

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local and Regional Workforce Development
Area Plans



Rivers East
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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 18, 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: Local Area Name Consortium Agreement.

Region Q Workforce Investment Consortium

See attached: Region Q Consortium Agreement

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

Name: Jennie C. Bowen	Title: Workforce Development Director
Organization: Mid-East Commission	Address: 1502 N. Market Street, Suite A Washington, NC 27889
Phone number: 252-974-1815	Email address: jbowen@mideastcom.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: Melvin McLawhorn	Elected Title: Chairman
Government: c/o Pitt County Commissioners	Address: 1717 W. 15 th Street Greenville, NC 27834
Phone number: 252-902-2950	Email address: scott.elliott@pittcountync.gov

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.

Name: Scott Elliott	Title: County Manager
Business Name: Pitt County Government	Address: 1717 W. 15 th Street Greenville, NC 27834
Phone number: 252-902-2950	Email address: scott.elliott@pittcountync.gov

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 disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)].

Name: N. Bryant Buck	Title: Executive Director
Organization: Mid-East Commission	Address: 1502 N. Market Street Washington, NC 27889
Phone number: 252-946-8043	Email address: bbuck@mideastcom.org

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

Name: N. Bryant Buck	Title: Executive Director
Organization: Mid-East Commission	Address: 1502 N. Market Street Washington, NC 27889
Phone number: 252-946-8043	Email address: bbuck@mideastcom.org

7. Attach a copy of the Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent's organizational chart with an 'effective as of date'. Name document: Administrative Entity Name Organizational Chart.

See attached: Mid-East Commission Organizational Chart

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 Number: 173851528

Assurances are given that the SAM status is current and up to date

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)

Lou Stout serves as the EO Officer for Rivers East.

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.

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.

See attached: Rivers East WDB List

Note: *The current WDB Chair is Jenny Brown. At a special called June meeting, the Board will elect their chair for PY2020. Each County Clerk will be contacted following the May meeting concerning private sector appointments for expiring seats and attendance records will be provided. For those who have not met the attendance requirement, the commissioners will need to appoint a replacement. An updated list will be provided once all appointments are complete for PY 20, which is anticipated to be July.*

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.

Note: If changes are needed to meet the NC DWS Bylaws requirements, include an expected date of submission with Plan response.

See attached: Rivers East WDB By-Laws

12. To demonstrate that the attached Workforce Development Board By-laws comply, complete [By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart](#).

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)]

See attached: Rivers East Bylaws Crosswalk

13. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

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)]

Rivers East will make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public for review for comment beginning May 21, 2020 for a period of 30 days, ending June 22, 2020. A link to the proposed Local Plan will be placed on the Rivers East WDB website (www.riverseastwdb.org) and the Mid-East Commission website (www.mideastcom.org). The plan will also be submitted electronically to all Consortium members and each WDB member. At the close of the public comment period, a list of all comments will be compiled and submitted to the Division Planner.

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

See attachment: Rivers East Organizational Chart

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 #)
September 9, 2020	3:00 pm	NCTeleCenter
November 11, 2020*		405 E. Blvd.
January 13, 2021		Williamston, NC
March 10, 2021		(Large Training Room)
May 12, 2021		

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.

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

See attachment: Rivers East Debarment Form

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.

Note: Mail the signed original [Signatory Form](#) to the assigned Division Planner.

NOTE: The Signatory page will be uploaded and the original forwarded to the Planner after the WDB votes to approve the plan at their May 20, 2020 meeting.

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 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?

Rivers East Workforce Development Business Services Department coordinates employer outreach through a network of agency partners. The information is shared between the local K-12 Education System, Community College System, local, state and regional Economic Developers, NCWorks Career Center Managers, and the Workforce Development Board, which are all vital points of contact for employers to share needs associated with engaging talent for new and existing employment opportunities. The coordination of services is dependent upon which partner agency is notified of an employer need, and which partner is needed to help the employer satisfy the need. Once the point of contact is made other agency partners are engaged to deliver the needed services to help employers bring economic prosperity to the region. Extensive collaboration between economic development and workforce development is ongoing and aligns with the local area strategic plan to develop Business Advisory Councils in each county. Recent requirements issued by the Board of Education have mandated that each K-12 Career and Technical Education Director have an advisory board to include local area agencies and business leaders. This mandate has allowed for the proliferation of Business Advisory Councils throughout the east. Currently there are four such advisory council in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board local area.

RAMP East is a great example of how two workforce boards have partnered with economic developers and K-12 school systems in a 10 county area, along with 8 community colleges to address an anticipated need due to exponential growth in the area of Advanced Manufacturing.

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 Rivers East Workforce Development Board strategic vision for preparing an educated and skilled workforce:

- **Focus our resources and training on providers that deliver high-quality employer-focused and job seeker programs.**
- **Continue and expand our networking with Community Colleges to identify "gaps" in program offerings as identified through labor market research and dialogue with business.**
- **Continue our close working relationship with the Customized Industry Training program.**
- **Continue and expand our assessment instruments in the NCWorks Centers to help identify the barriers to employment and provide comprehensive individualized plans to produce the best skilled workers for referral to businesses.**
- **Continue our emphasis on short-term training and work-based learning in the region.**
- **Expand our sector work to identify emerging sectors and to begin offering skills training to meet the projected needs.**
- **Continue our Career Pathways work (NCWorks Career Pathways) to engage businesses, K-12, Community Colleges, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce, STEM, and the Universities to develop our workforce from school to life-long learning.**
- **Continue our close working relationship with local, regional, and state economic developers.**

The benefit of having such an established framework is that it can be implemented to prepare an educated and skilled workforce at any level.

Performance Goals under WIOA for the Rivers East Local Area have not yet been negotiated for Program Year 2020.

The Performance and Accountability Manager generates reports for the WIOA Adult/DW participants receiving training services monthly and sends to the Career Advisor for review. These reports are reviewed monthly and corrective action performed as needed. All participants that have completed goals/obtained

employment or are not actively receiving services are required to be submitted for exit. Employment and wages are reviewed. After the operator records exit information into NCWorks, the SuperUser reviews the data to ensure it is recorded correctly. The MIS Specialist reviews NCWorks reports and FutureWorks data to review current program year performance and performance year performance. Programs are monitored to ensure all services provided are properly recorded.

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)]

The Northeast Regional Collaboration (Rivers East Workforce Development Board, Turning Point WDB, and Northeastern WDB) strategic vision for preparing an educated and skilled workforce:

- Focus our resources and training on provider's that deliver high-quality employer-focused and job seeker programs.
- Continue and expand our networking with Community Colleges to identify "gaps" in program offerings as identified through labor market research and dialogue with business.
- Continue our close working relationship with the Customized Industry Training program.
- Continue and expand our assessment instruments in the NCWorks Centers to help identify the barriers to employment and provide comprehensive individualized plans to produce the best skilled workers for referral to businesses.
- Continue our emphasis on short-term training and work-based learning in the region.
- Expand our sector work to identify emerging sectors and to begin offering skills training to meet the projected needs.
- Continue our Career Pathways work (NCWorks Career Pathways) to engage businesses, K-12, Community Colleges, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce, STEM, and the Universities to develop our workforce from school to life-long learning.
- Continue our close working relationship with local, regional, and state economic developers.
- Continue our close working relationship between the Boards.
- Continue our relationship with Vision East

The benefit of having such an established framework is that it can be implemented to prepare an educated and skilled workforce at any level.

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 Rivers East WDB, WIOA Service Providers, and NCWorks staff network and partner with educational systems, community colleges, community-based organizations, business groups, and others to stay abreast of services available in the region. Job referral and placement of customers possessing necessary skills is accomplished through the NCWorks Career Centers. Through dialogue with business, Community Colleges, and labor market information research, “Occupations in Demand” are identified for training to meet the needs of our workforce. Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, short-term training, apprenticeship, and other occupational skills training are utilized to assist adults, dislocated workers, and youth in need of additional skill acquisition.

There are four main campuses and one satellite campus of the NC Community College system within the region:

**Beaufort County Community College
Martin Community College
Roanoke-Chowan Community College
Pitt Community College
Martin Community College (Bertie Satellite Location)**

Academic program areas include Associates in Applied Science Degrees, Diplomas, or certificates in many program areas. General program areas include:

**Agriculture and Natural Resources Technology
Health Sciences
Biological and Chemical Technologies
Industrial Technologies
Business Technologies
Arts and Sciences
Construction Technologies
General Education
Engineering Technologies**

The Community College system offers developmental courses in various program areas and plays a primary role in direct training of existing or new employees for business and industry.

East Carolina University, Chowan University and University of Mount Olive are four-year institutions located in our region that also offer skills training, and others provide virtual learning.

Community-Based Organizations such as CADA, Greene Lamp and Telamon also offer services to our adult, dislocated worker, and youth populations.

The Rivers East Workforce Development Director convenes a meeting of the Adult Education Directors from the Community Colleges and Literacy Volunteers each year to increase collaboration. The discussion focuses on best practice sharing including local career pathways, enhancing career exploration hands on training & college transition instruction along with High school Equivalency preparation that are necessary to skill up the existing workforce, and services provided by referral or on-site at the NCWorks Career Centers.

Strong relationships currently exist with the Career and Technical Education system in Rivers East. (See multiple references to our Career Pathways/NCWorks Career Pathways Partnership throughout the plan).

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 Rivers East WDB, WIOA Service Providers, and NCWorks staff network and partner with educational systems, Community Colleges, Community-Based organizations, business groups, and others to stay abreast of services available in the region. Job referral and placement of customers possessing necessary skills is accomplished through the NCWorks Career Centers. Through dialogue with business, Community Colleges, and labor market information research, “Occupations in Demand” are identified for training to meet the needs of our workforce. Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, short-term training, apprenticeship, and other occupational skills training are utilized to assist adults, dislocated workers, and youth in need of additional skill acquisition.

The Board and our NCWorks Career Centers work closely with each of the four community colleges in the region to provide career and training services in a variety of degree, diploma and certificate programs. In addition, East Carolina University, Chowan University and University of Mount Olive are four-year institutions located in our region that also offer skills training. Additional universities provide virtual learning opportunities as well.

Community-Based Organizations such as CADA, Greene Lamp and Telamon also offer services to our adult, dislocated worker, and youth population.

Strong relationships currently exist with the Career and Technical Education system in Rivers East. (See several links to our Career Pathways/NCWorks Career Pathways Partnership throughout the plan).

The Rivers East WDB and NCWorks Committee review and approve short-term offerings that go into the product box in each Center. The Board approves training that will result in a post-secondary credential, or industry recognized credentials that are portable and stackable.

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)].

Over the last six years the Northeast Prosperity Zones Workforce Development Boards have served as Workforce Intermediaries for the Career Pathways Initiatives. Engaging employers to participate in the planning stages of developing the career pathways became a primary activity for the BSRs. Since the initial *Health Care Career Pathway*, the BSRs have assisted in engaging businesses in the Agriscience/ Biotechnology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Business Support Services pathways work. As part of this initiative and other outreach, the proliferation of incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, customized training and job profiling have become standard strategic approaches for engaging employers across the region. The interagency partnerships with partners like K-12, Community College, Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce and others have become an integral part in developing strategic workforce plans for employers preparing one, two, three and up to five year workforce projection plans. This collaborative approach helps workforce development respond appropriately when addressing the current and future training needs of employers. It becomes a more agile and measured response based on industry knowledge rather than happenstance. Collaboration with K-12, community college staff including customized industry training, local, regional and state economic development and Board staff are part of the regional strategic plan that helps all entities pool their knowledge and combine their resources to provide the business customer the best possible service without duplication.

This approach is showing promise as an innovative way to continue to deliver high quality services even during times of pending budget cuts across the state. With a more unified approach the partnerships continue to grow and improve as the partners learn the features of each organization's product and available services. One such collaboration between Pitt Community College, NCSU Industry Expansion Solutions (IES), and the WDB provided a way to pool resources to underwrite a customized training program where there was a shortfall in funding from traditional sources. By utilizing the local area Incumbent Worker Training Grant funds in coordination with the other entities, the company achieved their ISO certification. Partnerships like these have allowed each organization to think more

strategically when working with employers and maximized impact by leveraging available resources to meet the needs of the region's employers. This collaborative approach has helped us recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce, which is essential to economic stability in the region.

7. Describe how the Workforce Development Board coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5)]

Entrepreneurial opportunities and plan development are carried out by the Rivers East Business Services Manager by working with groups and businesses throughout the region. Close contact and coordination are maintained with the Small Business Centers at the four Community Colleges and East Carolina University. In our NEXTGEN Youth Program, participants are exposed to NC REAL development opportunities to learn more about opening their own business. The Mid-East Commission also offers microenterprise loans to qualifying individuals and businesses.

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)]

Recognizing the apprenticeship program requires more coordination and promotion to encourage business and individual participation in the region. The Rivers East Business Engagement Coordinator leads the effort to support registered apprenticeships in the region by working collaboratively with local community college, state and regional apprenticeship staff, and local businesses. The Board partnered with Pitt Community College to secure grant funding to provide a Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator for the Northeast, and several board members have registered apprenticeship programs within their companies. In addition, the Board is a partner with Beaufort County Community College in their Pre-Apprenticeship program focused on Advanced Manufacturing and is working with Pitt County Schools on their Tradesformers program.

