

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

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

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

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

Introduction and Instructions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local Area Plan Submission and Due Date

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

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

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

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

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

I. Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) Overview

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

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

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

Gaston Workforce Development Local Area

- If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name Consortium Agreement.
- If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name Local Area designation letter.

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

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

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

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

Name: Angela C. Karchmer

Title & Salutation: Workforce Development Board Director-Mrs.

Organization Name: Gaston County Government

Address: 330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Gastonia, NC 28052

Phone Number: (704) 862-7930

Email Address: angela.karchmer@gastongov.com

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

Name: Chad Brown	Elected Title & Salutation: Gaston County Board of Commissioners-Chairman
Government Affiliation: Gaston County	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: (704) 516-8017 cell	Email Address: chad.brown@gastongov.com

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

Name: Kim Eagle	Title & Salutation: County Manager, Dr.
Business Name: Gaston County Government	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: (704) 866-3101	Email Address: kim.eagle@gastongov.com

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

Name: Gaston County Finance Office	Title & Salutation: N/A
Organization Name: Gaston County Government	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: (704) 866-3037	Email Address: N/A

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

Name: Angela C. Karchmer	Title & Salutation: Gaston County DSS Director-Mrs.
Organization Name: Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services (Social Services)	Address: 330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052
Phone Number: (704) 862-7930	Email Address: angela.karchmer@gastongov.com

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

date’.

- Name document: *DHHS-Social Services Division Organizational Chart*.

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

QKY9R8A8D5J6 Active Registration SAM.GOV attached

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

Danyale Williams (704) 862-7807

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB List*.

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

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Notes:

- *Please complete the entire form. Check the block on the form provided certifying compliance with required WIOA Local Area WDB business nomination process.*
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12. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the Local Area WDB in compliance with WIOA Section 107.

Our Clerk to the Board – Merissa Mitchell works directly with the Gaston County Board of Commissioners

Office & Clerk to the Board of Commissioners – Donna Buff, as well as the Gaston County WDB Business Services Representative – Chelsea Valentine to make necessary referrals, for vacant board seats, to our Chief Elected Official – Chad Brown, Chair for the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. The referrals received are for potential board member candidates who possess decision making power, HR level authority, etc. within local businesses and can complete the necessary application for serving on their company’s behalf as a Gaston Workforce Development Board Member.

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB By-Laws*.

14. To demonstrate that the attached Local Area WDB By-Laws comply, complete By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart (form provided).

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

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

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) will make hard copies of the draft Local Area Plan available to the public through hard copies at Gaston County DSS Building first floor lobby. The LA Plan will also be made available via the GWDB website at www.gastongovworks.com under the resources

tab. The link for the plan will also be made available via GWDB social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) for public comment.

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

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

- Name document: Gaston County WDB Organizational Chart.

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

Date	Time	Location (include address and room # or virtual link)
July 20, 2023	12:00p.m. EST	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
October 19, 2023	12:00p.m. EST	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
January 18, 2024	12:00p.m. EST	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
April 18, 2024	12:00p.m. EST	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB Certification Form.*

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

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB Signatory Page.*

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

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II. Local Area WDB Strategic Planning

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

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

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

The GWDB has continued a vision of enhancing skills with the existing and emerging workforce to meet the needs of regional employers and improve the economic conditions of its residents while encouraging business development and expansion through entrepreneurship and innovation. Participants are provided with intensive case managers for assistance with individualized career services and training services. With emphasis on educating the emerging workforce, Gaston County will enable its workforce to be more skilled and increase employers' competitiveness in the global job market while meeting the changing needs of employers. Gaston is focusing on better career exploration through interest assessment testing prior to enrollment in training. Additionally, expanding the number of individuals receiving supportive services to enable existing students to remain in school, thus producing a higher number of post-secondary credential completers that will have an easier time finding self-sufficiency employment that meets performance requirements. Apprenticeship and Work based learning programs are an integral part of the student with barriers to employment having successful outcomes in finding a job after completion of their training, as well as job retention and self-sufficiency.

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

The GWDB follows federal and state guidelines to execute a Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with all required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners, as well as other community partners of the career center. The Gaston Local Area MOU allows core title programs to jointly develop, provide, and sustain career services to residents through One-Stop career centers. Local area residents who receive one-stop center career services may be enrolled in partner provided employment or education training which results in co-enrollment between WIOA core titled partner programs. Partners work together to avoid duplication of services and to exhaust all other resources before utilizing WIOA funds. Through linkage and referral, other partners such as faith-based or community-based organizations may also provide services to meet the needs of residents that WIOA core programs cannot. Gaston County has an extensive referral system with its partners including (but not limited to) NC Services for the Hearing Impaired, NC Services for the Blind, the Vocational Rehabilitation office, the DSS agency, etc. as well as many other community-based organizations for WIOA participants or individuals seeking information through the NCWorks Career Centers. Information pertaining to these entities is also included in Rapid Response Session Packets as requested or expressed by the employer with an interest in providing the information to their labor force. Targeted populations continue to be a dedicated focus in the Gaston Local Area.

