While this high number is mostly contributed to the COVID-19 issue, what this reveals is that from an average of 2,000-4,000 reaches a week to over 15,000 a week, brand awareness is peaking, and our outreach is paying off in grand dividends as the community at large is engaging with the brand and services through our social media platforms.

11. Briefly describe any local area best practices on modernization of local career centers.
    With a continued decrease in WIOA Title 1 funding the ability to modernize local career centers has not been a possibility for Western Piedmont. At this time all of centers have wi-fi capability for both customers and employers. In the near future we will be putting together training for NCWorks Career Center staff on how to use DWS approved tools like Microsoft Teams, which is a virtual resource new to them. Recently the impacts that COVID-19 has revealed is that many NCWorks Career Center staff are not well versed in how to work virtually, struggling to use online resources like Goto meeting, Microsoft teams, connecting to Wi-Fi, using a hotspot/jetpack and other relevant tech devices/tools. Our first goal is that we will look to help NCWorks Career Center staff become more modernized since that requires less extra funding, and hopefully in the future if funding is more abundant/flexible we can consider modern up fits to our brick and mortar location and/or possible a mobile units.

12. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans work toward increased alignment with other local workforce system partners. How will you work together to ensure North Carolinians receive more comprehensive services across a broader range?
    One of the WPWDB's strategic goals is to increase, identify and rate the current relationship with other stakeholder organizations (chambers, EDC, rotaries, elected officials….etc) and identify gaps in those relationships. We are focusing on promoting (communicate) the purpose of the Workforce Development Board to new and current businesses to enhance utilization of services that are beneficial to achieving their goals. We are also developing advocacy and policy positions in order to educate stakeholders on how the WPWDB aligns with, not only local workforce partners, but also with state partners such as myFutureNC, NC Rural Center, Appalachian Regional Commission, ncIMPACT and others.

13. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board is supporting Executive Order No. 92--Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities. Employment First is a national movement which recognizes that all citizens, including individuals with

significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

Our relationship with the local area Vocational Rehabilitation has a long history of collaboration. At least bi-annually Voc Rehab provides NCWorks Career Center staff with disability awareness training. The Voc Rehab Business Services representatives regularly attend the bi-monthly WPWDB Business Services lead meeting, coordinated by the WPWDB Business Service Consultant Lead, Matthew Xiong.

The newest disability initiative, Disability:IN North Carolina has spoken to the NC Directors Council and provided their goals and information, with the intent for all WDBs to be involved now and in the near future. We look forward to being a supportive partner to Disabilty:IN.

V. NCWorks Career Centers

1. Identify 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 services provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use the NCWorks Career Center Chart. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)] Name document: **Uploaded Western Piedmont Career Centers.**

2. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operators(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract (**Four Years**).

Public Notice – Letter of Intent to Bid	**December 16, 2017**
Letter of Intent Due	**January 13, 2017**
RFP Release Date (if necessary)	**January 20, 2017**
Bidders Conference (if necessary)	**January 27, 2017**
Proposal Deadline (if necessary)	**February 24, 2017 by 4:00pm**
Formal Review of Proposals (if necessary)	**Begins March 3, 2017**
WPWDB Notice of Selection	**April 27, 2017**
Contract Negotiations	**May 2, 2017**
Contract Start Date	**July 1, 2017**

The request for Letters of Intent was issued on December 16, 2016. Letters of Intent must be submitted no later than 4:00pm on January 13, 2017. 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, 2017, through June 30, 2018**
- **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 January 13, 2017. The RFP was to be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on February 24, 2017. The selected One-Stop Operator is selected for one year with the option to renew contract for up to four years. One RFP was submitted and the contract was awarded to the NC Division of Workforce Solutions.

3. What strategies have been used to better meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment and increase access to services and programs of the one-stop delivery system, such as improving digital literacy skills, and leveraging resources and capacity within the local workforce development system?

The NCWorks Career Centers in the WPWDB works hard to be very responsive to all our customers with, and without barriers. When customers come in the career center for the first time, they receive a one-on-one initial assessment where the career advisor gathers information and discusses the individual's goals and career aspirations. This verbal assessment could include a discussion about any barriers that may impede their immediate placement into employment. Once identified, the career advisor can make recommendations to the customer about ways that NCWorks can best assist them in their employment endeavors. This could include referrals to other workforce partner agencies to take care of immediate primary needs. like food and shelter, or it could mean a referral for a possible Title 1 scholarship to gain necessary skills to reach their employment and career goals, or anything in between. Each person is addressed as an individual and their needs and goals are unique to them.

NCWorks Career Center staff receive training on a number of topics to assist with working with our customers. Disability awareness training is provided in addition to Equal Employment Opportunity training. When working with someone who has disclosed a disability, sometimes the career advisor will work with Vocational Rehabilitation to provide what is needed for the customer's success.