The Board is such a supporter of registered apprenticeship that in March of this year, the Board along with its Administrative Entity, Mid-East Commission, developed and registered their first Apprenticeship program for the Career Advisors working in the NCWorks Career Centers in the state. Within the first 60 days, we have four Apprentices registered.

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)]:

- 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.
- b. Local resources that are provided to help struggling businesses avert or prevent layoffs, and
- c. Explain coordination with TAA to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services.

Upon receiving a WARN Notice from an employer that a workforce reduction is imminent, the Division of Workforce Solutions will contact the local area Workforce Development Director to initiate Rapid Response services. As outlined in the state protocol, if the layoff involves 100 or more employees, the Division of Workforce Solutions contacts Company officials to arrange Rapid Response services and coordinate the initial company meeting between the workforce board and the company. If a WARN notice is not required or the layoff affects less than 100 employees, the Workforce Board Director will contact the core partner group and organize the Rapid Response services. A standard presentation format is utilized to ensure all workers receive the same information, regardless of the time, date or location of the session. At a minimum, partners from the NCWorks Career Center, the local Community College, the Division of Employment Security and Vocational Rehabilitation will participate in the initial Rapid Response employee orientation sessions. Additional partners are included as needed, based on employee survey results or input from the employer management team.

Prior to a notice of layoffs or closure, the Business Services Manager may offer lay-off aversion services through Business Edge. This includes a thorough assessment of the needs and available options for businesses considered to be “at risk” based on several key indicators. Like Rapid Response, these services are coordinated with partners including the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), NC State IES, Community Colleges, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce and where necessary, Certified Turnaround Specialists, to address the urgent needs and sustainability obstacles the company may be facing.

For companies whose workers are determined to be trade affected, TAA services may be available. For those who chose to pursue training, they may be dual enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. Close coordination occurs between the TAA and WIOA programs to ensure the worker maximizes the services received from both programs without duplication. For example, one program may cover the cost of tuition, while the other provides supportive services. Decisions are made based on funding availability and program guidelines to ensure the participant maximizes the benefits available from each program.

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)]

The integrated service delivery system in Rivers East is characterized by integrated career center staffing, an integrated customer pool, integrated customer flow, and integrated technology in our Career Centers.

Responsible Parties in the Integrated Service Delivery Structure and their duties:

Career Center Manager-Overall, functionally reports to the Rivers East Workforce Development Board. On a day-to-day basis, functionally reports to the Rivers East Workforce Development Director. The Career Center Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the assigned career center. This includes coordinating staff work schedules and reviewing work outcomes to ensure services are being delivered in a timely manner. Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to coaching, directing, and reviewing staff performance that affects the Integrated Service Delivery system. Time will be spent on conducting periodic quality control checks by reviewing electronic files for accuracy. This ensures that a customer's information and required documentation is complete and supports continuous engagement.

The Career Advisor functionally reports to the Career Center Manager/ functional supervisor. This position is responsible for greeting, registering, directing visitors to needed services, and collecting customer satisfaction surveys. These activities are essential to maintaining exceptional customer service and require strict attention to details to meet the internal and external customer expectations. Duties include but are not limited to assisting job seekers with information about jobs, job referrals, providing Labor Market Information, and coordination of continuous engagement and enrollment into training opportunities that exist in our region and state.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operators- Provides WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff to the centers in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board service area. While the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funded Career Advisors will functionally report to their Center Manager, the Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operator will retain the formal supervision of same and act as the Employer of Record, being responsible for hiring, salary, benefits, timesheets, travel reimbursement, evaluations in concert with Center Manager/ designee, and any disciplinary action. Staff will be conducting periodic quality control checks by reviewing electronic and paper files for accuracy. This ensures that a customer's information and required documentation is complete and supports continuous engagement and program eligibility.

Division of Workforce Solutions- Provides Wagner-Peyser funded Career Advisors to the centers in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board service area. While the Wagner-Peyser funded Career Advisors will functionally report to their Center Manager, the Division of Workforce Solutions will retain the formal supervision of same and act as the Employer of Record, being responsible for hiring, salary, benefits,

timesheets, travel reimbursement, evaluations in concert with Center Manager/designee, and any disciplinary action.

Note: the functional job title of Career Advisor refers only to Wagner-Peyser and Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funded positions.

Integrated Customer Pool

Career Center customers, if eligible, will be enrolled in the performance pool of all eligible programs.

All one-stop service locations will:

- **Provide a one-on-one, staff-assisted welcome meeting to all first-time center customers**
- **Enroll all center customers in Wagner-Peyser at the time of the welcome meeting**
- **Refer all UI Claimants, when needed, as Dislocated Workers**

Integrated Customer Flow

Our centers have implemented an integrated customer flow designed to respond to customer need in addition to program requirements. Staff-assisted services are emphasized and Center services are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. The Career Center customer flow of services includes three major functions: welcome/assessment, skills development, and employment. Using regional labor market information, the Center will provide services to meet the needs of employers and jobseeker customers.

The Career Center customer flow will include a standardized initial skills assessment, access to a wide range of skill development services, and include options to improve their employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing.

Services in our "product box" will be available to Center customers, embedded in our integrated customer flow, and easily accessed by all customers with the support of all Center staff.

Three major components:

1. **Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the product box**
2. **Connection of the customer to additional staff-assisted skills and employment services when needed and wanted**
3. **Continued access to services until the customer's employment goal is achieved**

Procedures:

1. **Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the Product Box**

All first-time center customers will have a one-on-one “getting started” welcome meeting of approximately 20 to 30 minutes. This meeting will include (at a minimum) the following elements:

- A. Give a sincere and warm, “Thank you for coming”
 - B. Ask, “What brought you to the center today?” and conduct a brief and initial assessment of the customers work experience, skills, and needs
 - C. Register the customer in the NCWorks system
 - D. Complete the initial service plan:
 1. Customize and promote a recommendation for career service/s (based upon the customer’s initial assessment)
 2. Offer additional one-on-one, staff-assisted career services including skills and/ or employment service/s during this first visit or at a return center visit
 3. Schedule the first service/s and anchor customer commitment to service use
2. Connection of customers to additional staff-assisted employment, skills, and training services when needed and wanted

After completing the welcome process, customers may be scheduled either for a same-day or return meeting with center staff for one-on-one skills and employment consultation and basic and individualized career services (as appropriate) including:

- A. One-on-one skills and employment meetings will result in recommendations for and scheduling of additional services from the product box
 - B. All center staff will be trained to assist and facilitate customer access to any product box service by ensuring eligibility for any recommended and needed services
 - C. When appropriate, staff may schedule customers for additional return one-on-one meeting/s as needed and wanted by the customer
3. Continued access to services until the customer’s employment goal is achieved
All staff will promote and schedule additional services from the product box for every customer at every center visit until the customer’s employment goal is met:
- A. All services have entered employment as the desired outcome
 - B. Skill advancement, occupational training, and employment services are to be offered concurrently whenever possible

Integrated Career Center Staffing

Rivers East NCWorks Centers focus on customer service and are organized around services to customers, not discrete programs offered in silos. It is a system in which

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers.

Centers have implemented this system to deploy integrated staffing and utilize integrated technology to generate an integrated customer pool and customer flow. Integrated staffing refers to center staff organized by function, not by program or employer (funding source), with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Our staff is organized by function and is cross-trained so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers and is knowledgeable about all services the center offers.

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)]

The Rivers East Workforce Development Director convenes a meeting of the Adult Education Directors from the Community Colleges and Literacy Volunteers each year to increase collaboration. The discussion focuses on best practice sharing including local career pathways, enhancing career exploration hands on training & college transition instruction along with High school Equivalency preparation that are necessary to skill up the existing workforce, and services provided by referral or on-site at the NCWorks Career Centers.

Strong relationships currently exist with the Career and Technical Education system in Rivers East. (See multiple references to our Career Pathways/NCWorks Career Pathways Partnership throughout the plan).

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 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)]

Currently there are no written cooperative agreements in place; however, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff is an active partner in our NCWorks Centers in the region. VR staff attends center staff meetings, where training takes place on the use of NCWorks online, updates on hiring opportunities are shared and general discussion of coordination efforts are covered. VR Business Services staff actively promotes the programs and services of the Center along with specific VR services when visiting employers or other community partners. Through our VR partnership and Inclusion Committee, all Center staff have or will receive “Tilting at Windmills” training.

In addition, to make our NCWorks Career Centers more physically and programmatically accessible, utilizing funds from a Center Enhancement Grant, assistive technology is being purchased to place in each Career Center in the region. This includes a variety of equipment as recommended by VR's Assistive Technology Center specialist and all staff will receive training on the equipment.

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)]

From the Local Area's Procurement and Contracting Policy:

Competitive Procurement Options. Competitive procurement is the strongly preferred method for procuring goods and services. This section describes the various competitive methods to be considered and the requirements for each method.

1. **Micro-Purchase Option \$0- \$2,500.** An acquisition of products or services where the aggregate amount does not exceed \$2,500. An exception to the formal procurement method is the case of purchases less than or equal to \$2,500 (i.e., micro purchases) or other lower threshold set by the LA as deem appropriate for purchases in their policies. Purchases below that threshold may be made without soliciting competitive price or rate quotations if the price is considered to be reasonable. A reasonable price may be by comparing to a previous purchase, personal knowledge of the item being purchased, or by comparing to similar items being purchased. Records must be maintained.

2. **Small Purchase Option \$2,501- \$5,000.** A simple and informal competitive process for securing services, supplies and other property that do not cost more than \$5,000 in the aggregate on an annual basis is allowable. For purposes of economy, responsiveness to needs and administrative efficiency, the LA may consolidate procurements for similar needs (e.g., yearly requirements for office consumables or instructional materials), or break out project requirements into more than one procurement (e.g., separating computer hardware and software) in order to procure the best and most effective items in each category.

This option may not be used to purchase training services.

The LA must not break out purchase requirements for the sole purpose of staying under the aggregate limit of \$5,000 or the administrative entity's limit, if lower. The following requirements must be met and documented:

- **Price Quotes.** A minimum of three price quotes is required, which are supported by documentation consisting of product or service catalogues, current price lists, or telephone quotes substantiated by a written record of the price and source providing the quote, which is signed and dated by the staff person who obtained the quotes. When minimum of three quotes cannot be obtained, the justification for sole source procurement must be met (see Section C).
- **Basis for Selection.** For most commodity goods/services, the basis for selection would be the lowest price. If the basis is something other than price, the criteria for selection must be documented (e.g., the need and benefit of the purchase and the relative advantage of the offering from the provider selected).
- **Formal Document.** A purchase order, letter of agreement, or contract must be issued. Unless required by local procedures, a bilateral contract is not required. Purchase orders, vouchers, bills, sales slips or similar records can provide documentation. Note: For the purchase of consumable materials under \$5,000 per transaction, non-competitive procurement is an option (see Section C).

3. **Aggregate Purchase.** A purchase of multiple items of the same product. The aggregate purchase costing \$5,000 and over, must have review and written approval by the LA and DWS before the purchase is completed. The filing must be submitted to the LA twenty (20) business days prior to purchase in order to comply with the DWS requirement. Monitors will review purchase documentation against the filings submitted.

4. **Request for Proposal (RFP) Method.** An RFP is commonly used in procuring training or services for participants when potentially more than one entity would be submitting offers and program specifications are too broad to compare responses solely on the basis of cost. The solicitation must clearly specify deliverables and the basis for payment and incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or services being procured (including quantities).

Contents of Request for Proposal. To ensure resulting proposals include the information needed to make sound award decisions, it is required that the RFP include the following elements, as appropriate to the services being solicited.

- Name and address of the WDB's administrative entity.
- Name, address and phone number of person(s) to contact regarding the solicitation.
- General description of the sub-grant program, including identification of the applicable federal and state laws and regulations with which the selected contractor must comply. [Note: At a minimum, the WDB should reference the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; USDOL Regulations; and any appropriate NC Division on Workforce Solutions policy statement(s).]
- The population to be served and minimum levels of services to specific target groups.
- An estimate of the number/range of individuals to be served and expected results in each activity.
- Applicable coordination requirements.
- Funding parameters by activity.
- A description of the training and/or services to be provided.
- The period of performance.
- Applicable monitoring and reporting requirements, including, but not limited to, data entry, performance, and financial reporting.
- Other services or requirements (e.g., responsibility for eligibility determination, WDB policy on support payments, audit requirements and work statement requirements) that will affect proper budgeting by the offeror.
- Prohibition against subcontracting without WDB approval.
- Line item budget of proposed costs, including any profit to be realized and/or funds to be contributed.
- Documentation to be supplied by the offeror to establish its programmatic and financial capability to perform the work.
- Requirements for preparation and submission of the proposal, due date and time, content and format, number of copies and location/person where the bid should be submitted.
- Process and procedures by which proposals will be evaluated for competitiveness, including identification of specific criteria which will be used.
- Description of the procedures for responding to bidder inquiries and a schedule for the receipt of proposals including approximate dates for review and award.
- Grievance procedures for contesting the procurement process.
- Affirmative action assurance that the offeror will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Non-traditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as

amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to 29 CFR Part 34. The United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

The LA may choose to include other background and reference information in the solicitation. In organizing the solicitation package, the LA should clearly distinguish information which is general background from that which is directly applicable to preparing and submitting a competitive proposal.