Business Services Staff, Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions, and employers from our region are collaborative partners in regional career pathways exploration, development, and/or implementation processes. By working jointly with these collaborative partners, we can determine and address the needs of the local employers by identifying and developing classroom-based curriculum courses that address gaps in knowledge and skills. Work-based learning is introduced to ensure applied skills, related to their jobs, are developed, and evaluated by local employers. Pre & Post Skills Assessments are completed and training plans are developed jointly between the BSR, Employer, and participant to gage the effectiveness of training plans administered and the level of skills progression by the participant. Our regional career pathways are designed with on and off ramps that allow for individuals to attain certifications or degrees within a career field through classroom-based training.

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

Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) collaborates with neighboring counties and South Carolina to meet the needs of our employers, especially larger employers that need to pull talent and resources from all surrounding areas. Local BSRs and other workforce staff work together to coordinate in-person,

virtual, and hybrid hiring events.

The incumbent Worker Training program is in high demand by the employers in Gaston County. GWDB uses the Incumbent Worker Program to meet the demand of employers for business expansion, employee retention and/or employee upward mobility. The program can be used to upskill the current workforce with technical training all the way to leadership training. This also allows employers to backfill their entry level roles.

GWDB utilizes an On-the-Job Training program as a hiring incentive for employers. This program is best used for an employer who identifies a candidate that is still in need of training and development to obtain the necessary skills to fulfill the job efficiently. The employer receives 50-75% reimbursement for the trainee's wages during a 6-month (or 1040 hour) timeframe.

Work Experience (WEX) is also used as a hiring incentive for an employer. This is utilized for candidates that lack the skill and work history to be a qualified candidate. The trainees' wages will be 100% paid through GWDB contractor. With a successful WEX position completion, the objective is the employer desires to hire the candidate full-time as a permanent employee.

GWDB works with employers, educators, other workforce partners and community partners to identify and address workforce issues and create ongoing solutions. The GWDB also works with the same partners to create career pathways.

The GWDB works closely with the Economic Development Commission to provide up to date labor market information, wage data studies etc. to help employers better understand our current market conditions.

GWDB also leads a local team called Gaston's BEST (Business Employer Services Team). This team is made up of staff from GWDB including the Business Services Representative and NCWorks Career Center Manager, Gaston County EDC, Gaston Business Association, Gaston College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston Literacy, Gaston County Schools, DWS, and other valuable partners to work together on projects, workforce issues/solutions, hiring events, and creating new and utilizing existing relationships with employers to expand the footprint of services to businesses in our region. We maintain a catalog of all our team members, information on services, etc.

The GWDB maintains positions and memberships in local groups to maintain business relationships and build new business relationships to broaden our service offerings. Some of the groups consist of; Gaston County Schools Business Advisory Council, Gaston HR, GCAM (Gaston Co Association of Manufacturers), Gaston Business Association, other Chambers, etc.

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

Adult Education and Literacy partners attend bi-monthly Management and Leadership Team partner meetings with the Gaston County WDB and NCWorks Career Center-Gaston. During these meetings Adult Education and Literacy provides updates about their current programs and services. Through the updates provided, GWDB is able to avoid duplication of services provided, partner with the program on similar activities, and provide referral resources for both programs to utilize each other's services for the needed participants. On several occasions Adult Education and Literacy has been able to provide continued services for individuals who are English deficient, skilled deficient, and financially inexperienced that is outside WIOA services

offered.

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

Gaston County has developed an extensive referral system with NC Services for the Hearing Impaired, NC Services for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation offices and other community partners for WIOA participants or individuals seeking information through the NCWorks Career Centers. Information pertaining to these entities is also included in Rapid Response Session Packets as well as any other community service that the requesting party has expressed an interest in providing to their labor force. All Centers (certified and non-certified) including the Youth Center are ADA accessible. The Gaston WDB staff, along with representation from all Career Center Partners within our Local Area, have bi-monthly Career Center Leadership and Career Center Management Team meetings to strategize and share needs, services and events information.

Additionally, periodic training is offered and arranged by career center partners and providers. This is especially helpful to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals through training offered by Vocational Rehabilitation, Services for the Blind, and Services for the Hearing Impaired. Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination can be developed, reviewed, monitored, and/or addressed at these bi-monthly meetings.