The career centers have devised a plan to work with customers who are, or have been, justice involved. There is a designated career advisor in each career center who serves as the "go to" person for information and advice on how to direct these customers so that they can be successful in their search for employment that allows them to be self-sufficient. We work closely with our regional Former Offender specialist, Vanessa James. Vanessa attends both our local and regional employer services meetings to share with us her insight and skill,s and she in tur,n gains support from career center staff with integrated services for the former offender population. The community colleges are also a great partner for us. They provide a number of services that benefit our customers from providing the opportunity to complete their high school equivalency, to improve their basic skills for success at the post-secondary level, as well as, provide specific skills training, diplomas and associate degrees depending on the goals of the customers.

Workshops offered in the NCWorks Career Centers allow customers to learn how to improve their resume, navigate a job search, prepare for an interview, follow a

budget, just to name a few. All of our NCWorks Career Center workshops are shared with a workforce partner distribution list and posted on www.westernpiedmontworks.org.
HIRE/Partners meet regularly in all of the counties in the WPWD area and many partners have staff that participate in the local business services team meetings. These meeting allow sharing of information and developing relationships so that our customers can be served by various agencies to reach the ultimate goal of successful employment and self-sufficiency.

4. How are training programs such as apprenticeship, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and other work-based learning opportunities leading to industry-recognized credentials aligned with employers' needs, and marketed to support talent development?
The WPWDB promotes and offers NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience, and the Upskill Training Grant to assist businesses with talent development through work-based learning opportunities. The NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience and the Upskill Training Grant help create talent through work based learning so that current and future business needs can be met. The participants of the NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience gain valuable skill sets, and an understanding of what is required to be a part of the workforce. Each trainee of the Upskill Training Grant receives a certification/credentials after completing the training based on the selected training providers curriculum. Certificates/credentials are dependent of the type of training which can range from Supervisory certificate to being certified in Six Sigma Green Belt training.
Beginning in PY20 the Western Piedmont local area hopes to be participating regionally with our community college partners on a recently announced US DOL Youth Apprenticeship Grant. (Stay tuned.)

5. Provide a brief description of the NCWorks Career Center system in your local area and include 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 contractor 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.

6. Describe how local Workforce Development Boards 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.

7. 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.

8. Describe how new NCWorks Career Center staff are trained in the integrated services delivery system model, and at what point do they have full access to NCWorks.gov and the timeline for accomplishing the training for new staff. Describe the staff development activities that reinforce and improve the initial training efforts.
The WPWDB NCWorks Staff Development Internal Functional Improvement Team (IFIT) developed 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. New employees receive initial basic training on ncworks.gov prior to receiving access to the live system. There is a checklist for the basic 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 system. 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 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. 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. In addition to employer of record training, each Friday the Western Piedmont local are NCWorks Career Centers close at Noon to allow for career center staff training and team building activities. The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board holds center staff development in high regard. 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.

9. Describe how the Workforce Development Board holds the NCWorks Career Center operator and contractors accountable for activities and customer outcomes in the Center.
NCWorks Career Center operations, Adult and Dislocated Worker services and Youth services are all procured via a RFP process through which each contractor completes a statement of the work they plan to perform in relation to the WIOA Title 1 services they are contracted to provide. Through monthly management leadership team meetings we discuss performance and customer service improvements. These meetings include all NCWorks Career Center management staff from all contracted service providers. The WDB Director and DWS Northwest Regional Operations Director meet regularly to discuss performance and help develop goals for the NCWorks Career Centers.
The WDB staff have technical assistance meetings with the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth contractor staff. This is for all Title I program staff, and is a time to discuss where we stand with USDOL local area performance in regard to the WIOA programs. Focusing on what improvements can be made as well as updating all center staff on any policy updates or changes in processes related to the respective programs is also a major agenda item for these meetings.

10. Describe how the Workforce Development Board facilitates access to services provided through the NCWorks Career Center delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and through other means. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(B)]
The WPWDB and the NCWorks Career Center staff have worked together to facilitate remote services available in DSS offices where applicable, community colleges, secondary school systems and libraries as well as other agencies in the area. The WPWDB also has an up to date website that is business and jobseeker driven. Local recruitment events, hot jobs, success stories, and business, jobseeker, youth and veteran resources can be found via this media option. With ncworks.gov being a virtual one-stop system, remote access requires little to no direct involvement from the NCWorks Career Center staff since anyone can access and use the system to search for jobs, apply for jobs, and research other labor market information.
The WPWDB local area has started offering job getting activities and ncworks.gov registration to incarcerated individuals through means at the local probation and parole offices. Center staff take laptops to the offices and assist these individuals for preparation to reenter the workforce.
The sudden onset of the COVID19 pandemic has led to many discussions about how we can use technology to provide remote services when customers are prevented or do not have the mean to actual come to a NCWorks Career Center. This pandemic

situation has opened up more discussions about how we engage virtually by offering customers basic career services, intensive services and training services virtually in times such as this, and in the future.