Publication Requirements and Clarifying Information. The LA must provide adequate public notice of the solicitation prior to the date established for submission. Such notice must include written notification to all organizations on the current, applicable bidders' list and written publication in newspaper(s) of general (i.e., the LA's service area) circulation or posting to an accessible website.

A second public notice does not have to be completed if the RFP is being distributed in conjunction with an intention to bid process. In this case, the RFP must be distributed to the providers responding to the intention to bid, as well as to any party requesting it.

To provide the opportunity for a maximum number of qualified organizations to prepare bids, it is strongly recommended that the LA issue the public notice a minimum of 30 days prior to the submission date for proposals.

If the LA accepts inquiries, the solicitation should describe the process for receiving/responding to the inquiries. Any comments provided in response to inquiries must be provided to all recipients of the RFP.

Amendments to Solicitations. If a determination is made to amend (expand or restrict) the solicitation, distribution of this information to each person or organization who received an RFP is required.

Evaluating for Competitiveness/Demonstrated Performance. The following criteria will be used to measure demonstrated performance as determined by staff, Committee members, and Workforce Development Board members:

- a. No indication of fraud, abuse or wasteful spending
- b. Monitoring Reports do not include significant monitoring finding related to: fiscal concerns, case management, participant file folders, unresolved audit issues, financial management
- c. No unresolved prior year findings
- d. Have responded appropriately to all corrective action plans
- e. Making satisfactory progress with the 14 required program elements for the Youth Program
- f. All enrolled youth participants have received a WIOA/ partner sponsored service within a 90 day service period
- g. On target to meet or exceed measurable performance standards
- h. Making satisfactory progress towards expending 80% of budgeted funds.
- i. Youth Programs are meeting planned enrollment levels

Selection and Award Procedures. Private sector members of the WDB board will review and evaluate all proposals. The ad hoc committee results will be presented to the board and committees for approval.

3. Intention to Bid. This competitive method maintains the integrity of a competitive procurement process by identifying, through public notice, potential bidders to determine the feasibility of procurement.

Criteria for Use. This procedure is appropriate when there is a high level of uncertainty regarding the number of bids which will be received and whether there will be a sufficient number of bids to justify the development of a solicitation.

Procedural Requirements. To use this method, the LA must complete the steps described below.

a. Develop a set of preliminary training/service specifications for which the WDB intends to request bids. The specifications must include the following parameters:

- date the proposed solicitation will be issued
 - specific type of training/services to be performed
 - estimated number of participants and/or available funds or ranges, if preferred
 - expected period of performance
 - geographic area to be served
 - specific target groups to be served, if applicable
 - type of contract to be awarded
 - expected performance
- a. Issue a public notification in the same manner as that used for the issuances of RFPs. In addition, issue letters or e-mail notifications to all applicable organizations on the bidders' list, requesting an indication of whether the organization intends to bid on specific training/services which are described in the letter, consistent with the specifications developed in the preceding step. The letter must indicate the date by which a response is to be received.
- b. If the intention to bid process is used and no interest is received, noncompetitive sole source procurement may be used. When one intention to bid response is received, every effort must be made to negotiate desired training/services with that provider. However, if acceptable training/services cannot be negotiated, the LA may use a sole source justification to obtain the training/service. A complete history of this process must be documented in the procurement file.

Limitations. Sole source procurement may not be used if more than one organization indicated its intent to bid. In this case, a solicitation for the training/services advertised must be developed and transmitted to all who responded to the intention to bid.

4. **Request for Quotation/Invitation for Bid (Formal Advertising for Sealed Bids.)** Under this method, bids are publicly solicited and a contract is awarded to the responsible offeror whose bid, conforming to all material terms and conditions of the solicitation, is the lowest in price. A fixed-price contract is the preferred method to be used.

PROCUREMENT BY SEALED BIDS MAY NOT BE USED WHEN SECURING PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY TYPE SERVICES.

According to 29 CFR 95.48 and 29 CFR 97.36, all procurement contracts and other transactions between Local Boards and units of State or local government must be conducted only on a cost reimbursement basis. There is no provision for profit allowed. (WIOA Section 184(a)(3)(B).)

Criteria for Use. This method is appropriate and effective when the WDB is capable of specifying and describing the desired goods or services to be provided at high level of precision and completeness. The best examples are commodity-type goods/services which are widely available in the marketplace; e.g., computer equipment and software, instructional and testing materials, furniture, or training available to the general public.

Procedural Requirements. The minimum procedural requirements for this method are:

- Prepare a Request for Quotation (RFQ)/Invitation for Bid (IFB). The RFQ/IFB must include full and clear definitions and descriptions of the items to be procured, key performance dimensions or specifications, format for submission of bids, submission deadline and timeframes.
- Distribute the RFQ/IFB to organizations on established bidders' list and publicly advertise the procurement in a local newspaper with WDB area-wide circulation or post to an

accessible website, allowing sufficient time prior to the date of bid opening to permit adequate responses to the solicitation.

- Open all bids publicly at the time and place stated in the RFQ/IFB.
- Complete a cost or price analysis to determine the reasonableness of cost.
- Award a contract to the responsible offeror whose bid represents the lowest price and conforms to all of the specifications in the RFQ/IFB and meets the demonstrated performance criteria.
- Provide written notification to unsuccessful offerors promptly and file documentation accordingly.

Note: The WDB can reserve the right to reject any or all bids when there are sound reasons in the best interest of the program. However, the WDB must communicate this right in the solicitation.

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 Rivers East Workforce Development Board established a Strategic Vision for 2020 which serves as local implementation of the goals set forth by the NCWorks Commission's Strategic Plan and Governor's Job Ready Plan.

Through career exploration, assessment and planning, the WDB supports individuals from choosing their career path to attaining their credentials. Through data management, participants are tracked from start to finish in pursuit of their educational goal and supported even after employment is gained. By evaluating the training providers, the board ensures the training is relevant to the local labor market and is identified as a high growth sector to ensure participants are being prepared to succeed in the local, state and global economy.

An employer led workforce system ensures the services provided are relevant and hold value. Employer needs remain a top priority in the region, as the employers are the ultimate end user of our Center's job seeker product. The Business Services team works closely with local businesses and other employer facing partnering agencies to align services and coordinate available funding to ensure the employers' needs are met or exceeded.

Our NCWorks Centers operate in an integrated service delivery environment. Training is offered on the 2nd Friday of each month to ensure Center staff are up to date on performance goals, service delivery methods, policy, and technology.

The Rivers East WDB continues to lead or partner in innovative projects such as RAMP East and the Simulation Station, while bringing new technology such as Virtual Career Fair and Text Software to improve service delivery to job seekers and employers alike.

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)].

Regional Economic Analysis:






The Northeast Prosperity Zone lags the state in economic opportunity, education, and infrastructure development. This is not due to the lack of innovative solutions, but rather access to state-of-the-art infrastructure such as roadways, broadband access, and a connected transportation system. As described in the *Northeast NCWorks Career Pathways* narrative there are some economic drivers that are showing promise. Employment opportunities exist in *Healthcare, Agriscience/Biotechnology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Business Supportive Services Sectors*. Each of these sectors shares core foundational and educational

requirements for entry-level employment. The skills needed to advance into higher paid positions can be obtained through industry specific training vetted by employers and implemented through NCWorks Career Centers integrated services delivery system. The aging workforce, low education attainment, and sub-standard infrastructure coupled with the slow population growth may limit the economic development possibilities for the region.

Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors:

Jobs by Industry

381,130 Total Jobs (2020)		50.2% Male (National: 52.8%)	49.8% Female (National: 47.2%)
NAICS	Industry	2020 Jobs	
11	Crop and Animal Production	13,522	
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	647	
22	Utilities	794	
23	Construction	21,093	
31	Manufacturing	39,058	
42	Wholesale Trade	10,706	
44	Retail Trade	43,822	
48	Transportation and Warehousing	8,516	
51	Information	3,991	
52	Finance and Insurance	12,497	
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	17,199	
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11,647	
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,968	
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	21,835	
61	Educational Services	6,278	
62	Health Care and Social	38,441	

	Assistance	
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,716 
72	Accommodation and Food Services	31,422 
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	21,998 
90	Government	68,980 
99	Unclassified Industry	0 

Source: EMSI

Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs:

Continued work by the *Northeastern Career Pathways* collaboration reveal that employers remain concerned about the foundational skills workers need to succeed on the job. Foundational skills include skills needed to perform workplace tasks such as, reading SOPs and safety alerts, locating information on a graph to complete a routine process task, and performing basic mathematics to compile reports required for quality control and environmental reporting. Employers expressed concerns that soft skill training is needed for existing and emerging workforce populations. Soft skills are skills needed to stay employed and include interpersonal skills that are needed for effective communication with others on the job, and employability skills, such as reporting to work on time, and completing task as assigned.

To address these concerns voiced by employers the Workforce Development Boards, K-12 Career and Technical Training Directors, and the Community Colleges implemented soft skills training as part of the required curriculum training for high-growth industry sectors. In addition, these skills will be offered as short-term training courses in many of the NCWorks Career Centers to assist the existing workforce in understanding employer expectations while on the job.

2. Describe how the regional strategic vision aligns with the [NCWorks Commission’s 2019-2021 Strategic Plan](#).

The strategic vision for the Northeast aligns with the NCWorks Commission’s Strategic Plan as it focuses on the same key areas. Through our Career Pathways work, the Northeast has collaboratively created tools, resources and training to promote skills and education attainment involving K-12, Community College, University and other key partners. The materials developed promote a diverse group of pathways with each having multiple on and off ramps for all ages. Our pathways promote not only degrees, but certificates and stackable credentials while highlighting high growth industry sectors, available job opportunities, and pay rates. The career ladders present how an individual can move up after obtaining

employment with additional education and experience. Apprenticeship and work-based learning are highlighted as opportunities to gain valuable experience needed to excel in the chosen path.

Employer input was key in the development of the pathways and stands at the center of everything we do. Career awareness, career exploration, classroom training sponsorships and work-based learning opportunities are all developed through employer partnerships. Each of these components requires two or more workforce agencies to work together to address the business needs.

Local innovation has been a critical component of building the Career Pathways and maintaining the relationships between the boards and all of the partnering agencies. The Northeast brought tools such as Traitify and Kenexa Assess to the state. Award winning initiatives like RAMP East, Simulation Station and Career Café were born in the Northeast as innovative ideas to create new opportunities to reach and engage the population in our rural service areas.

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)]

The total population of the region as of 2019 estimates is 293,103. The region’s population has increased by 0.8% since 2014, with a growth of 2,447 individuals. The population is expected to increase another 1.0% through 2024, adding another 3,037 individuals.

Jobs have also increase in the last five years by 2.8%. This number fell significantly short of the national growth rate of 7.6%. As the number of jobs has increased, the labor force participation rate has decreased from 56.4% to 56.0% in the same five year period.

15.7% of the region’s residents possess a Bachelor’s degree (3.1% below the national average) and 10.5% hold an Associate’s degree (2.4% above the national average).

Total Working Age Population	243,248
Not in Labor Force (15+)	107,034
Labor Force	136,214
Employed	131,141
Unemployed	5,073

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 workforce system deploys multiple strategies to engage employers in the services delivered. This includes one-on-one meetings, outreach, presentations to employer and civic organizations and introductions through partner agencies. The relationship with local and regional economic developers, EDPNC, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, K-12, Vocational Rehabilitation and others is key to engaging large and small businesses. Through our NCWorks Career Centers or Virtual Career Fairs, we may connect with a business while they are searching for talent. Employer needs may also be served by providing services related to incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, work experience or apprenticeship programs.

The in-demand industry sectors with the most promise in the region include Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriscience/Biotechnology, and Business Supportive Services that spans across and connects these industry sectors. An example of responding to an in-demand industry sector is the RAMP East initiative, focusing on addressing the potential shortage of a skilled workforce in an area experiencing unprecedented growth in advanced manufacturing. Realizing this is a regional issue, the Rivers East and Turning Point WDB's partnered with eight community colleges and local economic developers to begin building a talent pipeline to address the employer need. This project is still a work in progress, but remains a viable means to skill up and transition workers across the regions into highly skilled sustainable wage jobs.

5. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

Each Workforce Development Board is responsible for the development and delivery of services within their workforce area, and the Directors are the functional supervisors for the NCWorks Career Centers where most of the services are offered. Part of the strategy to engage employers to help identify skill gaps and training needs are coordinated by the Workforce Development Boards Business Services Representatives. As a result of the NC 1000-in-100 Initiative, several Business and Industry Councils were developed using the same stakeholders from the NC 1000-in-100 Initiative. These councils meet once a quarter to review and discuss economic and workforce opportunities and plan strategies to assist employers as needed. The local-area Economic Developers or the Chamber of Commerce Directors are asked to serve as Chair to the Business and Industry Councils. This strategy has proved to be effective and responsive to addressing employer needs and to coordinate the needed resources to address employer's needs. Constant contact is maintained with local and regional economic developers.

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)].

Regional Transportation Overview:

The geographic makeup of the Northeast Regional Collaboration is primarily rural with 17 of the 20 counties designated as tier-1, and the remaining 3 counties tier-2. The significance as it relates to transportation is that 17 of our counties are among the most economically distressed counties in the state, and funding limitations associated to developing the roadways and transport systems are limited by the state budget. Local funding to improve the transportation systems is unlikely because of limited funding available from local municipalities. These limiting factors exacerbate economic development and access to well- paying jobs. To assist customers the NCWorks system provides assistance for those who qualify for Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act benefits. Such assistance is limited and subject to funding availability through WIOA.