There are cooperative efforts through the Gaston County WDB, with local employers, which are established by the existing Gaston County WDB Member representation by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), VR Employer Services representative for Gaston's BEST member representation at employer-based events, and collaborative employer site-visits arranged by the Gaston Co WDB & VR Employer Services representatives with employers to hear their needs and highlight available local/regional/state workforce solutions/resources. Each of these Gaston County WDB facilitated points of connection puts VR representatives in contact with local Employers who are looking to tap into various talent pools to meet their workforce needs. VR has presented to the Gaston County WDB members & guests, as well as to Gaston's BEST members who include Economic Development and Gaston Business Association (GBA) (Chamber of Commerce).

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

The need to ensure relevant services are provided timely and efficiently is managed via goals and performance requirements located in each WIOA Service Provider and One Stop Operators contract, as well in the MOU for the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston. This has proven to be a productive maneuver and has allowed ISD to work within the Career Centers in a more seamless fashion while increasing the % of met performance measures and serving the most disadvantaged populations. The contracts have a provision that allows the

Board to base profit payments paid out on performance outcomes met on a quarterly basis. If quarterly performance goals are not met, the contractor is allowed the opportunity to receive those profit dollars at year end if the annual negotiated performance measures are met. The contract requirements for WIOA services and One Stop Operator Services shall be consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission and Strategic Planning.

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

The Southwest Region utilizes special grant funds for national disaster recovery purposes to allow individuals the opportunity for Disaster Relief Employment or Career and Training Services. This enables individuals who are temporarily or permanently dislocated, due to a national disaster, to obtain paid work experience positions in areas related to Humanitarian Assistance or Clean Up and Recovery efforts. Each of the Workforce Development Boards in our region maintain and list of emergency contact organizations across the area for quick assimilation of needed services and solutions utilized when a crisis happens. Dislocated Workers can also be served, utilizing dislocated worker funds, for those needing financial assistance with training or upskilling and meet dislocated worker eligibility criteria.

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

WIOA staff are always looking for opportunities to expand outreach to those with barriers through job fairs, information sessions at partner agencies, or other community events. Dislocated Workers are targeted through rapid response events, RESEA referrals, and job fairs. Youth and high school dropouts are targeted through keeping a connection with the local community college as well as referrals from various agencies that serve that population. We also have opened communication recently with the Department of Social Services to serve more Foster Care youth and 18–21-year-old programs. We offer these individuals to be enrolled in pre apprenticeship opportunities, OJT, and work experiences which all have objectives of reentering into the workforce. We provide information sessions at such agencies as Catherine’s House and Hope United on a rotation. We also partner with Vocational Rehab to better serve those with disabilities in their job search. We measure success through end of the month reporting as we can gather data for how many customers were enrolled that meet priority of service or who have significant barriers to employment such as the groups listed above.

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

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) has a strong partnership with Gaston College in several aspects. Gaston College is the contractor for the GWDB Youth NextGen program. This allows WIOA Youth enrollees full access to the colleges services as the NextGen program is housed on campus. Gaston College provides staff members to hold job readiness workshops to participants on-site at the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

GWDB has a strong partnership with the college when it pertains to Incumbent Worker Training. When a business is interested in a particular training, GWDB works with Gaston College's Customized Business Department to offer this course at no cost to the business. If the college does not offer the course GWDB can utilize IWT funds to pay for the training that may potentially use Gaston College as their trainer.

GWDB works with local area high schools in partnership with Gaston College to continue to streamline the transition from high school to community college and four-year institutions.

GWDB works with Gaston College to also offer Career Awareness Events to middle and high school students. Our Board works with Gaston College's Apprenticeship 321 program to provide the OJT portion for the salary wages for a candidate attending the apprenticeship program.

Gaston College's Workforce Director serves as a member of the GWDB to provide that key piece of insight and knowledge that comes with the community college. Gaston College representatives are also members of the GWDB Youth Committee and regularly attend bi-monthly GWDB Management Partner meetings. Other local higher education institutions such as Belmont Abbey College and Gardner-Webb University have attended GWDB job fairs to reach the local area job seekers.

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

Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) works very closely with our local Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Gaston EDC leads meetings through GCAM (Gaston County Association of Manufacturers) that GWDB staff members regularly attend to gain insight on Gaston County's leading Manufacturing industry. Gaston County EDC is a member of Gaston's BEST (Business Employer Services Team) led by the GWDB Business Services Representative. A Gaston County EDC representative is also a member of the GCWD. The BSR and EDC, more specifically the Existing Industry Manager, partner on visiting businesses, offering services, attending business events, keeping each other current on business activity, connecting each other with business contacts, coordinate job fairs several times a year, and other partnership opportunities. The EDC and GWDB work closely together to provide wrap around services with workforce/economic development services such as the EDC provides the BSR with a list of businesses that have been provided Economic Grants, so the BSR can ensure the business are also afforded all workforce services. The GWDB BSR works with state EDC staff when layoffs occur within Gaston County to partner on Rapid Response Services provided.