11. Describe Local Area strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between Boards 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. Unemployment Insurance issues and questions should be directed to https://www.ncesc1.com/main/login.asp or the DES Customer Call Center at 1-888-737-0259
    With the recent COVID19 pandemic, calls about unemployment insurance claims have increased dramatically causing a major staffing issue for the DES call center. This has resulted in some NCWorks Career Center staff being deployed to assist DES with phone calls coming into the DES call center.

12. Describe how the Local Workforce Development Board has implemented a business services team and how they are supported by NCWorks Career Center integrated services staff.
    The Business Services Consultant (BSC) of the WPWDB works closely with the NCWorks Career Centers employer and employment services teams to:
    Promote the Upskill Western Piedmont Training Grant; examine outreach opportunities for Labor Market Intelligence; and help expand recruitment and retention efforts. The WPWDB BSC coordinates bi-monthly business services teams meetings that include employer/employment services teams from NCWorks Career Centers, NC DHHS-Vocational Rehabilitation, and the community colleges. These meetings provide networking capability for the system as a whole, as well as sets up team building and business recruitment efforts particularly when planning Job Fairs, Veterans Stand-down's, and Rapid Response events.

13. Describe how entities within the NCWorks Career Center system, including Career Center operators and partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(C)]
    Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser are held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities are adhered to. NCWorks Career Center staff are required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the WPWDB EEO Officer and the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

14. Describe the integrated customer service process for participants. Attach a flow chart for services to include initial one-on-one interviews with customers, including NCWorks.gov

dual registration, skills assessments, and determination of further services. Name document:

Upon entrance to a career center the customer is greeted and asked a small series of introductory questions (ex: Hi! How are you today, and what brings you into the career center?) to best determine next steps. The next steps based on customer feedback may be that they are taken to the resource area to receive help with ncworks.gov registration and/or resume building, and/or they may need to complete a REASEA/EAI assessment. All new customers to the NCWorks Career Center are required to preview our Orientation Video to inform them of available opportunities and services provided by the WPWDB NCWorks Career Centers. If other barriers are determined, skills training and/or partner assistance may be needed. With the success of our in-center job getting workshops, some customers may be attending a workshop within the career center.

Integrated Service Delivery Model – NCWORKS Career Center

**The Function Diagram provides a basic snap shot of customer services within a NCWORKS Career Center in the Western Piedmont Workforce Local Area. More detailed services are listed within the procedures manual.*

15. If applicable, attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the local Workforce Development Board and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career

Center system. (A MOU guide is attached for your reference as Appendix X). [WIOA Section 121(b)(A (iii)]. Name document: **Uploaded Western Piedmont One-Stop Required Partners MOU (the IFA is attachment F in this MOU)**

16. Describe how the Workforce Development Board uses a portion of funds available to the Local Area to maintain the NCWorks Career Center system, including payment of the infrastructure costs of Career Centers. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(ii) and (h)]
The WPWDB uses IFA funds for lease payment of the Catawba County (Conover) NCWorks Career Center. When needed, laptops and other work applicable equipment is purchased for NCWorks Career Center staff in order to meet the needs to serve both jobseeker and business customers.
As COVID-19 has created need for NCWorks Career Center staff to work virtually for an extended period of time, other equipment and technologies will be purchased such as more laptops, laptop capable headphones, and virtual meeting access (GoTo). Other equipment needs are considered on a case by case basis when requested by a career center.

17. Describe the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]
Both WIOA Title 1 Contractor 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 ncworks.gov registration. DWS-Wagner Peyser provides computers, printers, copiers, paper at no cost at the Catawba Career Center. WDB service contractors lease computers for their staff from DWS at Burke. The community college provides service contractors 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.

18. Describe the Workforce Development Board's method for planning oversight, review process and frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)]
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. In August 2019, the WPWD management team held its first all day retreat, focusing on building trust, setting 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 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 ncworks.gov and observing center operations. During monitoring, the statement of work submitted in the RFP is reviewed to ensure that what is stated in the RFP is being carried out by the One-Stop Operator. 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.

19. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using the integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners**.** [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]
Since www.ncworks.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 ncworks.gov training and can help assist jobseeking customers with resumes and job search opportunities simply from the customer view.
The impact of COVID-19 has recently created the need for virtual integrated technology such as Zoom and GoTo meetings and the use of Microsoft Teams. These tools are used to: Engage with WIOA scholarship participants; Hold center management teams meetings; and using ncworks.gov Live Chat feature, engage with customers using the virtual one-stop MIS system.