Commuting Patterns:

According to the Carolina Demography at UNC-Chapel Hill's Carolina Population Center, most commutes are in-county commutes. In most cases, the largest commuting flow is within the county, meaning most people live and work in the same county. Within county commuting occurs among the majority of county residents in 75 of the state's 100 counties. In another 19 counties, within county commutes are the largest single commuting flow but do not represent the majority of all commutes. In only 6 North Carolina counties is the largest commuting flow to a county other than their county of residence. 2 of these counties are in Northeastern WDB, Camden and Perquimans.

County	Percentage Commuting WITHIN the County	County	Percentage Commuting WITHIN the County	County	Percentage Commuting WITHIN the County
Beaufort	75.7	Edgecombe	50.0	Northampton	46.5
Bertie	55.2	Gates	27.9	Pasquotank	72.8
Camden	21.9	Halifax	64.3	Perquimans	33.6
Chowan	61.1	Hertford	66.2	Pitt	84.3
Currituck	33.6	Hyde	84.3	Tyrrell	61.0

Dare	89.9	Martin	56.6	Washington	65.2
		Nash	66.9	Wilson	77.2

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 Northeast Regional NCWorks Career Pathways project helped unite Workforce Development Boards, Community Colleges, and the University System with the NCWorks Career Centers for the purpose of connecting job seekers to training and education attainment opportunities. In some cases, the Adult Education Coordinators from the Community Colleges are active partners within the NCWorks Career Centers holding employability classes at the career center. Other times, the NCWorks Career Center refers job seekers to the Adult Education classes held at the community college locations. This has created a symbiotic relationship where each partner becomes an integral part of the Integrated Service Delivery System. The goal of the NCWorks Career Centers is to be a one-stop delivery system where job seekers and employers come to receive services. The partner network is made up of various service providers and in most instances, they are the training provider for the Integrated Service Delivery System. The training providers deploy services for Adult Literacy, Adult Basic Education, Career Readiness Certifications, and other special employer initiatives to transition job seekers into meaningful employment. The NCWorks Online portal tracks participant activities from the day of their registration to include all short-term training, sector initiative training, and credentials received from all training providers. This holistic approach provides the framework to prevent duplication of services and offers to each service partner the ability to track and report services provided to job seekers and employers.

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 three Workforce Development Boards represented in the Northeast Regional Collaboration serve mostly a rural area. Each board does have at least one city/micropolitan area in its geographic footprint. Due to the mostly rural nature of the service area, relationships with local government is key. Each Board staff is housed within the Council of Government for the region. This allows for information sharing to be maximized with local government entities, their mayors, town councils, manager and such. It also allows for collaboration on projects that affect workforce, such as transportation, planning and zoning, infrastructure, economic development grants, community development grants, and aging services.

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

The Northeast is heavily influenced by the United States Military. One of the primary goals for Veterans exiting the service is to find meaningful employment in their local-area or hometown. The Northeast Regional Collaboration through the NCWorks Career Centers and as part of their Integrated Service Delivery System are required to provide a 24-hour hold on job posting to allow for the veterans' preference before posting the notice to the general public. The Northeastern Workforce Development Board encompasses a U.S. Coast Guard facility in their local area.

Through the NCWorks Career Centers, staff is available to assist exiting military, veterans, and military spouses with their employment and training needs. From entry into the Career Center, veterans are made to feel welcome as they are directed to the appropriate veteran's staff who offer one-on-one career counseling services. In addition to promoting hiring veterans through our NCWorks Career Center and partners, other methods used to promote the hiring of military veterans is addressed through our strong ties to Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Community College, and Veteran Services partners who actively market the military and the skills they bring to the region's employers. Additionally, several programs are in place to focus on creating an easier transition from military to civilian life; tools like the NC4VETS Resource Guides and GI Jobs magazines found in our NCWorks Career Center and countless tools such as, My Next Move for Veterans and Military Skill Translator, are on NCWorks Online to assist veterans in showing how their military skills can convert into civilian skills needed to find employment.

Our career center staff work with veterans and have the tools needed to assist them with military skills translation. However, we also have two Veterans focused staff positions in our Career Centers devoted to assisting Veterans with their employment needs. The Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs Specialists (DVOPs) assists all Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to help them overcome their barriers and develop a plan to help them find meaningful employment. In addition, the DVOPs may assist with resume and cover letter writing and preparing them for interviews. The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) visits with local businessmen and women, Human Resource Managers and Hiring Officials in Northeastern North Carolina Area to promote the hiring of Veterans. The LVER is involved in the community with the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Developers and Veteran Organizations to create Job Fairs and Veteran events. In the NCWorks Career Center the LVER trains the career center staff on assisting Veterans and offering Priority of Service.

10. Provide details on how the region is prepared to respond to serve victims of national emergencies or hurricane disasters.

Each of the three WDB's in the Northeast has been affected by hurricanes in the past. National Dislocated Worker Grants have been utilized to assist with humanitarian efforts and clean up in the aftermath. The current national pandemic has been a different type of emergency. In response, virtual service delivery has become more important than ever. Staff remain accessible by phone, email and chat and new Text and Virtual Career Fair softwares are being used to continue to provide assistance in connecting job seekers and employers.

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 Rivers East WDB supports the goal of increasing the skills and education attainment of its citizens. To accomplish this goal, the focus must be on increasing career awareness and career exposure opportunities for students, parents and teachers. The Career Pathways ladders developed in the Northeast promote the various careers in the high growth industry sectors and highlight the increase in wages as you increase your education and experience levels. Attainment of a degree, certificate or stackable credential all lead to greater opportunity to earn a sustainable wage.

In addition, the Board has added additional courses to the approved provider list to encourage more participation in short-term training and increased our focus on work-based learning including apprenticeship.

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

In addition to the materials already available through our Career Pathways work, additional targeted outreach is planned for specific high-growth industry sectors. As an example, RAMP East promotes careers in Advanced Manufacturing. It includes a new set of coursework called the Advanced Manufacturing Institute, which is offered at eight area community colleges. This is a short-term course that allows completers to earn their OSHA 10 certification and Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt. The course was built using feedback from local employers who have “bought in” to the initiative and are guaranteeing interviews to the completers.

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

Individuals with barriers to employment often need more support to be successful. Often times these barriers have kept them out of work for longer periods of time, so shorter term coursework resulting in an industry recognized credentials is usually a better fit for these individuals as it allows them to complete the coursework in a short period of time, gain a valuable credential and quickly obtain employment. As part of their employment plan, additional supportive services, case management services and counseling are made available while they are in training and when they are transitioning into work. These individuals usually are a great fit for the on-the-job training component to increase their skill level and entice the employer to take a chance on a candidate they may not have normally considered.

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 local Workforce Development Board uses a variety of methods to outreach to employers regarding available business services. These many include, but are not limited to, social media, printed materials, promotional calls or visits, presentations at civic organizations, Chamber newsletters, community events, and introductions through partner agencies.

5. Briefly describe how the local Workforce Development Board plans to enhance work-based learning projects to a broader range of local employers.

Rivers East Workforce Development Board works through the NCWorks Career Centers and service providers to coordinate work-based learning with local area employers. These efforts are ongoing throughout the region and continue to be a supply source to employers of all sizes. The coordination and promotion of these opportunities are often extended through various partner agencies including economic development, Chamber of Commerce, Community College, HR groups and others. This ensures a mix of small, medium and large employers.

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?

Each county has an application process to apply or express interest in serving on any appointed board. The Workforce Board Director often works with the County Manager or Clerk to review applications, identify potential candidates, and screen for eligibility based on the set criteria prior to the nominations going before the local elected officials for appointment. After appointment, the Director provides an orientation session to all new members to provide an overview of the board duties and functions.

7. Does the local Workforce Development Board currently have any sector partnerships established with local or regional businesses? If so, please cite an example.

No, outside of the Career Pathways work completed, there is an active invitation concerning establishing a sector partnership with our local electric cooperatives, but all meetings were postponed due to COVID-19.

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.

From building a Regional Collaborative Strategic Plan, providing career awareness in Advanced Manufacturing, providing teachers hands on experiences in local industry, and improving our outreach, tools, technology and staff, the Rivers East WDB is always looking for ways to grow our horizons.

As an example of our innovation, we have recently held our first Virtual Career Fair and added text messaging services in our region as a result of COVID-19.

9. Has the local Workforce Development Board received any (Federal, State or Local) funding for local innovative projects? If so, please list these grants.

The Rivers East WDB received \$2M in special grants funding during PY 18 & 19. This included a Maximize Carolina Grant to promote Advanced Manufacturing careers in Beaufort County (Made in BoCo), a Golden Leaf grant for RAMP East to provide teacher externships, student industry tours and regional job fairs for Advanced Manufacturing, an NCWorks Local Innovation Grant for asset mapping and building a cohesive communications plan, and a Center Enhancement Grant focused on improving communication and feedback, tools and technology, staff training and skill up, accessibility, outreach, and enhanced partnerships.

We also partnered with Turning Point WDB for a RAMP East grant through Commerce for a Recruiter positions.

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.

Rivers East maintains a strong social media presence, having accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Information is also posted on the Board's website and shared on the various social media posts. The WDB forwards Press Releases to the local news outlets requesting the information to be shared. In addition, Local Area staff including Center staff participate and present at various partner agencies and Chamber events, including attending local festivals. The WDB also had professional outreach materials printed that are used by all staff and distributed throughout the communities for universal brand recognition.

11. Briefly describe any local area best practices on modernization of local career centers.

The Enhancement Grant funding is being used to equip career centers to become "Centers of Excellence" through updated equipment and branded items as identified in the previous planning grant. Such items include assistive technologies to equip one computer work station at each career center to better provide access and services to visual, hearing and mobility impaired individuals; updated signage with new

NCWorks logo; modern digital signage utilizing each center's wall monitor to promote services and programs; use of virtual technologies for improved communications and expanded outreach to underserved populations through video-conferencing software, implementation of virtual career fairs, and incorporation of SMS keyword messaging systems at each career center.

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?

The WDB provides continued staff participation and support to each career center's partner group which includes the majority of the workforce partners. These meetings serve as cross-training opportunities across agencies, and increase collaboration. In addition, through sponsorship of the GADJ (Guidance and Direction for Jobseekers) initiative we have enhanced our partnership with K-12, Career and Technical Education, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Board is an active participant in NCCare360, an integrated database and referral system and we regularly use online tools like Constant Contact, website's regional calendar of events, and virtual career fairs to promote efforts and improve communication between partners.

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.

The Inclusion Committee has toured the Assistive Technology Center located in Greenville, NC and has worked with the Center Managers to identify "assistive" technology needed for our NCWorks Career Centers. Through an Enhancement Grant we have been able to purchase multiple devices for our Career Centers. In addition, we have partnered with the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to offer services to customers who have a self-disclosed disability. VR staff also participated in our annual Disability Awareness training. In 2018, we partnered with a local employer and VR to offer an individual with a disability a full-time job, through our On-the-Job Training Program. This individual was also awarded the Rivers East Annie Mobley Youth Award.

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: Local Area Name Career Centers.

See attached: Rivers East Career Centers

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

The Rivers East WDB released a RFP for competitive procurement of Adult and Dislocated Service Provider and One-Stop Operator(s) on April 17, 2020 due May 14, 2020. Award was made after negotiation at the May 20, 2020 WDB meeting. The contract will be awarded for a two year period, with the option to extend a third year with satisfactory performance.

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?

In these current times of employment uncertainty, many individuals have multiple barriers to employment. In order to better engage these individuals in our Center and increase access to services and programs, several strategies have been deployed region wide.

To address barriers to transportation and internet access, Rivers East, along with Northeastern and Turning Point, previously utilized an Innovative Service Delivery Grant to establish partnerships with our local libraries across the region, as well as other community organizations. Several Centers are designated “drop off” points for their local transit authority. Rivers East has and will continue to work with various partners to leverage resources wherever possible. For example, Rivers East has supported NC DHHS Vocational Rehabilitation Services’ Employment Marketing Skills Training by providing instruction utilizing online tools and laptop computers provided by the Beaufort, Martin and Hyde Regional Library. Rivers East is hosting virtual career fairs enabling individuals with transportation issues to participate.

To ensure our Centers are physically accessible, all Centers in Rivers East have completed an ADA compliance review with our local VR engineer. All Centers meet ADA compliance or currently have repairs in progress. Additional assistive technologies will be used to equip one computer work station at each career center to

better provide access and services to visual, hearing and mobility impaired individuals.

To address digital literacy skills, our Centers are partnered with their local community college and/or literacy council to provide referrals to individuals needing to enhance their computer skills. While Center staff are available to provide some assistance, often the individuals need more one-on-one assistance than staff can provide in the setting of the Center.

To address the barrier of former offenders, Centers have partnered with local re-entry councils or non-profits focused on re-entry efforts. In Bertie & Martin County, the Center is the lead agency of the Re-Entry Council. WOTC and federal bonding are also utilized as incentives for employers to provide that “second chance”.

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?