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

The Gaston Workforce Development Board (GWDB) has been involved in at minimum four new/expansion economic development projects in the previous year that have assisted new and existing companies with their

development. The Gaston County EDC has included the GWDB to assist with initial meetings with prospective employers to provide an overview of workforce development services that are available to the company if located in Gaston County. GWDB staff members attend groundbreaking events for new companies and promote emerging businesses and vacancies. The GWDB is included in all hiring initiatives for both new and existing companies once they are available to start the hiring process and services are provided such as job fairs and vacancy advertisements. GWDB staff work with the EDC and other partners to build the pipeline for business in the means of finding already skilled talent or helping to train local talent to fit their needs.

12. Provide a description of how the WDB is employing sector strategies by creating industry-led sector partnerships to facilitate engagement of employers and better coordinate workforce development services, training, and economic development activities. Include a brief example(s) of existing industry sector initiatives / partnerships or describe the strategy to implement them for evidence-based in-demand industry sectors for the region [WIOA Section 106 (c)(1)(C), Section 107 (d)(4)(D)]

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) understands the importance of partnership to provide comprehensive workforce services to Gaston County businesses. The GWDB continues to foster and expand on partner engagement by:

The GWDB leads a local team called Gaston’s BEST (Business Employer Services Team). This team is made up of staff from GWDB including the Business Services Representative and NCWorks Career Center Manager, Gaston County EDC, Gaston Business Association, Gaston College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston Literacy, Gaston County Schools, DWS, and other valuable partners to work together on projects, workforce issues/solutions, hiring events, and creating new and utilizing existing relationships with employers to expand the footprint of services to businesses in our region. We maintain a catalog of all our team members, information on services, etc.

The GWDB BSR regularly attends GCAM (Gaston County Association of Manufacturers) meetings hosted by the Gaston County EDC to provide current information on Gaston County’s leading manufacturing industry. The GWDB is an integral partner in the Talent Partnership/Pipeline Management (TPM) with the Gaston Business Association and Gaston County EDC which currently focuses on providing training, education, and job matches in Manufacturing. The TPM is in the process of developing a pipeline for Healthcare and Technology in the near future. All the agencies that partner with the TPM work to develop apprenticeship pathways, talent pipelines, focused recruiting/hiring events, training needs, etc.

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

Pathway Name	Partner WDBs	Year the pathway was developed	Number of trainees (to date) who have utilized the pathway
Advance Manufacturing-Mechatronics	Southwestern PZ	2018	2

Healthcare/Nursing	Southwestern PZ	2018	73
Energy	Southwest, Northwest, & Western Carolina Alliances of WDB's	2019	0

14. In addition to facilitating the development of career pathways, also describe the review process for in-demand career pathways to determine if new pathways are needed, or if current pathways should be updated or removed based on the needs of the industry.
- a. Include plans for new career pathways.
 - b. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders' (DPI, community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates.
 - c. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts.

A. The needs for additional or new career pathways can be explored and evaluated annually when JobsEQ and LMI data are used to update the Local/Regional OID Lists with careers that are in demand. The GWDB also gathers this information from employer surveys.

B. The pathways are developed in conjunction with both local area partners and businesses, on a regional level. This is beneficial due to current commuting patterns of residents traveling between Gaston County and the surrounding counties in both Centralina and CharlotteWorks Local Areas for work.

C. The pathways are developed in conjunction with both local area partners, school systems, colleges, and businesses to be an all-inclusive collaboration.

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

GWDB keeps an up-to-date connection with local training providers and promotes WIOA through information sessions at the community college, partner agencies, job fairs and community events. We also assist customers during pre-intake with career pathway information, labor market information, and local opportunities for training, retraining or employment in high-demand programs. We encourage customers to thoroughly explore their career fields of interest before committing to training so that credentials, measurable skill gains and overall success is more attainable.

The GWDB capacity to provide workforce investment activities that address education attainment and skill needs of high demand fields include engaging in intensive individualized career and training counseling which includes an overview of career cluster and Holland Code assessments and a consistent review of both the local area jobs/careers in demand that provide wages towards sustainability. Additionally, strategies for awareness to increase access to education and postsecondary credentials and certificates includes consistent exposure to

lean and earn opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, summer employment) through community organizations and partners plus review of training providers and matriculated educational programs with participants. During the recruitment, initial meetings, and throughout the duration of program participation participants are aware of the supportive services offered to eliminate barriers faced when working towards employment and educational attainment. NextGen highly encourages self-awareness amongst participants by providing resources and support for ongoing personal development, recognizing the ability of personal motivation, and finding the value in oneself as they are working towards sustainability.

The BSR works closely with the college system, high school system, vocational rehabilitation, NCWorks Career Center-Gaston and other partners to identify the skills and education gaps that are being seen as barriers. After identifying those skills/education gaps we work with the individuals to ensure they are matched with the college system or training provider to close those skills/education gaps. The BSR also surveys Gaston County businesses to gather what skills/education gaps they are experiencing. That data is shared with the college system to ensure they are offering these in-demand courses and connecting the participants to the appropriate resources to provide the funds necessary to enroll them into the needed courses/training to eventually perform in the industry that they are interested in.