VI. Employer Services

1. Please briefly describe the efforts of the Business Services Representatives and/or Employer Services staff in the following areas:
   - Promoting work-based learning opportunities to employers
     - **The WPWDB promotes and offers NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience and the Upskill Training Grant to assist businesses with talent development through work-based learning opportunities. Marketing both of these work-based learning opportunities to employers is done through business engagement activities like: using print and online promotional materials; giving presentations about the programs where requested; continuing to strengthen workforce partnerships so they in turn provide referrals to the WBL opportunities.**
   - Exploring/ promoting sector strategies with employers
     - **The Business Services Consultant (BSC) and Employer Services staff, partners with economic developers, community college, Chambers of Commerce, and Industry Leaders to identify small businesses and in-demand sectors occupations. Continued focus on local career pathways is continually promoted so this information stays in front of partners, employers and the community at large.**
   - Utilizing employer data to inform priorities

- **The BSC analyzes current labor market information to understand the current economic conditions. The BSC identifies economic challenges/barriers and seeks resources to remedy the challenges/barriers, and shares those with employers. One example is wage analysis. Employers want to know the current pay rate for certain occupations. The BSC can conduct wage analysis for the local area and/or region and discuss the data with the employer. In a tight labor market, understanding and implementing competitive wages may be an advantage for the business.**

- Making employer referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff
  - **The BSC will make referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff when employers express interest or have needs for the referrals.**

2. Please describe the efforts the Workforce Development Board has made to deliver business services on a regional basis. (Possibly duplicative of items above).
   The WPWDB leverages the partnerships with economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, community colleges, and industry stakeholders for information on economic trends and conditions on a local and regional level. The WPWDB also partners and collaborates with two other Workforce Development Boards in the Northwest Prosperity Zone to coordinate business services. The WPWDB BSC is also in active attendance at the statewide BSR meetings held several times a year. Through the regional work of the FWA, each board's BSC has a colleague to share and engage with for regional services, when needed.

3. Describe how the Board partners with employers and other organizations to promote work-based learning activities.
   The WPWDB promotes and offers NEXTGEN WIOA Title I Youth Work Experience and the Upskill Western Piedmont Training Grant to assist business with talent development through work-based learning opportunities. Marketing both of these work-based learning opportunities to employers is done through business engagement activities using print and online promotional materials. The WPWDB also uses its partnership with economic developers, Chambers of commerce's, community colleges, public school systems, and other workforce partners to help promote work-based learning opportunities to employers.

4. Please describe business services partnership efforts in the areas of education, economic development and with employers.
   The WPWDB also leverages its partnership with, economic developers, Chambers of commerce's, community colleges, public school systems, and other workforce partners to help promote business services such as work-based learning opportunities, labor market information, talent recruitment and retention, and other relevant business services to employers. One example is the Upskill Training Grant. Our local area Community College Customized Training Coordinators refer businesses to the BSC for information about applying for the Upskill Training Grant. Both entities work together to stretch their funding so that the business

training needs are met using the best possible process. The WPWDB Director serves on CTE Advisory Boards, Manufacturing Sector Partnerships and attends economic development and chamber board meetings to ensure business service programs provided via the WPWPDB and NCWorks Career Centers are known and utilized.

VII. Performance

1. Examine the local Board's current Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance for PY 2019 and previous Program Years (reports available via FutureWorks).

    a. What are some of the factors in the local area that impact performance levels (both positively and negatively)? Be sure to consider factors such as the unemployment rate, factory closures/openings, weather events & natural disasters that may have impacted the area, as well as internal operational factors that may impact the local area's performance.

    The WPWDB had been dealing with very low unemployment (a good problem to have) resulting in our most prominent customers being Adult program customers, with greater barriers. We see very few dislocated workers, because the typical result is they tend to find work quickly because they are better prepared skill wise. Due to COVID-19 we started to see a slight increase in layoffs of small numbers particularly in retail business and some manufacturing although limited. We have been able to serve more customers who have been laid off recently and the long term unemployed increasing our pool of dislocated workers. (As of May 7, the nation is at about 15% unemployment as a result of COVID-9). 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, although decreasing, has remained higher since the recession. 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. This has also proved 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.

b. What strategies are in place to maintain or improve performance?
The WPWDB has always promoted quality over quantity with our WIOA Title 1 Contractors. We want our participants in all programs to be successful and they cannot reach that level if they have critical needs that are not being met such as: housing, food and transportation. Our career advisors work diligently to help them get those needs met so that the individual can then focus on their career goals and move forward. Title I career advisors look at eligibility first, and then they look at suitability and where the individual is currently to determine what it might take to get them to self-sufficiency. In addition to providing services to move participants along their career path and help them to meet the goals they set for themselves, there is a lot of monitoring that is done by the Title 1 contractor management staff and WPWDB staff. By frequent monitoring, we can identify areas of concern, or a participant who might need extra attention. This is common when new eyes are looking at a participant file; it's easier to identify other needs or concerns.

c. In the event the local board is not on track to meet yearly performance indicator goals, please discuss what corrective actions/steps would be undertaken to address this situation.
Western Piedmont is on track to meet performance goals for PY19. The only concern is median earnings of which, we are currently over 90% of our goal and possibly could still sustain that however, with the impact of COVID19 performance for 2021 might look a little different. Any participant whose 2nd or 4th quarter after exit contains March, April and possibly May of 2020, in those quarters we could see a sharp decrease in earnings. In order to stay on track, meetings are held regularly with Title I Career Advisors to talk about ways to maintain engagement with participants so that we don't lose contact with them. We also have regular all meetings where 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 when they lose a job, or want to move along their career pathway, or improve their financial position by searching for career advancement. In addition, the level of monitoring we do in the WPWDB plays a role in our ability to maintain performance levels.