Rivers East’s focus on work-based learning has been a priority for many years. In PY17, the board hired a Business Engagement Coordinator to focus solely on developing work-based learning opportunities in our region. With state support in PY18 and PY19, this position continues with this mission in mind. On-the-job training and quality work experience placements for new and existing participants are continually developed. With the addition of a Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator for the Northeast (grant funded through Pitt Community College), apprenticeships are finally on the rise in the Northeast. In addition, Rivers East is partnering with local community colleges and industry leaders to promote pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship and examining ways to braid funding to support work-based learning experiences.

RAMP East (Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline) is a prime example in Rivers East and Turning Point WDB areas to address the talent needs of new and expanding advanced manufacturing businesses in the 10-county region. One curriculum will be offered at all 8 community colleges with multiple industry recognized credentials included. We are investigating the potential to tie it to pre-apprenticeship, which would lead to a registered apprenticeship, along with combining it with on-the-job training for qualified applicants.

Labor market information and other intel, including constant feedback from local industry, are utilized to ensure the training provided, whether classroom, work based or a combination of the two, are meeting the demands of local business and industry. In addition to individual outreach, our Business Services Manager and Business Engagement Coordinator partner with local economic developers, local HR organizations, and other entities to ensure local employer needs are met.

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 integrated service delivery system in Rivers East is characterized by integrated career center staffing, an integrated customer pool, integrated customer flow, and integrated technology in our Career Centers.

**Responsible Parties in the Integrated Service Delivery Structure and their duties:
Career Center Manager-Overall, functionally reports to the Rivers East Workforce Development Board. On a day-to-day basis, functionally reports to the Rivers East Workforce Development Director.**

The Career Center Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the assigned career center. This includes coordinating staff work schedules, and reviewing work outcomes to ensure services are being delivered in a timely manner. Duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to coaching, directing, and reviewing staff performance that affects the Integrated Service Delivery system. Time will be spent on conducting periodic quality control checks by reviewing electronic files for accuracy. This ensures that a customer's information and required documentation is complete and supports continuous engagement.

Career Advisor-functionally reports to the Career Center Manager/ functional supervisor.

The Career Advisor is responsible for greeting, registering, directing visitors to needed services, and collecting customer satisfaction surveys. These activities are essential to maintaining exceptional customer service and require strict attention to details to meet the internal and external customer expectations. Duties include but are not limited to assisting job seekers with information about jobs, job referrals, providing Labor Market Information, and coordination of continuous engagement and enrollment into training opportunities that exist in our region and state.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operators- Provides WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff (Career Advisors) to the centers in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board service area. While the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funded Career Advisors will functionally report to their Center Manager, the Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operator will retain the formal supervision of same and act as the Employer of Record, being responsible for hiring, salary, benefits, timesheets, travel reimbursement, evaluations in concert with Center Manager/ designee, and any disciplinary action. Staff will be conducting periodic quality control checks by reviewing electronic and paper files for accuracy. This ensures that a customer's information and required documentation is complete and supports continuous engagement and program eligibility.

Division of Workforce Solutions- Provides Wagner-Peyser funded (Career Advisors) to the centers in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board service area. While

the Wagner-Peyser funded Career Advisors will functionally report to their Center Manager, the Division of Workforce Solutions will retain the formal supervision of same and act as the Employer of Record, being responsible for hiring, salary, benefits, timesheets, travel reimbursement, evaluations in concert with Center Manager/designee, and any disciplinary action.

Note: the functional job title of Career Advisor refers only to Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Dislocated Worker funded positions.

Integrated Customer Pool

Career Center customers, if eligible, will be enrolled in the performance pool of Wagner-Peyser. All Trade Adjustment Assistance customers will also be enrolled in the performance pool of the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program. WIOA Title I Youth customers are not considered a part of the common customer pool, as the needs and the services available to that population are different.

All one-stop service locations will:

- Provide a one-on-one, staff-assisted welcome meeting to all first-time center customers**
- Enroll all center customers in Wagner-Peyser at the time of the welcome meeting**
- Refer all UI Claimants, when needed, as Dislocated Workers**

Integrated Customer Flow

Our centers have implemented an integrated customer flow designed to respond to customer need in addition to program requirements. Staff-assisted services are emphasized and Center services are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. The Career Center customer flow of services includes three major functions: welcome/assessment, skills development, and employment. Using regional labor market information, the Center will provide services to meet the needs of employers and jobseeker customers.

The Career Center customer flow will include a standardized initial skills assessment, access to a wide range of skill development services, and include options to improve their employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing.

Services in our "product box" will be available to Center customers, embedded in our integrated customer flow, and easily accessed by all customers with the support of all Center staff.

Three major components:

1. Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the product box
2. Connection of the customer to additional staff-assisted skills and employment services when needed and wanted
3. Continued access to services until the customer's employment goal is achieved

Procedures:

1. Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the Product Box

All first-time center customers will have a one-on-one "getting started" welcome meeting of approximately 20 to 30 minutes

This meeting will include (at a minimum) the following elements:

- A. Give a sincere and warm, "Thank you for coming"
- B. Ask, "What brought you to the center today?" and conduct a brief and initial assessment of the customer's work experience, skills, and needs
- C. Register the customer in the system for -enrollment in WP
- D. Complete the initial service plan:
 1. Customize and promote a recommendation for basic and individualized career service/s (based upon the customer's initial assessment)
 2. Offer additional one-on-one, staff-assisted career services including skills and/ or employment service/s during this first visit or at a return center visit
 3. Schedule the first service/s and anchor customer commitment to service use

2. Connection of customers to additional staff-assisted employment, skills, and training services when needed and wanted

After completing the welcome process, customers may be scheduled either for a same-day or return meeting with center staff for one-on-one skills and employment consultation and basic and individualized career services (as appropriate) including:

- A. One-on-one skills and employment meetings will result in recommendations for and scheduling of additional services from the product box
- B. All center staff will be trained to assist and facilitate customer access to any product box service by ensuring eligibility for any recommended and needed services
- C. When appropriate, staff may schedule customers for additional return one-on-one meeting/s as needed and wanted by the customer

3. Continued access to services until the customer's employment goal is achieved
All staff will promote and schedule additional services from the product box for every customer at every center visit until the customer's employment goal is met:

- A. All services have entered employment as the desired outcome
- B. Skill advancement, occupational training, and employment services are to be offered concurrently whenever possible

Integrated Career Center Staffing

Rivers East NCWorks Centers focus on customer service and are organized around services to customers, not discrete programs offered in silos. It is a system in which WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers.

Centers have implemented this system to deploy integrated staffing and utilize integrated technology to generate an integrated customer pool and customer flow. Integrated staffing refers to center staff organized by function, not by program or employer (funding source), with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Our staff is organized by function and is cross-trained so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers and is knowledgeable about all services the center offers.

6. Describe how local Workforce Development Boards determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.

NCWorks Career Center staff will perform WIOA eligibility verification for all customers interested in or referred to training services. An interview, evaluation or assessment and career planning will determine the appropriate course of training for each customer. Through this process staff will determine if the customer:

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

Training services will be provided either through an Individual Training Account (ITA) or through a training contract. Training services will be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographic area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. A list of training services and eligible training providers will be supplied to maximize customer choice, identify in-demand occupations, inform customers of relevant

training provider performance, and coordinate to the greatest extent possible with other sources of assistance

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

Follow-up services will be provided, as appropriate, for participants in adult or dislocated worker activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment for a minimum of 12 months after the first day of employment. NCWorks Career Center staff will provide counseling regarding the workplace and labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance along with other Career Services as appropriate. Follow-up is provided in a variety of methods including by phone, text, e-mail or in person.

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.

NCWorks Career Center staff in each of our centers has full access to the NCWorks system. Training provided during the implementation of integrated service delivery, which began over three years ago in our region, included customer service training, labor market information, procedures for the NCWorks system, procedures for case management and documentation, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA policies and procedures. In each of our centers, our Career Advisors serve all customers and provide Wagner-Peyser and basic career services. For new staff, training begins immediately and is continuous. All integrated service delivery staff receive training per the NCWorks Online onboarding checklist.

Since the initial training, Local Area staff and the DWS Regional Analyst offer periodic on-site training, group training, and disseminate updated procedures via e-mail. Additional training is provided as needed utilizing the NCWorks Training Center to continuously improve their knowledge. In Rivers East, all Centers close at noon on the 2nd Friday of each month for Center Staff Training which is held collaboratively, by Center or via webinar. Examples of training include Disability awareness, Business services, Outreach opportunities, ISD, and Assessments such as Assess and Traitify. This training, along with those listed above, will be held on an on-going basis to keep all staff current.

9. Describe how the Workforce Development Board holds the NCWorks Career Center operator and contractors accountable for activities and customer outcomes in the Center.

The Rivers East Workforce Development Board adopted a Standard Operating Procedures format during the original iteration of the Integrated Service Delivery System. Abiding in the instructions are precise procedures for operators, partners agencies, and contractors to assist them in following the programmatic requirements for approved activities as stated in the local-area and WIOA performance measures. The functional activities outlined in the SOPs, will serve as a guide for all partner agencies to follow when delivering services to our customers. Along with the performance reports and Center activity reports provided at each WDB meeting, Center Managers also provide a verbal and written report of Center activities. Through monitoring of program performance reports, customer surveys, and continuous improvement monitoring of the Center and Center Manager, the NCWorks Committee and WDB hold the Center operator, Center manager, and program contract staff accountable for activities and customer outcomes.

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 NCWorks Career Centers in Rivers East utilize NCWorks Online, which is a single, web-based system that provides job matching services to job seekers and employers, as well as program and client management/participant tracking used by staff. It is a web-based system that can be utilized by both job seekers and businesses remotely. Customers in both cities and rural areas can access information from their home computers, and if one is not available, can be reached via computers in libraries, Community-Based Organizations, faith-based organizations, and other locations.

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)]

In Rivers East, the Career Advisors in each of our centers serve all customers and provide Wagner-Peyser, Adult, and Dislocated Worker services, and provides limited information regarding unemployment insurance. All staff conducts EAIs and designated staff delivers RESEA services. The DWS Regional Analyst offers periodic on-site training, group training, and disseminate updated procedures via e-mail concerning UI

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 Rivers East Business Services Staff continues to develop teams within the NCWorks Career Center to serve local area businesses to deliver information related to work-based learning, incumbent worker training, and apprenticeship opportunities. These value-added programs are part of the overall strategy to help employers connect with underdeveloped talent and provide the job seeker an

opportunity to find meaningful employment. The Manager of the NCWorks Career Centers are vital part to conveying information about the programs. The Business Services Staff works directly with the managers to facilitate the delivery of such services to the region's employers. It is the goal of the Business Services Department to fully integrate the work-based learning programs and to provide a seamless and impactful service to the local area employers.

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)]

As partners in our One-Stop system, staff works very closely with Vocational Rehabilitation in helping customers find employment and training which will result in their obtaining gainful employment that meets their needs and vocational choice. VR is also represented on the Workforce Development Board and serves as the Chair of the Inclusion Committee as an advocate for the needs of our disabled population. All NCWorks Centers in Rivers East are accessible to our disabled citizens and meet ADA requirements.

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: *Local Area Name Service Flow Chart 2020*.

Integrated Customer Flow

Our centers have implemented an integrated customer flow designed to respond to customer need in addition to program requirements. Staff-assisted services are emphasized and Center services are continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. The Career Center customer flow of services includes three major functions: welcome/assessment, skills development, and employment. Using regional labor market information, the Center will provide services to meet the needs of employers and jobseeker customers.

The Career Center customer flow will include a standardized initial skills assessment, access to a wide range of skill development services, and include options to improve their employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing.

Services in our "product box" will be available to Center customers, embedded in our integrated customer flow, and easily accessed by all customers with the support of all Center staff.

Three major components:

- 1. Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the product box**
- 2. Connection of the customer to additional staff-assisted skills and employment services when needed and wanted**
- 3. Continued access to services until the customer's employment goal is achieved**

Procedures:

- 1. Initial customer welcome with immediate access to employment and skill advancement services in the Product Box**

All first-time center customers will have a one-on-one "getting started" welcome meeting of approximately 20 to 30 minutes

This meeting will include (at a minimum) the following elements:

- A. Give a sincere and warm, "Thank you for coming"**
 - B. Ask, "What brought you to the center today?" and conduct a brief and initial assessment of the customers work experience, skills, and needs**
 - C. Register the customer in the system for enrollment in WP**
 - D. Complete the initial service plan:**
 - 1. Customize and promote a recommendation for basic and individualized career service/s (based upon the customer's initial assessment)**
 - 2. Offer additional one-on-one, staff-assisted career services including skills and/ or employment service/s during this first visit or at a return center visit**
 - 3. Schedule the first service/s and anchor customer commitment to service use**
- 2. Connection of customers to additional staff-assisted employment, skills, and training services when needed and wanted**

After completing the welcome process, customers may be scheduled either for a same-day or return meeting with center staff for one-on-one skills and employment consultation and basic and individualized career services (as appropriate) including:

- A. One-on-one skills and employment meetings will result in recommendations for and scheduling of additional services from the product box**
 - B. All center staff will be trained to assist and facilitate customer access to any product box service by ensuring eligibility for any recommended and needed services**
 - C. When appropriate, staff may schedule customers for additional return one-on-one meeting/s as needed and wanted by the customer**
- 3. Continued access to services until the customer's employment goal is achieved**

All staff will promote and schedule additional services from the product box for every customer at every center visit until the customer's employment goal is met:

- A. All services have entered employment as the desired outcome**
- B. Skill advancement, occupational training, and employment services are to be offered concurrently whenever possible**

Integrated Career Center Staffing

Rivers East NCWorks Centers focus on customer service and are organized around services to customers, not discrete programs offered in silos. It is a system in which WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of NCWorks Career Centers. Centers have implemented this system to deploy integrated staffing and utilize integrated technology to generate an integrated customer pool and customer flow. Integrated staffing refers to center staff organized by function, not by program or employer (funding source), with the purpose of serving customers efficiently and effectively. Our staff is organized by function and is cross-trained so that all center staff has the capacity to serve all customers and is knowledgeable about all services the center offers.