III. NCWorks Commission

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

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

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

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

1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local employers and informs them of the wide array of business services offered. Include how the Local Area WDB (a) ensures collaboration with other

employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as (b) Vocational Rehabilitation, (c) Agriculture Services, (d) Foreign Labor, (e) Re-Entry, and (f) Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery.

Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Business Services Representative engages with employers by participating in networking events, participating in and/or leading local task forces, serving/leading committees and teams in which employers are involved (Gaston HR, GCAM, GBA, Gaston County Schools Business Advisory Council, etc.). The GWDB BSR leads the local Gaston's BEST team which is driven by employer needs. Gaston's BEST team maintains an updated catalog with all services and contact information that are distributed at most events and available to businesses. GWDB utilizes the Board website and social media accounts to reach a broad audience which includes many employers. GWDB works with Veteran specialists throughout the year, more specifically at Veteran Stand Down Events and Veteran's preferred hiring events. GWDB utilizes job fairs as an opportunity to speak with employers and share workforce services that are available to businesses. All GWDB flyers are up to date on all the programs and services offered. The BSR conducts drop-in visits to share catalogs and flyers for disconnected employers to increase their awareness of the existence and services provided through GWDB.

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

In Gaston County we have one Business Services Representative. The BSR takes the lead role of coordinating efforts of local employer-facing workforce partners operating within the NCWorks Career Centers including Employer Services Team Members; the Contracted Career Center Manager, Career Center Functional Team Leaders and their team members, and DVOP(s). Local Industry Sector-Based employer groups cultivate the appropriate environment and space for employers to have their questions regarding training, tax incentives, recruitment, and economic development. The BSR works closely with the DWS Career Employment Services Manager to engage businesses to utilize workforce services. The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston Manager conducts outreach at community events and committees to promote NCWorks Career Center services to employers.

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

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is continuing to partner with our local community college and school systems to bring awareness to the students and their families or friends about local career centers (both adult and youth career centers), services, and opportunities attached to the NCWorks brand. We will proceed with the creation of a social media-based campaign, which will proudly display the NCWorks brand, and will revolve around different parts of Gaston County's workforce and include the many

opportunities that exist for its citizens and businesses, especially those that receive public assistance, are low-income, and/or are considered be an at-risk youth. Career awareness events will be sponsored by the GWDB and/or its partners with event assistance offered by the career centers and/or workforce partner staff.

Therefore, printable materials and outreach efforts will include the NCWorks brand. These events will be targeted toward Gaston County High Schools' seniors and local college students. The purpose of these events is to bring awareness to the kinds of career opportunities that are available here locally - in addition to the associated education, formal training, and/or hands-on skills that employers require for each.

Our current partnership with Gaston County Public Library also affords us the opportunity to provide career services in an environment that is frequented by customers, some of whom do not utilize the NCWorks Career Center. This allows us to promote the NCWorks system and brand through career center services provided to library patrons and sharing orientation materials and outreach pintables containing the NCWorks Brand with these individuals.

The GWDB maintains temporary and/or permanent signage, for branding purposes, at all certified career centers.

The GWDB conducts outreach to promote services available to customers and businesses alike through several avenues including (but not limited to): Board-Sponsored Websites; Social Media Outlets (including Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram); through delivery of our Business Solutions Catalog to new employers, ongoing collaboration with local WIOA partners and Gaston's BEST (Business and Employer Services Team) members, and partnerships with EDC to meet with new and expanding businesses to link them to the NCWorks Career Center and services available there.

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

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

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) and its local NCWorks Career Center work with our partners within the community college system, universities, Social Services, Vocational Rehab, Goodwill, EDC, and other community organizations and partners to recognize and address challenges related to job growth and business expansion. GWDB utilizes employer surveys to investigate what their specific needs are and once that data is gathered solutions are implemented to address these needs. Examples of some solutions are recruiting and job fair events, collaborative recruiting events with other counties/regions, coordinating job fairs for Business Park tenants in the county, hosting employer breakfast to bring a group of employers together to foster discussions on employer needs and offer them solutions or partnerships, etc. The EDC offers grants that assist with expanding companies and GWDB can provide other hiring incentives that will offset the companies cost of hiring and training individuals (OJT, WEX, Apprenticeship etc.). GWDB currently partners with Mecklenburg County York County (South Carolina) to host Job Fair of the Carolinas bi-annually which attracts and reaches different pools of applicants from all regions. GWDB partners with Lincoln and

Cleveland County to host Tri-County job fairs to do the same recruitment events at a larger scale. GWEDB works with companies on wage statistics to ensure their wages are in-line and competitive to support their growth and the hiring needs that will continue to increase IWT funds can be offered to train businesses current employees so they can hire entry level positions with their expansion needs. Employers are encouraged to work with other neighboring counties to access all resources that they need, specifically being able to attend job fairs in neighboring counties and regions. Through the GWDB meetings, committees, and teams staff ensure the employers have a strong presence in our high schools and college system.