d. How is performance information shared throughout the hierarchy of staff? Please detail how the Board addresses performance data in its relationship with its contractor(s) and how case managers are using performance data to drive local area performance.
In the WPWDB we talk about performance at least monthly, and quarterly. In regards to USDOL local performance measures, specific Title I Program meetings are held with the Contractor Program Manager and the Program Coordinator to discuss ways to improve performance. We believe that working

for the best interest of the participant and their goals, results in good performance outcomes for our local area.
For WPWDB, NCWorks Career Center operations performance is also key to driving the success of what we do and why we are here. Tracking measures and having specific operations data allows everyone to see the value add and understand how they contribute to our overall success. The effectiveness of much of what do through our NCWorks Centers is tracked using ncworks.gov service/activity codes. This data is real-time and in direct correlation of day to day impacts. We believe that if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it.
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.

2. In recent years, many Workforce Development Boards have seen decreasing population counts for the number of Dislocated Workers served. Please describe the strategies the Board has in place to ensure this population is sufficiently (proportionately) represented in the performance pool. Be sure to include whether the Board makes use of the nontraditional Dislocated Worker definitions (such as any individuals who are long-term unemployed and can, therefore, be considered Dislocated Workers) in the response.
The unemployment rate in the WPWDB has been low for the past few years and we have seen few layoffs or company closings during this time. In addition, we do see a number of long-term unemployed individuals that we can serve as non-traditional dislocated workers. When possible this allows us to increase the pool of dislocated workers we serve. We have been successful by having an employer-business services team that is aware of what is happening in the local employer community and make NCWorks Career Center staff aware of closings and/or layoffs. Title I Career Advisors have also partnered closely with RESEA and EAI programs in order to serve the long-term unemployed. Both of these have resulted in an increase in the number of dislocated workers that we have served in PY2019 and we expect this to continue to increase. As mentioned throughout this plan. we know that the fall out of COVID-19 will create a larger pool of dislocated workers that we hope to provide training and workshops to.

3. The Measurable Skill Gains measure is a real-time indicator denoting participants who are making demonstrable progress on a track toward Credential Attainment. Please describe how the Board makes use of the information the Measurable Skill Gains measure provides as a means of ensuring the Board reaches 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 participate 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.

4. Please describe the process for monitoring service providers in the local area. Include details such as how it is conducted, who is involved, how often, et cetera.
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 contractor 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 60 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*.)

Please refer to the uploaded Program Monitoring Policy. https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

VIII. 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 Contractors 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 Contractors 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's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR Part 37.71]. Name document: *Local Area Name EO Complaint Grievance Procedure 2020.*
   Uploaded - Western Piedmont EO Complaint Grievance Procedure 2020

3. Describe methods 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 contractors 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 contractors, EEO policies and procedures are reviewed to confirm the contractor is in compliance with the Local Area's EO policy.
   https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

IX. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

1. Describe the local Workforce Development Board's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include high level goals, outreach strategies, service delivery and expected outcomes. Describe how this vision will improve the employment outcomes for this population.
   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 team is in place which, reviews and discusses each application for WIOA funding. 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 of 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.

2. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services. 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. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]

   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 participate to be placed in full-time employment.

   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. In a strong economic environment where there are many jobs available, it has become challenging to engage customers with the training opportunities available to them. This is where developing the "sales skills" for NCWorks Career Center staff will help us to engage the customer with what is available to them at the skill/education level where they are currently, versus the opportunities available to them with additional training in their areas of interest. We need to instill the value of life-long learning in all of our center staff, and in our customers. If this can be accomplished, we will be able to connect employers with the candidates that they are desperately seeking and improve the economic situation in families and communities.

3. 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 Workforce Development Board and service delivery. Identify any service provider contract extensions.

Below is the dateline for the RFP process completed in 2019 for services beginning in PY2020:

RFP Public Notice	**March 1, 2019**
RFP Release Date	**March 8, 2019**
Proposal Deadline	**April 5, 2019 by 4:00 p.m.**
Formal Review of Proposals	**Begins April 8, 2019**
WPWDB Notice of Selection	**April 25, 2019**
Contract Negotiations	**April 29, 2019**
Anticipated Contract Start Date	**July 1, 2019**

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions was awarded the contract to provide Adult and Dislocated Worker services. The option is to extend services each year for up to three years if the contractor is meeting all obligations and there are no issues with their operation of the program. The next full RFP release if that is the case will be in 2022 for services to begin July 1 2022.