See Attachment: Rivers East Service Flow Chart 2020

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: Local Area Name NCWorks Career Center MOU.

See attachment: Rivers East NCWorks Career Center 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)]

In each of our centers, partners pay their fair-share of occupancy costs either as in-kind contributions or based on a cost-allocation formula. The contributions vary by partner, Center and are negotiated with the board. Additionally, the Rivers East Workforce Development Board allocates a small amount of funds each year to the Centers for equipment purchases, supplies, and staff/partner travel.

17. Describe the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

In each of our centers, partners pay their fair-share of occupancy costs either as in-kind contributions or based on a cost-allocation formula. The contributions vary by

partner, Center and are negotiated with the host agency. In four of the five Centers, DWS provides the manager covers the cost of the Managers salary and benefits as part of cost sharing.

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)]

Continuous Improvement recommendations/technical assistance is provided throughout the year to all NCWorks Career Centers in Rivers East to ensure compliance with State and Local Area expectations. Monthly reports are submitted by each Career Center Manager and a combined report is forwarded to the NCWorks Committee members through the Local Area office to assess the activities and progress and to identify the need for improvement.

The Rivers East Workforce Development Board has developed a systematic monitoring guide for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of our NCWorks Career Centers operations. Monitoring/Continuous Improvement is the quality control system whereby the WDB gathers and analyzes information to detect problems, identify strengths and weaknesses, and propose improvements to the customer flow. Monitoring/Continuous Improvement activities are conducted once a year to determine whether Centers follow contractual agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, Resource Sharing Agreements, WDB policies, WIOA regulations, and WDB requirements. Most importantly, members of the Workforce Development Board and the NCWorks Committee participate in the on-site visits. The WDB monitors performance, programmatic, and fiscal activities. NCWorks Center Operators must cooperate with any monitoring, inspection, audit or investigation of activities related to WIOA and Enhancement funding. Additionally, oversight may be conducted by the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions, the State of North Carolina, the U.S. Department of Labor, or their designated representatives. This cooperation includes access to the premises for the purpose of interviewing employees or participants and permitting the examination of, and/or photocopying of books, records, files, or other documents related to the One-Stop and WIOA contractual agreements. Each NCWorks Operator signatory official and Manager receives a written monitoring/continuous improvement report following the visit. A management action plan, including corrective actions, explaining how the recommendations will be implemented must be submitted by the NCWorks Center to the Local Area ten working days after the receipt of the report

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)]

Integrated Technology

The NCWorks Career Centers in Rivers East utilize NCWorks Online, which is a single, web-based system that provides job matching services to job seekers and employers, as well as program and client management/participant tracking used by staff. It is this web-based system that helps achieve an integrated customer pool, where all customers (when eligibility permits) are enrolled in both the WIOA Title I Adult program and Wagner-Peyser program; and all Trade Adjustment Act customers are enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program. An integrated data system allows for unified and streamlined intake, case management, and service delivery, minimizing the duplication of data. Referrals, services and activities are assessable by all staff to better serve the customers.

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
 - Exploring/ promoting sector strategies with employers
 - Utilizing employer data to inform priorities
 - Making employer referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff

The priority of the Business Services Staff is to assist employers in a coordinated process to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce. The goal is to help employers connect with job seekers by engaging employers in the use of the Workforce Development Board and NCWorks Career Center services. Services may include referrals to appropriate partner agencies and explaining services that are available to them through the integrated service delivery system. The program's services available to employers include virtual recruitment events, on-site incumbent worker training, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training for new hires. Other services related to employer engagement include encouraging employers to use NCWorks online to post job orders and connecting employers with the appropriate NCWorks Career Center staff capable of providing the needed services. The goal of the Integrated Service Delivery System - Business Services is to offer seamless business services by providing the best-in-class customer service to our internal and external customers.

Business Service staff played a key role in gaining employer support of our Career Pathways work. They provide local labor market data to the board, local economic developers and other regularly.

2. Please describe the efforts the Workforce Development Board has made to deliver business services on a regional basis. (possibly duplicative of items above)

Rivers East has two (2) full-time board staff providing Business Services. The Business Services Manager provides a multitude of intensive services to the businesses in all five counties of the region including one-on-one consultations, incumbent worker training, development of collaborative recruitment plans, valuable labor market information, and connections with appropriate partners. The Business Services staff meet at least bi-monthly to collaborate on initiatives using resources from Rivers East, TurningPoint, and Northeastern Region Workforce Boards. We have collaborated on On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, RAMP East, and Career Pathways.

In addition, the Business Engagement Coordinator position focuses on promoting the NCWorks Career Centers and its services to local businesses, along with the promotion and coordination of placements for work-based learning. In addition, the Business Engagement Coordinator serves as the Board's ACT Profiler. NCWorks

Center Managers and designated staff are also expected to provide services to businesses.

The delivery of Regional Business Services is a concept that is practiced on a regular basis with our adjoining workforce boards. Rivers East Workforce Development Board, Turning Point Workforce Development Board, Eastern Carolina Workforce Board, and the Northeastern Workforce Development Board share a labor force that is accustomed to crossing county lines and traveling more than 45 minutes each way to their place of employment. This requires cross collaboration to deliver such services as On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, and mass recruitment efforts as demonstrated recently in the RAMP East Project. Employer demands do not stop at county lines, and the ability to work well together has proven to be a great asset to our boards for improving economic opportunity of the region's constituents.

3. Describe how the Board partners with employers and other organizations to promote work-based learning activities.

Rivers East Workforce Development Board helped organize Business and Industry Councils throughout the five-county region. This is where representatives from the Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Community Colleges, K-12/CTE and local employers come together once a month/quarter to address specific concerns of the county or region.

One such project in Beaufort County brought together five major employers to identify and train individuals by offering pre-hire classes in Advanced Manufacturing. This pipeline development training is part of a regional effort by employers and partner agencies to connect with the needed talent to grow and expand their companies. Work-based learning comes as the “finisher” of this concept, with the promotion of those who complete this two-week training to local businesses being transitioned into paid work experience, on-the-job training, or established pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training models.

4. Please describe business services partnership efforts in the areas of education, economic development and with employers.

Rivers East Workforce Developments Business Services Department coordinates employer outreach through a network of agency partners. The information is shared between the local K-12 Education System, Community College System, Economic Developers, NCWorks Career Center Managers, and the Workforce Development Board, are all vital points of contact for employers to share needs associated with engaging talent for new and existing employment opportunities. The coordination of services is dependent upon which partner agency is notified of an employer need, and which partner is needed to help the employer satisfy the need. Once the point of contact is made other agency partners are engaged to deliver the needed services to help employers bring economic prosperity to the region.

Extensive collaboration between economic development and workforce development is ongoing and aligns with the local area strategic plan to develop Business Advisory Councils in each county. Recent requirements issued by the Board of Education have mandated that each K-12 Career and Technical Education Director serve on an advisory board to include local area agencies and business leaders. This mandate has allowed for the proliferation of Business Advisory Councils throughout the east. Currently there are four such advisory council in the Rivers East Workforce Development Board local area.

Our Business Services team partners with local K-12 education as well as local community colleges to bring awareness of the programs offered through WIOA that would benefit both the student and the employer. Local Area staff make presentations to teachers and guidance counselors as well as visiting student assemblies held at the Early College High Schools. We have partnered with initiatives such as Max Carolina and RAMP East.

Business Services is in constant communication with our local economic developers. Several of our economic developers attend our local business and industry council meetings. When they are recruiting industries to their respective counties, we are at the table providing an overview of services we can provide.

Our employers play a key role in providing industry tours, job shadow opportunities, work experience and on-the-job training for our participants. In addition, many will attend our career fairs, hold recruiting events in our Career Centers and serve on our local board.

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 primary factors that impact local performance include the unemployment rate, community college attendance rate, number of new and expanding businesses, number of layoffs, and barriers to employment. The most recent COVID 19 Pandemic will have a far-reaching impact on the local area performance measures. With the local unemployment numbers being reported a low, the candidate pool available for employment and training is limited and often this segment of the workforce will have more barriers to achieve sustainable employment.

With new and expanding businesses, the opportunity for local employment increases, however, the wages offered are not always at or above the median wage required to meet performance. The recent losses of higher paying jobs in our local area have certainly impacted performance and the COVID 19 pandemic will exacerbate the losses.

- b. What strategies are in place to maintain or improve performance?

Consistent program oversight is a primary duty of the Rivers East Performance and Accountability Manager, along with the WDB Director. The ability to interpret indicators to monitor the progress of the WIOA programs based on performance criteria and attainment of set goals is indicative of the regions past and future performance goals. Monthly desk monitoring is performed on program performance and contractor monthly reimbursement forms including line item budget tracking of training expenditure to ensure the appropriate percentage of expenditures.

Reports are run in NCWorks and distributed to operators to monitor performance. The super user assists in recording/correcting data as applicable. Deficiencies and nonattainment of LA goals are addressed with the WDB and operator. Areas of performance are addressed, and training is provided at quarterly training sessions. Progress on indicators is also monitored through Futureworks.

Technical assistance is provided on a one-on-one basis in support of attainment of performance measures is also provided in areas such as: data entry and accurate recording of services, improvement in assessment and suitability screening, timely follow up, assistance with overcoming barriers, maintaining contact, career counseling, reporting of all supplemental data in NCWorks, increased coordination of services with other entities, and employability skills training.

It is with a keen eye on the details and business instincts that the Workforce Development Board will ensure that all federal and state performance outcomes will be met.

- 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.

Board staff meet at least monthly with the contractor's local management team. Performance is discussed and reports are shared. All parties are aware that all contracts are performance based, and appropriate action will be taken as needed for consistent poor performance.

WDB staff provide quarterly training for all contractor staff, Center Managers are provided performance reports, and all Center staff receive additional training on the performance measures and the impact each staff and customers has on attaining overall performance. Additional training sessions on specific topics are scheduled monthly by contractor staff, and WDB staff provide additional training as needed, in addition to one-on-one technical assistance and caseload reviews.

The Region is focused on providing staff the training and tools required to provide excellent customer service and continuous engagement with each customer until the time of employment and after to ensure retention.

- 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.

WDB staff provide performance information to Center Managers for distribution to all Center staff. Staff receive additional training on the performance measures and the impact each staff and customers has on attaining overall performance. Specific contractor performance data is shared with their local management team and directly with local career advisors.

Performance data and enrollment reports are updated and shared with each Committee, the Board, and contractor at least bi-monthly. This data is, in turn, shared with local Career Advisors to drive actions and corrections to increase the

performance. An example would be credential rates. If a contractor is not currently meeting their credential rate, board staff work closely with the contractor to follow up and identify credentials received but not properly recorded.

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.

Rivers East has had several major closings and layoffs in the past two years which should have increased our numbers of Dislocated Workers served significantly. However, even with the efforts of Rapid Response, due to the low unemployment numbers, tight labor market and the reduced number of weeks for unemployment benefits payments, many of the dislocated workers are not seeking our services, as they are quickly transitioning to other employment. All REA and RESEA customers are advised of training services, especially short term training.

In an effort to seek additional dislocated workers, Rivers East has expanded the definition of a dislocated worker to include the long term unemployed. With low unemployment rates and a lower than average labor participation rate, the number of discouraged workers is high, but the outreach to this population remains a struggle. Dislocated Worker enrollment is monitored by local area staff and career advisor outreach and recruitment strategies are reviewed during training.

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.

Measurable Skills Gains helps to document incremental progress of individuals while in training. Successful completion of skill gains document satisfactory progress while enrolled in education, which helps lead to the completion of training and the attainment of credentials. Tracking progression through training and recognizing skill gains help our career advisors track progress and continually motivate participants toward the end goal of attainment and employment. Also, by tracking skill gains, other assistance needed to achieve successful completion is more easily identified (such as tutoring). By tracking measurable skill gains in real-time, credential attainment is more easily managed, additional services are offered when needed and we are able to better set our participants up to achieve their goals and meet our performance goals.

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.

Formal programmatic and fiscal monitoring occurs one each year, normally near the mid-point of the program year. Each monitoring is completed using an established monitoring tool and includes a review of program management, relevant documentation, internal monitoring, administrative systems, and established policies and procedures.

Programmatic monitoring includes a review of a sample of participants (new, active and exits) in NCWorks Online to review eligibility, required documents, correct reporting of activity codes and case notes. The results of this online review are shared with the career advisor and their immediate supervisor during an in person visit.

Fiscal monitoring includes a review of required bonding, insurance policies, participant benefits, budgets, monthly expenditure reports, fiscal correspondence, staff payroll and travel, indirect, program income, profit and asset/property management. A sample of expenditures is pulled from the general ledger to match with documentation in NCWorks to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

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].