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

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

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

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) has worked diligently on hiring and recruiting practices by listening to employers' feedback on what they need in a qualified candidate and searching for these individuals in various forms. GWDB has collaborated with employers on evaluating their benefits and increasing their pay scales to be locally comparable and competitive for existing and new employees to increase their applicant pool and guarantee employee morale and retention. GWDB also focuses on skill and career advancement and can provide IWT funds for employers to upskill their employees provide raises and promotions. GWDB staff regularly attends DEI trainings that local employers are offered to attend. GWDB works with employers to tap into special population labor pools to hire underserved job seekers. For example, GWDB provides employers the resources and incentives (such as WOTC) on hiring ex-offenders. Many employers are unaware about the WOTC services and it has been a great tool to provide to them to assist in hiring targeted populations. The GWDB partners with probation officers and reentry specialists to provide employers and job seekers with resources to better assist these individuals.

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

The Business Services Representative works closely with the Adult & Youth Programs to develop and increase the number of work-based learning opportunities that our customers are seeking. Our BSR also works

with employers on developing these work-based learning opportunities in ways such as job shadowing, Work Experience (WEX), OJT, apprenticeship, IWT, tours, career awareness events, etc.

IV. NCWorks Career Centers

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

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB PY 2023 NCWorks Career Centers.*

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

Two Hawk Workforce Services – One-Stop Operator/Career Center Manager for NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

Competitive Procurement:

- Released request for proposal - 9/22/2020
- Question submittal deadline - 10/2/2020 Noon
- Q & A document - provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference - 10/6/2020 10am
- Proposals due - 10/21/2020 4pm > Amended - Proposal Due Date 11/6/2020 4pm
- Proposals Evaluation Committee Meeting – 11/10/2020
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation – 12/4/2020 12pm
- Notification of Award to Awardee– 12/4/2020
- Posted to Board Website for Public Comment – 12/10/2020
- Proposed Start date for contract /services - 1/11/2021
- Gaston WDB chose to extend this award for Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) and Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). Gaston Workforce Development Board will not exceed a total of 3 years in the overall award under the executed contract.

3. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]
 - a. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults.
 - b. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers.
 - c. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth.

The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston is a resource for both individuals seeking employment and training as well as to employers seeking qualified job candidates. Our career center is a user-friendly facility providing job seekers with opportunities to attend workshops, meet with career advisors (virtually as well as in-person) for one-on-one job search assistance, explore funding for training, and to discuss Work-Based Learning opportunities such as On-the-Job Training, Transitional Jobs, Work Experience, Job Shadowing, and Internships. The career center offers access to career advisors, computers, faxes and copying at no cost aiding job seekers in their search. Services are delivered according to the one-stop delivery system's provision of career and training services. Integrated services are offered by three major functional teams: Welcome, Skill Development, and Employment services. Customers are served based on priority of service with Veterans given the highest priority. Career services begin with a registration in NCWorks online and an initial assessment, which could lead to basic career services including (but not limited to) resume, virtual recruiter, 3 job referrals, interest and/or skill assessments, job development, career counseling, workshops, or job readiness activities via a Wagner Peysner application entered in NCWorks Online. All customers receive referrals to appropriate career centers and community-based partners that can assist the customers with barriers and goals. Customers are informed about WIOA Individualized & Training services and offered the opportunity to talk with a WIOA staff member and/or attend a WIOA orientation. WIOA case managers meet with customers to discuss the availability of Adult/DW/Youth training opportunities or intensive job search assistance. If training services are requested, the case manager assists with exploring training providers, providing course information, registration, and program costs, in addition to TABE testing for Youth and/or interested Adults. To receive WIOA funded training, the customer must meet eligibility requirements, the training provider's requirements and be determined to need training as outlined in the training justification form. The case manager is required to develop an individualized plan with the participant, identify the participants goals along with appropriate objectives, and the decide (with the participant) which combination of services is most appropriate for him/her to achieve his/her goals. Individual counseling, career planning, case management, and job readiness activities are key components to aid in a participant's success. The selection of a training program, training provider, and/or type of WIOA services should always consider the goals and interests of participant, as well as the demand for the specified occupation in the local area. Training providers and programs are linked to occupations in demand and provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible training provider. ITAs are issued for those seeking training-related financial assistance not covered by financial aid. Career and Training Services are provided until the customer has successfully reached their employment goal.