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

4. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board's Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) service providers chart effective July 1, 2020 using the Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List provided. Name document: *Local Area Name Adult and DW Providers 2020.*
   Uploaded – Western Piedmont Adult and DW Providers 2020

5. 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. 7Define what "significant number of competent providers" means in the local area. Include whether the local Workforce Development Board uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers. Attach if a separate policy. Name document: *Local Area Name Eligible Training Providers Policy*. [PS 06-2019]
   Uploaded - Western Piedmont Local Additional Training Providers/Programs Policy https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements
   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 have been in business for a minimum of three years and show evidence of job placement in the training area. Once a training provider is listed on both the ETPL and the LTPL, they may provide training services to WPWDB customers. To ensure that a significant number of competent training providers, are available and offering a wide variety of training programs and occupational choices to customers, the WPWDB requires that training providers update their information and reapply after the first year of providing services and every two (2) years thereafter. The WPWDB will also take into account performance accountability measures as identified in WIOA Section 122 (b)(1)(A-J) when determining eligibility of training providers. Once a training provider is listed on the ETPL and LTPL, the WPWDB 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 approved Occupational Training List. In instances where it can be determined that there is a demand for workers in the field of employment being sought by the customer, and 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 "Approval of Additional Training Providers/Programs" dated July 1, 2015.

The WPWDB understands a group of workforce staff from various areas of NC continue to work on a state training provider policy in order to build consistency across NC and local workforce development areas. Many training providers offer services across workforce development lines so consistency is important. We await the results of this collaborative effort and any policy that may result.

6. 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.

X. 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 – A minimum of 75 percent of the Youth funds allocated local areas, except for the local area expenditures for administration, must be used to provide services to OSY;*
- *Work Experience – Not less than 20 percent of Youth funds allocated to the local area, except for the local area 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.*

USDOL also focuses on the following WIOA Performance Indicators:

- Employment, education, or training during the 2nd quarter after exit

- Employment, education, or training during the 4th quarter after exit
- Median earnings during the 2nd quarter after exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers (system-wide measure, not program specific)
  NOTE: Performance is Section VII.

1. Provide a general overview of the local current total population (within five years) of the Title I WIOA eligible youth by Local Workforce Development Board area. Include the following general information for the local Workforce Development Board area:

   In-School Youth Analysis
   a. Approximately, what number of the Youth are ages 14-21? **39,805**
   b. Approximately, what percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)? **16.5%**
   c. Approximately, what number of these Youth are in the current school dropout statistics? **7,164**

   Out-of-School Analysis
   a. Approximately what number of Youth ages 16-24 of the current total population (within five years) make up the population? **39,618**
   b. Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population? **13.3%**
   c. What are the general educational levels of this age group? **Less than High School Diploma, High School Diploma or equivalent, some college, associate's degree, bachelor's degree**
   d. What is the general employment status of this age group? **17% unemployed, working part time, working full time**

2. Based on the assessment above, does the local Workforce Development Board plan to serve In-School Youth?
   Yes. We plan to serve those students who need intensive services, and encouragement to obtain the goal of high school graduation and achieving their diploma. In the Alexander County School system, a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor is located on site and where applicable, we can co-enroll students. This ensures the relevant services needed for the student to be successful in graduating and in finding employment or additional training are put in place following successful completion of high school.

3. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area, 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 contractor 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. For in-school youth who are in the public school system, they 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). Out-of-school youth will be involved in classes at the 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 disabilities are provided as required by the ADA. All NCWorks Career Advisors are required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

4. Describe the local area's broad Young Adult (NEXTGEN) Program design 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 ncworks.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 service's needs;

      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. and 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 ncworks.gov and these results are used to drive conversation about career opportunities for each participant.

5. How does the local area 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)]

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 in assisting 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.

6. Describe the local area's broad Young Adult (NEXTGEN) Program design to include:
   a. Employment Goals, and

      When the objective assessment has been completed and eligibility and suitability for the NEXTGEN program has been determined, it is then time for the young adult to begin identifying goals for themselves. The Career Advisor provides information and advice to identify the educational and/or employment goals the young adult desires to achieve. Every youth is different. Some need immediate employment such as those young adults who are homeless or aging out of foster care. Career Advisors work with the young adult to understand their situation so that they can better assist them. For those wishing to pursue employment the focus becomes work experience. The NEXTGEN Career Advisor works with local businesses to set up relationships that create available paid work experiences.

   b. Education Goals.

      After identifying all the desired goals, they then list steps to get the youth to each goal. These steps may also include support services that the young adult

needs in order to be successful in achieving the particular goal, completing a training class or semester successfully. For example, a parenting young adult may need child care assistance in order to go to training and reach her ultimate education goal of becoming a CNA I to secure employemnt. While this may sound like a clear cut pathway to program success and completion, many times it is not, due to life circumstances or changes in career direction for the youth. If the young adult will stay engaged in the program, the Career Advisor will help them maneuver their circumstances and hopefully still realize success in the end.

7. Where does the local area plan to serve the young adults (NEXTGEN): NCWorks Career Centers Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized Centers, Service 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.