The Rivers East Local Area staff and all Career Center staff, including Program Operator staff, receive annual training and technical assistance during the year on EO requirements. Based on feedback and recommendations, the Local Area revises EO procedures and EO contract language to remain in compliance.

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*.

See Attachment: Rivers East EO Compliant Grievance Procedure 2020

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

Rivers East Local Area EO Officer communicates regularly with State EO Officer to ensure we stay up-to-date on changes as well as monitoring the federal websites for updates.

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.

The vision promoted by the Rivers East Workforce Development Board is holistic in scope and principal. The primary objective is to maximize the WIOA services offered to our customers. This is accomplished by utilizing a network of public and private entities to build collaborations and leveraging resources to meet the needs of our customers by establishing and maintaining a synergetic relationship between education, economic development, and workforce development. These relationships, along with those of our other partnering agencies, help extend the outreach of the WIOA programs and Career Center services provided into our local communities.

To improve integrated service delivery we must provide 21st century training for all front-line staff and partners that will imbue innovation and real-world tactics to effectively serve our customers. It is imperative to address our internal skill gaps by using proven career planning and business development procedures to gain the trust of those we serve. To achieve performance measures with integrated service delivery, a more comprehensive and individualized level of service and coaching is required.

It is a paradigm shift from referring every customer that enters the career center to an employer or to classroom training. A strong focus is placed on identified high-growth industry sectors within our region. Career Development training is a science that uses the aforementioned holistic approach to assisting our customers achieve their work and life goals. Furthermore, by training our workforce staff in the use of career development planning will demonstrate to our private sector customers that we are capable of helping them recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce, and in turn increase performance outcomes. The plan to provide more specialized training for the Integrated Service Delivery Staff will improve the odds of the desired outcomes as set forth in the WIOA performance measures. It will allow for innovative actions to build a destination where business and industry desire to come because of the primary resource needed to make their dreams a reality – our existing and emerging workforce is the resource they seek, it is our responsibility to participate in their dream.

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)]

Strengths

- **Occupational Skills Programs (ITAs) – ITA services are delivered through the NCWorks Career Center WIOA program providers. Training outcomes are monitored by the Rivers East Workforce Development staff, and recommendations to achieve expenditure goals are made throughout the program year.**
- **On the Job Training Program – A portion of the local area’s county budgets is allocated for On-the-Job Training contracts. The NCWorks Career Center Committee reviews/monitors the progress of the program and makes recommendations to the Center and program operator on how to improve their level of service if needed.**
- **Short-Term Training offerings - Short-term training is central to the Integrated Delivery Service System and is systematically implemented as a second service strategy in each career center. Short-Term training providers are approved by the Rivers East Workforce Development Board Staff, and may vary by location. The results of the training are monitored by the NCWorks Career Center Managers and the Rivers East MIS Specialist.**
- **Vocational Continuing Education Programs – Vocational programs are part of the Integrated Service Delivery system. These services are part of the second service strategy and are usually delivered through the community college system.**
- **Career Pathways work (Business, Community Colleges, CTE, and Economic Development). Rivers East Workforce Development Board has completed three Career Pathways; Health Care, Business Support Services and Advanced**

Manufacturing. A part of the strategy is to bring together Workforce Development, Business, Community Colleges, Career and Technical Education, and Economic Developers from the Northeast Region. Currently the collaboration is working on its fourth pathway, Agriscience/Biotechnology.

• **Customized Training** – The Governors 1000-in-100 initiative was the first formally organized collaboration with the Community Colleges Customized Industry Training Directors throughout our five-county region. Additional collaborations included, Tools for Manufacturing, and Pre-Apprenticeship Training both of which are part of a continuous business engagement strategy for the Rivers East Workforce Development Board.

Weakness

There is a lack of transportation and internet access in our area. Large rural counties do not have transit systems. In rural areas customers rely on libraries for internet access. The Outreach Coordinator has worked with customers to access NCWorks services and assisted with job search and staff promote the mobile NCWorks app when possible.

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.

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.

At the March 11, 2020 WDB meeting, the Board reviewed the programmatic and fiscal performance monitoring reports for the current contractor. Based on the WIOA Program Demonstrated Performance Criteria, the WDB elected to place all programs out for competitive bid. Requests for Proposal (RFPs) were released on April 17, 2020 and due on May 14, 2020. Awards for PY 20 program operation will be made at the next WDB meeting, currently scheduled for May 20, 2020.

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.

See Attachment: Rivers East 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. Define 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]

Rivers East's goal is to offer a wide variety of training programs and occupational choices that are in demand and align with our established career pathways. Current, along with any additional providers, are evaluated based on demonstrated performance regarding credentialing/licensure rates and employment rates along with the capacity to provide comprehensive training at a reasonable cost. The Performance & Accountability Manager, along with the Director and Business Services Manager review all new providers or programs for relevance to the local labor market prior to approval. Providers are reviewed every two years on program outcomes including overall program completion rate, WIOA completion rate, and training completers and noncompleters that enter employment. This list of programs by provider is shared with and approved by the WDB.

A full list of eligible providers and programs is available in each Center and NCWorks Online. The list is reviewed with any customer who expresses a need and/or interest in training. Rivers East most often utilizes the local community college and university system, along with private providers for classroom training. Local area staff will continue to ensure a significant number of competent providers are available to maximize customer choice.

The board defines "significant number of competent providers" in the local area based upon the following types of training providers that are located within the local area who are subject to the ETPL requirements in order to receive WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide training services to eligible adult and dislocated worker individuals through ITAs:

- 1. institutions of higher education that provide a program of training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;**
- 2. apprenticeship programs registered by the USDOL Office of Registered Apprenticeship;**
- 3. public or private training providers, including joint labor-management organizations, pre-apprenticeship programs, and occupational/technical training; and**
- 4. providers of adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with occupational skills training.**

Based upon this criteria, the local area has determined that a significant number of competent providers are available within the local area (and adjoining local areas) to deliver WIOA funded training services to eligible Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth.

Customer choice is key. A full list of eligible providers and programs is available in each Center. The list is reviewed with any customer who expresses a need

and/or interest in training. Rivers East utilizes the local community college and university system, along with private colleges such as Miller-Motte. Current along with any additional providers are evaluated based on demonstrated performance regarding credentialing/licensure rates and employment rates along with the capacity to provide comprehensive training.

See Attachment: Rivers East Eligible Training Providers Policy

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

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.

Follow-up services will be provided, as appropriate, for participants in adult or dislocated worker activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment for a minimum of 12 months after the first day of employment. NCWorks Career Center staff will provide counseling regarding the workplace and labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance along with other Career Services as appropriate. Follow-up is provided in a variety of methods including by phone, text, e-mail or in person.

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?

39,886

- b. Approximately, what percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)?

29.8%

Approximately, what number of these Youth are in the current school dropout statistics?

161

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?

48,543

- b. Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population?

12.6%

- c. What are the general educational levels of this age group? **Some college**
- d. What is the general employment status of this age group? **Employed**

2. Based on the assessment above, does the local Workforce Development Board plan to serve In-School Youth?

Yes

As applicable, the 14 Program Elements will be provided to in-school youth. Outreach and recruitment will be performed to identify and serve eligible in-school youth. Counseling and case management services will be provided to motivate and assist youth to complete their educational component. Those needing additional instructions will be connected to tutoring services. Students identified as potential dropouts will be recruited. Supportive services will be supplied to address barriers.

Services will be coordinated with LEA and CTE staff. Copies of Youth IEPs will be obtained and incorporated into the WIOA IEP. Each youth will receive an assessment of interest, skills, abilities, interest, aptitudes and values. Staff will make referrals to and work with VR coaches to direct youth to industry specific training and employment. Work-based learning linked to occupational and academic learning will be provided. Work readiness, work maturity and soft skills training will be provided to prepared youth to obtain successful employment.

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)].

Youth activities that will be offered in Rivers East are tutoring, study skills training and instruction, alternative secondary school services (provided by the community college), work experiences, occupational skills training (provided by the Community College), adult mentoring, comprehensive guidance and counseling, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, financial literacy, entrepreneurial training, labor market information, postsecondary preparation, Education and workforce preparation activities and follow-up services. Unless otherwise specified, youth activities are provided by the Rivers East Youth Operators. These activities are made available in all five counties to all youth as applicable. Vocational Rehabilitation has a successful model of working with youth with disabilities. Rivers East will work closely with VR in serving disabled youth.

Rivers East utilizes a tiered work experience model which provides youth participants the opportunity to attend industry tours, job shadows, and paid work experiences. In addition, youth participants have on-the-job training opportunities in their chosen career fields. We partner with VR to assist individuals with disabilities.

4. Describe the local area's broad Young Adult (NextGen) Program design to include:
 - a. Providing objective assessments;

An objective assessment will be administered or obtain a thorough and in-depth assessment of the academic level, skill levels, and service needs of each participant at the time of enrollment into WIOA activities. Assessment should be carefully planned and administered to collect specific, relevant information leading to an appropriate mix and sequence of services and interventions. Initial/entry assessment will include: basic skills, work readiness skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, barriers to employment, family situation, occupational interests and aptitudes, financial resources and needs, supportive service needs, and developmental needs. This information should be acquired through various means, including, but not limited to, standardized tests, structured interviews, behavioral observations, inventories, career guidance instruments, performance-based or competency-based assessment tools, and where the information is current and reliable, assessment results from another service provider (school or agency). Rivers East requires use of the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for basic skills testing, and assessment tools for assessing career interests and aptitudes.

Assessment instruments, especially on-line tools, used to measure learning styles, life skills, etc. must be adequately researched by WIOA staff prior to use to determine that they are objective, and conform to widely accepted standards for validity and reliability, WIOA staff must have adequate training on the administration, scoring, and proper use of test results. Information collected from the assessment process serves as the basis for individualized service planning in order to achieve the educational and employment outcomes desired for each participant. Assessment should be an ongoing process throughout participation in WIOA in order to track progress and to measure and record personal growth, skill goal attainment, and achievement of planned objectives for each participant.

- a. Supportive service's needs;

Supportive services will be provided as needed to include: linkages to community services, assistance with books, fees, school supplies and items for postsecondary classes, assistance with transportation/travel funds, child care and dependent care, payment and fees for employment and training related applications, testing, clinical and certifications, assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work related tools, referrals to health care, housing and legal aid services, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and youth incentives. An assessment will be performed to identify the participant's needs. Some supportive services will be provided through referrals and some with WIOA funds.

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

An Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategy will be developed and updated as needed to provide a written, individualized plan of services and activities, including appropriate learning objectives and goals. The service strategy is based on the needs of the participant and is directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators. This is a plan of action to set goals which address their educational goals, performance goals, learning objectives and provide preparation for unsubsidized employment. Goals, objectives and services are linked to the participant's career pathway.

Comprehensive case management provides staff support and guidance to address needs and barriers, solve problems, and assist in attainment of the identified goals and objectives.

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)]

Each youth enrolled into WIOA will have a written, individualized plan of services and activities (an appropriate mix of the fourteen required program elements), including appropriate learning objectives and goals, based on the entry assessment information. The Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is intended to provide in-depth information about a youth, both history and present circumstances, in order to create a plan of action agreed upon by the young person and staff working together. The service plan should be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the youth as they move through WIOA. Each service plan will outline the appropriate mix and sequence of services, indicate the rationale for decision-making, and include appropriate achievement objectives and expected timeframes. The IEP will be developed in partnership with each youth; will be client-centered and flexible in accommodating changes in plans as youth's needs and situations change. Each IEP will identify an educational goal, performance goal, selected learning objectives, and provide preparation for unsubsidized employment. The IEP will set clear and realistic goals for educational advancement, entry into employment in a targeted industry, and continued learning and development. The goal is to accurately evaluate youth in order to develop an appropriate service strategy to meet his/her individual needs. Assessment should occur throughout the program, at time of enrollment and then at appropriate intervals to document participant progress.

A quarterly review of the IEP will be made to evaluate the progress of each participant in meeting the objectives of the service strategy. The participant's progress in acquiring basic skills, work readiness skills and occupational skills, as appropriate, and the adequacy of the supportive services provided will also be included in the periodic evaluation. The IEP will be used as the basic instrument for the LA to document the appropriateness of the decisions made concerning the

combination of services for the participant, including referrals to other programs for specified activities. Training provided by the service provider should be in accordance with the IEP. The IEP is an informal “contract” between the WIOA service provider and the client. The proposed contractor must assist the client in attaining the goals set forth in the IEP.

Because WIOA resources are generally insufficient to provide the full range of training or support services identified as needed in the IEP, every reasonable effort must be made to arrange basic, work readiness and occupational skills training as well as supportive services through other community resources for participants. WIOA service providers shall utilize the IEP document in NCWorks Online.

6. Describe the local area’s broad Young Adult (NextGen) Program design to include:
 - a. Employment Goals, and
 - b. Education Goals.

The goal of the youth program is to assist the youth in attaining their educational and employment goal. A high school diploma or equivalent is a key component of ensuring their attainment of sustainable employment. Career Advisors often visit students at their local high school or community college location to verify and encourage attendance. In addition, recruitment events are often held in these locations for these targeted audiences.

To ensure individuals are active in attaining their educational goal, we define that they must be making satisfactory progress in their education component to be allowed to participate in work experience. While the ultimate experience is a combination of both components, we realize the paid work experience component is often needed leverage to ensure the credential completion.