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

Once a customer is referred to WIOA by DWS, community college, or other partner agencies, we complete a

customer's NCWorks application if it hasn't already been completed. This allows case managers to open dialogue with the customer about work experience and training interests to see if the customer is a good fit for training. We request that the customer complete a Training Request packet to explore cost of the requested program, school of choice, duration of training, support while in training, transportation, childcare barriers, or any other issues that may cause the customer to not be successful. The review team studies each case to make sure that the customer has provided all necessary WIOA documentation and would be a suitable fit for training based on family situation, current employment, and if training is necessary or if the customer already possesses marketable skills.

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

WIOA follows up with all WIOA participants upon the customer's exit from WIOA program. The WIOA Program Manager assigned one case manager to complete the majority of follow-up calls to ensure quality and consistency. The customer is contacted via phone or email once a quarter and follow up is attempted. If customer has received a raise, promotion, or job change a new Employment Verification is requested and if the customer appears to need further services such as job search, arrangements are made to conduct an appointment with that customer to complete a new NCWorks, resume and job search for customer. This process and outcome are also documented in the person's case files.

6. Describe how:

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

The onboarding process begins with a review of all LA Policies and Procedures, followed by an extensive overview of the NCWorks Online System and how it is used to track customer activities, services, and documents. The staff member receives an overview of programs, and an introduction to Integrated Service Delivery via the NC Workforce Training Center's Welcome to Workforce Module and by observing the welcome team, skills team and employment team services. After that, the Career Center Manager is responsible for reviewing policies and procedures for completing RESEAs, EAIs, Front Desk Greeting, and Career Resource Center. Once complete, the onboarding training plan is initialed and signed by the Program Manager, Career Center Manager, and/or Super user depending on which part of the training plan is being completed. Once the training record is submitted to the WDB, NCWorks Online training is set up for trainees with WDB staff. This training is usually scheduled for the next week and is completed within 1-2 days. NCWorks Online Access is given by the WDB Super user after the LA Policy & Procedures and NCWorks Online training has been completed. Beyond initial training, staff are asked to participate in training site webinars/workshops, local area training or other pertinent staff development provided throughout the program year. Verification of staff training for new hires and seasoned staff is provided to the Gaston WDB WIOA

Coordinator and kept on file for future reference, should the need arise. Training of staff is provided through the NCWorks Training Center to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion is held to a high priority during service delivery, as well as during other interactions. Additionally, board staff are given an additional opportunity to receive DEI training through DSS.

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

A list of TAA participants is provided to the WIOA case managers so that the customer can be contacted and begin the co-enrollment process. The customer does have to be approved into NCWorks as well as the training provider they are requesting. Once the customer is enrolled in WIOA the case manager coordinates with the TAA case manager to arrange appointments for the same day so that the customer isn't inconvenienced. We would discuss what TAA is covering so no duplication of funds occurs and plan accordingly for each customer. For example, if TAA covers tuition, but can't cover transportation, WIOA can pick up to supplement while the customer is in training.

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

Veterans are identified at the front desk based on self-identification. Veterans are thanked for their service and made a priority to be seen by appropriate staff to meet their needs. Each veteran fills out a Veterans Intake Form to assess needed services. The DVOP at the NCWorks Career Center - Gaston receives the intake form to assess eligibility for services under "Special Barriers to Employment". If barriers (such as lack of housing) are identified, the DVOP will serve this customer through their program but at any point can refer the customer to WIOA or other partner services for further assistance if requested. The customer can be dual enrolled in services and coordinate appointments with the DVOP and WIOA case manager to avoid inefficient service. Veterans are provided with career development services, job search assistance, and community resources. Active Military personnel who are transitioning back into the civilian workforce can also receive assistance with their resume to correlate their skills and training received in the military to the training and skills requested by employers for job positions. They are also provided with both individual comprehensive guidance and career counseling.

The Career Center serves veterans under Priority of Service.

LA Priority of Service Order:

1. First – covered persons with an additional barrier to employment that meets 'statutory priority' requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.

2. Second - non-covered persons who have an additional barrier to employment that meets 'statutory priority' requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills

deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.

3. Third – covered persons without an additional priority to employment that meets ‘statutory priority’ requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.

4. Fourth - additional priority populations established by either the Governor and/or the Local WDB including (in order):

- a. Disabled
- b. Offender
- c. Not Self-Sufficient

5. Fifth – additional non-covered persons who are "individuals with barriers to employment" identified in WIOA sec. 3(24)

6. Last, non-covered persons who do not have an additional barrier to employment that meets ‘statutory priority’ requirements (public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding....in the order specified by the Local WDB.

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

All Career Centers are ADA compliant and have access to auxiliary aides upon request. Center Staff have a quick reference guide which includes contacts and phone numbers for organizations that are certified to assist individuals with disabilities. Additionally, staff is trained annually to comply with EO mandates by providing equal opportunity to consumers and is cognizant of serving all consumers accordingly.