8. What new local higher-level goals (not traditional performance measures) are in place to serve the young adult (NEXTGEN) population to include new outreach strategies and interactions with this population outside of the office/NCWorks Career Center setting? Do these improve employment outcomes and retention (or other identified local needs) for this population?
   In the WPWDB, we utilize a profit calculator in which we basically require certain numbers of enrollments, credential completions and paid internships to be completed based on what is submitted for the statement of work by the Title 1 contractor. In order to meet these goals, outreach strategies are critical. While the Title 1 contractors have done well prior to the implementation of a profit calculator, this process requires extra thought and care in developing strategies to connect with the population they serve through the school systems, community colleges and other partner agencies. Our current Title 1 contractor (Ross IES) has improved relationships with other partners and it has resulted in improved outcomes for the program. We have met performance in the most recent years and are on track currently to meet performance for PY19. We also know that the younger generation utilizes and trusts social media as a means to discover opportunities for learning and for work. We feel our continued effort to use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to reach people, especially young adults, is paying off, through our success stories, workshops, and recruitment events.

9. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth (NEXTGEN) workforce activities in the Local Area, 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 contractor 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 counselor and other workforce 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 to 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 and/or to find employment that leads to self-sufficiency through paid internships or post-secondary training.

In the NEXTGEN program, the Career Advisors complete a thorough objective assessment to determine the eligibility of the student for WIOA and if there are any additional needs to be addressed. Basic skills are assessed through school records or reading and math assessments. Other assessments may be completed as necessary. For in-school youth who are in the public school system, they 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). Out-of-school youth will be involved in classes at the 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 disabilities are provided as required by the ADA. All NCWorks Career Center staff are required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

10. Provide the Workforce Development Board'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)]

    The WPWDB has traditionally spent a majority of the total youth budget on Out-of-School youth. The move to 75% expenditure was not an issue, especially considering the expansion of the eligibility criteria, and age of out-of-school youth that may be served. 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.

11. Describe how the local Workforce Development Board 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.
    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 ncworks.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 Boards as 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.

12. 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 twelve months.

13. Specify if the Local Workforce Development Board plans to offer incentives for (NEXTGEN) youth. If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include: a) criteria to be used to award incentives; b) type(s) of incentive awards to be made available; c) whether WIOA funds will be used and d) the Local Workforce Development Board has internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards. Name document: *Local Area Name Youth Incentive Policy*.
Uploaded – Western Piedmont Youth Incentive Policy. https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements
The WPWDB does offer incentives for NEXTGEN participants. See the Youth Incentive Policy attached.

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

14. If the Local Workforce Development Board does not offer incentives for (NEXTGEN youth, please explain why. **N/A**

15. Describe the local area 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.

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 I 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 benefits 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 Workforce Development Board ensures each of the 14 youth program elements is made available to youth participants.[WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(A)] Name document: *Local Area Name Youth Program Elements*
    Uploaded – Western Piedmont Youth Program Elements

18. How does the local area ensure that the minimum of 20% of funds is spent on work experience and is the local area expending the 20% minimum on work experience to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth.? [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)]
    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 contractor for NEXTGEN services in WPWDB has budgeted $120,853 for work experience. The stipend/wages generally range from $7.50 - $15.00 per hour. Wages are determined based on the entry level pay at the local for the same type of work. The WPWDB focuses on using the budgeted amount on wages as much as is possible.

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

    a. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.
    We do not. 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:
    c. Provide the committee's purpose/vision.
    d. Provide the committee's top three goals or objectives for PY 2020.
    e. Attach the 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 Workforce Development Board member.) Name document: *Local Area Name Youth Committee Members.* [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)] and,
    f. Complete the following chart for the PY 2020 Youth Committee's planned meeting schedule to include dates, time and location. *[Expand form as needed.]***N/A**

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)

20. 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 2019 for services beginning in PY2019:

RFP Public Notice	**March 1, 2019**
RFP Release Date	**March 8, 2019**
Proposal Deadline	**April 5, 2019 by 4:00 p.m.**
Formal Review of Proposals	**Begins April 8, 2019**
WPWDB Notice of Selection	**April 25, 2019**
Contract Negotiations	**April 29, 2019**
Anticipated Contract Start Date	**July 1, 2019**

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions was award the contract to provide NEXTGEN (Youth) services. The option is to extend services each year for up to three years if the contractor is meeting all obligations and there are no issues with their operation of the program. The next full RFP release if that is the case will be in 2022 for services to begin PY2022.

21. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board Youth service provider's chart, effective July 1, 2020, using the Youth Service Provider List provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. Name the document: *Local Area Name Youth Providers 2020*.
Uploaded – Western Piedmont Youth Providers 2020

XI. Local Innovations

1. List additional funding received by the local Workforce Development Board to include special grants (Enhancement, Finish Line, Innovation), National Dislocated Worker Grants (disaster), YouthBuild, Foundation, outside funding and others to include a brief description the source and the amount.