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.
NCWorks Career Centers Tier 1

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?

The usage of social media and new technology has proven to be a successful tool in interacting and providing services to youth outside of the NCWorks Centers. Positive responses were receive from the Virtual Youth Summit and virtual weekly workshops. Youth are engaged and work on key elements that assist with employment. Calendly, an online calendar tool is use to create events. These events,

with Zoom integration, will include virtual orientations, appointment times, virtual workshops and virtual interviewing. Youth customers select times to meet virtually with Youth Advocate. Facebook, Instagram and other social media will be used to contact and provided services to youth that may not be available via phone or email.

In addition, partnerships are created to meet potential participants at local community colleges for traditional students and those pursuing their high school equivalency.

By meeting youth where they are, in person or by using technology, it removes the transportation barrier and allows a quicker connection to staff to address needs or provide coaching and counseling as needed. These “instant” connections improve retention as it increases availability .

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)]

Youth activities that will be offered in Rivers East are tutoring, study skills training and instruction, alternative secondary school services (provided by the community college), work experiences, occupational skills training (provided by the Community College), adult mentoring, comprehensive guidance and counseling, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, financial literacy, entrepreneurial training, labor market information, postsecondary preparation, Education and workforce preparation activities and follow-up services. Unless otherwise specified, youth activities are provided by the Rivers East Youth Operators. These activities are made available in all five counties to all youth as applicable. Vocational Rehabilitation has a successful model of working with youth with disabilities. Rivers East will work closely with VR in serving disabled youth.

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)]

Programs must be designed to serve and expend 75% or more on out-of-school youth and up to 25% in-school youth. There is a minimum expenditure and enrollment level for out-of-school youth.

Outreach and recruitment must be held at locations and with agencies that serve out-of-school youth, such as, but not limited to community based organizations, community colleges, housing authority, faith based, DSS, health department, and local juvenile justice or other defender services. Recruitment events are held at locations where out-of-school youth frequent. In addition, social media and technology tools are provided to allow potential participants to engage in services from wherever they may be.

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;
- b. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies;
- 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]

The local Workforce Development Board meets at least yearly with the AEFLA staff from each community college to discuss outreach and recruitment. Many of the colleges have set aside time and/or space for Youth staff to meet with potential participants on campus.

Vocational Rehabilitation sends their Employment Specialist to several of our Centers once a week to be available to customers. In addition, staff make referrals to VR and they refer individuals to the Center and specific programs for assistance. One of our Local Area staff serves on the Project SEARCH committee which is a partnership between Pitt County Schools, RHA/VR, and Vidant Health.

All participants in the youth program have access to all 14 program elements. Those in adult education are also “tracked” by career pathway and often lessons are taught with the practical hands on technique. Project based learning and workforce preparation are essential, and all of these tracks align with the established Career Pathways.

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

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

Follow-up services will include:

- **Leadership development and supportive service activities;**
- **Regular contact with a youth participant’s employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise;**
- **Assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development and further education;**
- **Work-related peer support groups;**
- **Adult mentoring; and**
- **Services necessary to ensure the success of a youth in employment and/or post-secondary education.**

Follow-up services will be provided in person, by phone, email, text or by mail, as appropriate.

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.

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

Incentives will be provided as a means to recognize and reward a youth's success. WIOA Youth funds may be used to provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth. Incentives can be, but are not required to be, in the form of cash payments to youth. Internal controls are in place to safeguard cash/gift cards.

See Attachment: Rivers East Youth Incentive Policy

14. If the Local Workforce Development Board does not offer incentives for (NextGen) youth, please explain why.
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)]

The goal of the youth program is to assist the youth in attaining their educational and employment goal. A high school diploma or equivalent is a key component of ensuring their attainment of sustainable employment. Career Advisors often visit students at their local high school or community college location to verify and encourage attendance. In addition, recruitment events are often held in these locations for these targeted audiences.

To ensure individuals are active in attaining their educational goal, we define that they must be making satisfactory progress in their education component to be allowed to participate in work experience. While the ultimate experience is a combination of both components, we realize the paid work experience component is often needed leverage to ensure the credential completion.

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)]

To prepare youth for unsubsidized employment, a multitude of services may be needed. Work Readiness training is a base needed to ensure they have the "soft skills" to not only get the job, but keep the job. In addition, leadership development opportunities help them learn to communicate, problem solve and work within a team. To ensure

youth are aware of in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local labor market, career awareness and job shadowing may be utilized. With 4 completed pathways including career ladders, youth can take their “interest” from Traitify and connect it to the education needed to get the job they want.

Employer engagement serves as a centerpiece in the development of effective career pathways and work based learning opportunities for youth. Rapport must be established with local and regional employers to promote in-demand occupations and to build connections between work and learning. We must engage industry and coordinate work-related activities for program participants. The primary role of the Business Engagement Coordinator (BEC) is to engage employers and secure work based learning opportunities including, but not limited to, internships, job shadowing, work experience, on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship along with unsubsidized job placements for program participants. In order to assist with these placements, Career Advisors meet with the BEC and at a minimum, provide case load review information to the BEC on a monthly basis including each participant’s name, anticipated career path, and current status.

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

See Attached: Rivers East 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)]

Rivers East requires at least 20% of all funds are budgeted for work based learning opportunities such as paid work experience and on-the-job training. Expenditures are monitored monthly and reports provided to the Committee and Board bi-monthly. To support placement in work based learning opportunities, the Business Engagement Coordinator works closely with the Career Advisor to track participants, their career goal and progress. When ready, they work together to secure appropriate work based learning sites for the youth to get hands on experience in their desired field of work.

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)] **Yes**
- a. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.
 - b. If yes, please provide a response to the following:

c. Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

The purpose of the NEXTGEN/Youth Committee is to develop portions of the local plan related to youth with co-design by youth and business leaders; recommendation of providers of youth activities in the area with input from youth; oversight of eligible providers of youth activities; establishment of linkages with educational agencies and other youth entities and leverage of non-WIOA resources; implementation of youth friendly and one time service interventions; establishment of rapid attachment to work for out of school youth with focus on retention and advancement to higher level jobs; focus on continuous improvement. This Committee will also coordinate with other school-to-work programs such as Career Pathways and apprenticeship, and develop strategies to impact the success of these programs and participate in coordinated analysis of efforts to comprehensively serve youth.

d. Provide the committee's top three goals or objectives for PY 2020.

The NEXTGEN/Youth Committee has adopted the following goals and objectives:

- **Implement Career Exploration @ each NEXTGEN site- includes identifying careers based on local labor market information and Traitify/Career Assessment Tool Results. This includes revising the current WEX program into a tier-system that utilizes Career Exploration, Job Shadowing and Work Experience and engaging five new employer partners per county.**
- **Innovative program and implementations- includes developing additional resources for Career Advisors and providing "think tank" style workshops to provide the opportunity to network and develop creative ideas.**
- **Implement a system for continuous recruitment of customers to the program- includes partnering with local community colleges and community agencies who serve 16-24 year olds and their families.**

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,

See Attached: Rivers East Youth Committee Members

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.]*

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
September 9, 2020	1:30 pm	NCTeleCenter
November 11, 2020*		405 E. Blvd
January 13, 2021		Williamston, NC
March 10, 2021		(Large Training Room)
May 12, 2021		

20. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs was completed, to include any contract extensions.

At the November 13, 2019 WDB meeting, the Board reviewed the programmatic and fiscal performance for the current contractor. Based on the WDB approved WDB's WIOA Program Demonstrated Performance Criteria and the fact that the contractor was not on target to meet the established probationary goals by November 30, 2019 the WDB voted to place all Youth programs out for competitive bid. Requests for Proposal (RFPs) were released on November 18, 2019 with written notification sent by mail and e-mail to all parties on the bidder's list, notice was placed in all local newspapers and posted on the Region Q website www.regionqwdb.org. The WDB voted to select the service provider(s) for the remainder of PY19 & 20 at their December 11, 2019 meeting. The contract was awarded for a two year period, with the option to extend a third year with satisfactory performance.

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*.

See attached: Rivers East Youth Providers 2019

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
Finish Line Grant	Operations funds for the FLG initiative	6/30/2020	4050-8088 4050-8137 \$ 66,000
Enhancement Planning Grant	Planning grant for “Centers of Excellence”		4050-8032 \$ 11,505
Business Services Funds	Funds to staff a Business Engagement position to focus on work based learning	12/31/2020	4050-8031 \$75,000
Maximize Carolina	Max Carolina Sector grant for Beaufort County manufacturers	3/31/2020	4050-8012 \$41,303
Finish Line Grant- Roanoke Chowan CC	Program funding for the FLG initiative	1/1/2021	4050-8072 \$ 29,932
FLG- Martin CC	Program funding for the FLG initiative	1/1/2021	4050-8073 \$ 4,371.82
FLG- Beaufort CC	Program funding for the FLG initiative	1/1/2021	4050-8074 \$ 33,240.29
FLG- Pitt CC	Program funding for the FLG initiative	12/31/2020	4050-8075 4050-8113 \$ 90,000
NCWorks Local Innovation Grant	Capacity building grant for unified communications plan	4/30/2021	4050-3016 \$ 47,853.10

NDWG –Florence (Admin)	Admin funding for NDWG project	9/30/2020	3110-7057 \$ 14,786
NDWG- Florence (Program)	Program funding for NDWG project	9/30/2020	3110-7056 \$ 133,082.79
Enhancement (Program) Grant	Program funding to achieve “Centers of Excellence” goals	11/30/2021	4050-8025 \$142,500
Enhancement (Admin) Grant	Administrative funding to implement “Centers of Excellence” program	11/30/2021	4050-8026 \$7,500
Golden Leaf Community Based Grantsmaking Initiative	Supports RAMP East initiative with focus on career awareness for teachers, students, parents and job	2/1/2022	Golden Leaf \$ 641,400

* Denotes balance remaining in WISE for PY 19

- Describe one local Workforce Development Board best adult/dislocated worker program practice.

A new initiative that has proven successful is Career Advisor tours for all Center staff. This allows all Center staff the opportunity to visit local companies and learn more about their business, workforce, hiring needs, basic requirements, and application processes. As part of our Integrated Service Delivery model, this has been opened up to all Center staff, regardless of fund source, including Title I and Title III staff.

- Describe one local Workforce Development Board best youth program practice.

The tiered work experience plan - Step 1 is Career Exposure which allows students to tour local facilities and “see” the jobs in action. Step 2 is Job Shadowing which will allow them to “try” the job. Step 3 is Level I of paid work experience which helps participants learn the foundational skills of work. Step 4 is Level II of Work Experience which is expected to lead to full time employment (subsidized or unsubsidized).

- Describe one local Workforce Development Board regional strategy that has yielded positive results.

Rivers East partnered with the Turning Point WDB, local community colleges and local economic developers from our 10 county region to build RAMP East. RAMP East is a collaborative initiative to build a Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline to serve the new and expanding industries in our regions. An estimated 5,000 jobs will be available in the next three years and this partnership is the key to success. Turning Point WDB received an Enhancement Grant to hire two Recruiters for this

project and Rivers East WDB applied for and received a Golden Leaf grant to address the interest gap with students, teachers, parents and job seekers. While this project is still “in progress”, the hope is our experience will serve as a pilot project for the entire state.

In addition, in response to COVID-19, we have expanded our virtual service options to include text and chat options, as well as offering Virtual Career Fairs.

5. Describe one local Workforce Development Board Incumbent Worker or other business services best strategy.

A best practice that has started in Rivers East is the targeted promotion of work based learning (OJT, WEX, and Incumbent Worker) opportunities to the member governments of our administrative entity, Mid-East Commission. By engaging with our local government partners, the services provided become beneficial to the citizens we serve in multiple ways.

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

- 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*.

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 (PS 10-2017)	X	
2. Competitive Procurement Policy (PS 19-2017, Change 1)	X	
3. Conflict of Interest Policy (PS 18-2017)	X	
4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures (PS 07-2018)	X	
5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (PS 20-2017, Change 1)	X	
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	X	
7. On-the-Job Training Policy (PS 04-2015, Change 1)	X	
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	X	
9. Priority of Service Policy (PS 03-2017)	X	
10. Youth Work Experience Policy (PS 10-2017)	X	
11. Local Supportive Services Policy	X	
12. Local Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures & Monitoring Schedule	X	

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 (PS 17-2017, Change 1)		
2. Local Area Needs-Related Policy		
3. Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy		
4. Local Area Youth Incentive Policy		

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	No set limit
Time Limits	No set limit
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate’s, Bachelor’s, other)	Certificate, Diploma, Associate or Bachelor Degree
Procedures for determining case-	Request for exceptions are submitted in writing to the LA for considerations. Information reviewed includes cost of training,

by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	past performance (outcomes) of training provider, and local labor market information.
Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short term, etc.)	Semester
Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.)	Books and Fees
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.]*

Transportation	Childcare	Supplies <i>(include examples)</i>	Emergency <i>(include examples)</i>	Other <i>(include examples)</i>
Travel reimbursement @ \$0.34 per mile MAX \$102/week	Up to \$140/week for first child and \$85/week for second child	Includes pens, pencils, notebooks, calculators, etc.	As needed-case by case Rent, utilities, car repairs	Licensing/exam fees Required uniforms Required tools CRC test fees