Grant Name/Kind	Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount
Enhancement Grant *(NEXTGen NEXTSteps to Career Pathways)*	Used funding to offer additional paid internship opportunities for our NEXTGEN participants	November 18, 2018 to December 31, 2019 extended to May 31 2020	4050 Statewide Initiative Funds $200,000
Finish Line Grant	Used to provide assistance to community college students who were over 50% complete with their training and had an emergency expence that could	October 2018 – June 2020	4050 Statewide Initiative Funds

	possibly derail them and result in the student being unable to complete their training		$130,000

2. Describe one local Workforce Development Board best adult/dislocated worker program practice.
   In the WPWDB, we are currently working on how to create an on-line pre-application for Adult and Dislocated Worker services. COVID19 has brought the importance and the need for the ability to do such things by using technology to the forefront, although we had already been discussing this opportunity as a goal for 2020.

3. Describe one local Workforce Development Board best youth program practice.
   Currently the WPWDB is working on how to create a WIOA online Pre-Application. After piloting a virtual pre-application with the Adult and Dislocated Worker program, we will move to do the same for the NEXTGEN program. We had begun this development before COVID-19, and now even more so, see the benefits of offering virtual engagement opportunities to the public so they can enroll in training for career advancement. Through our extended social media outreach we showcase at least one NEXTGEN success story every month. The success stories are also hosted on the homepage of www.westernpiemdontworks.org.

4. Describe one local Workforce Development Board regional strategy that has yielded positive results.
   WPWDB does not have one specific regional strategy. Overall FWA works well together, meeting annually to work on continuous improvement efforts, such as improving all NCWorks Career Center staffs knowledge of ncworks.gov, case notes, and activity codes. The WPWDB Program Administrator along with her other colleagues from the western boards, meets bi-monthly with the regional analyst to stay up to date on changes in ncworks.gov and then ensure that information is shared with local career centers.

5. Describe one local Workforce Development Board Incumbent Worker or other business services best strategy.
   In the WPWDB, our BSC works closely with the community college customized training program staff to better stretch and utilize each entities funding. They have collaborated to develop a formal cost-sharing process to best serve the business customers in the respective counties. The businesses are able to leverage both customized training funds and Upskills (Incumbent Worker) funds that best suit the needs of the business. The benefits are two-fold, businesses receive a higher quality of training and more employees can participate in the training. In addition, the partnership is able to provide services to more businesses.

XII. Program Year 2020 Local Workforce Development Board Plan Required Policy Attachments

1. The following policies are required to be attached as separate documents in WISE as part of the PY2020 Comprehensive Regional Plan. Name documents: *Local Area Name, Policy Name*. **Uploaded**

   In the first column, state if it is attached or why it is missing and when it can be expected.

   In the second column mark ***only*** if the policy has been changed/revised since PY2019 and requires a special review for PY 2020 and has not been previously submitted to the Division.

   Do not add an empty document in WISE as a "placeholder".

Required Local Policies and DWS Reference	Attached (Yes/No)	Revised for PY2020 (Yes/No)
1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Work 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**	**n/a**
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	**Yes**	**Yes**
7. On-the-Job Training Policy	**No**	**n/a**
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	**Yes**	**Yes**
9. Priority of Service Policy **(Veterans &Spouse. Adult)**	**Yes**	**Yes**
10. Youth Work Experience Policy	**Yes**	**Yes**
11. Local Supportive Services Policy (**Childcare. Transportation**)	**Yes**	**Yes**
12. Local Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures & Monitoring Schedule	**Yes**	**Yes**

***All Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board policies can be found at:**
https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

2. Designate whether the following local Optional Policy is included and used at the local Workforce Development Board and is included in the Plan or write "N/A" implying "Not Applicable", the Workforce Development Board does not have this policy and therefore does not use these services.

   In the second column mark ***only*** if the policy has been changed/revised since PY2019 and requires a special review for PY 2020 and has not been previously submitted to the Division.

   Do not add an empty document in WISE as a "placeholder".

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

Optional Local Policies	Yes- the Board has a policy or N/A (Not Applicable)	Revised for PY2020
1. Local Area Incumbent Worker Training Policy	**Yes**	**Yes**
2. Local Area Needs-Related Policy	**No**	**No**
3. Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy	**No**	**No**
4. Local Area Youth Incentive Policy	**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 $7,600 lifetime
Time Limits	2 years or less (or by special permission)
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate's, Bachelor's, other)	Associate's Degrees, Diplomas, Continuing Education Certificate's or Third Party recognized Credentials/Certificates
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions	Costly Occupational Training Policy - Approval of Western Piedmont Program Administrator Required

for training that may be allowed	
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, phyicals, exams, required tools of the trade such as stethescopes, automechanic tools, electrician tools, etc.
Other	

4. Please specify the supportive services provided by the local Board Supportive Services Policy. List specific items under Supplies, Emergency and Other, as identified in the local policy. *[Expand form as needed.]* https://www.wpcog.org/policy-statements

Transportation	**Childcare**	**Supplies** *(include examples)*	**Emergency** *(include examples)*	**Other** *(include examples)*
Youth Only - Mileage reimbursement at $.30/mile up to $300/ month, bus tickets.	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, other emergency items that are not recurring expenses.	Youth Only - Mileage reimbursement at $.30/mile up to $300/ month, bus tickets.