As a part of the state Career Center Certification process, the NCWorks Career Center must pass an ADA compliance inspection of both the parking lot and building with regards to appropriate access for customers with disabilities. Customers self-identify disabilities and if reasonable accommodation is needed (such as large print or hearing-impaired services, etc.) those are provided. Career Center staff provide partner referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. WIOA serves persons with disabilities under the LA Priority of Service.

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

In the Gaston Local Area, our integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers is accomplished through the collaboration efforts of the local workforce team called Gaston’s B.E.S.T. Gaston’s BEST is led by the Gaston WDB and members are identified & chosen if they are partners/contributors to the development of the local workforce. Members include employer/business-based representative(s) from such agencies as Gaston Community College, Apprenticeship321, Small Business Center, Gaston County Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, GBA (Chamber of Commerce), NCWorks-Gaston, Goodwill Industries, and Gaston County

Economic Development Commission. This employer/business focused team meets quarterly (or more often if necessary) to strategize regarding the state of the local workforce, forecast future changes in the local economy, identify new or existing companies in addition to addressing their needs with existing business solutions or (when necessary) developing new business solutions. Members routinely go out to meet employers in groups of 2-3 (on behalf of the entire team), to interview them, assess their needs one-on-one, and give them a Business Solutions Catalogue to reference when the business has additional needs in the future. This practice was developed in previous responsive to past Employer Needs Surveys and the 1000 in 100 campaign, where employers identified their desire to have their needs addressed by a group/team of workforce representatives rather than by each individual organization calling on them separately.

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

All Center staff who are responsible for Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services will assist in the completion of scheduled RESEA and EAI enrollments. These customers are provided assessments, resume updates, job placement services, information on workshops and skills upgrades specific to UIB recipients and information on the use of the NCWorks system. UIB recipients are encouraged to follow up with more intensive job placement assistance available at the Career Centers or independently access NCWorks from their mobile devices or home computers.

The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston schedules and conducts Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) and Employability Assessment Interviews (EAI) for individuals who are collecting unemployment insurance. RESEA/EAI customers are required to report to the career center, via virtual or in-person avenues, to ensure that their benefits are not affected. The avenue used for the customer's attendance of the RESEA/EAI interview is determined by their level of personal comfort with virtual services and the level of accessibility they have to technology resources at their disposal. During the assessment interviews, staff provides the individual with job leads and refers them to other services including orientation to programs and services, workshops to assist them in their employment search, or career advisors for potential funding to return to school. Job seekers who participate in RESEA/EAI appointments go through the same experience/client flow process as all the other job seekers entering the NCWorks Career Center and this ensures all job seekers receive the same services and opportunities. NCWorks Career Center-Gaston and Gaston WDB staff participate in monthly NCWorks Career Center leadership team meetings to ensure the NCWorks Career Center team (onsite & off-site career center partners) and the Gaston WDB staff have a strong linkage of communication and that all staff have access to consistent and regular technical assistance, guidance, labor market intelligence, etc. This supports alignment between the workforce board, NCWorks Career Center team, and unemployment insurance programs. To ensure alignment, the DWS Regional Operations Director has an open invitation to participate in any of these activities, meetings, trainings, etc. – as often as time and scheduling constraints will permit.

12. Attach a flowchart for services – flowchart must include:
a. initial one-on-one interviews with customers,

- b. NCWorks.gov dual registration,
- c. skills assessments, and
- d. determination of the need for further services.

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB Services Flowchart 2023*.

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB NCWorks Career Center MOU*.

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

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

GWDB conducts NCWorks Career Center Management Team Meetings on a bi-monthly basis with all center partners represented at the table. Discussion is focused on improvement of services, maintaining high customer approval, initiatives and opportunities within the Local Area that would allow for increased exposure of Career Center services and enhance public awareness of the extensive services offered and ensuring that services and activities conducted within the centers or by center staff is meeting job seeker and employer needs.

The Local Area conducts a monitoring of their WIOA Service Providers at least annually and including areas such as financial accuracy, programmatic implementation, WIOA & LA Policy Adherence, data validation & program eligibility, E.O. compliance, and ISD service delivery. One Stop Operations is also reviewed for compliance.

Additionally, the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Service Providers & Career Center Management/Functional Leaders are expected to complete monthly (at minimum) random quality checks of each of their team member activities (WP & WIOA Intakes, Active Cases, Exits, and Follow-up Cases). To improve the Board's understanding and ability to ensure services are meeting consumer & employer need, it has procured a survey platform to capture customer (both participant & business) and partner responses. The Gaston WDB, along with the Career Center Manager, will review the responses and take appropriate action as needed for areas of identified concern or where additional adjustments need to be made in offerings and/or availabilities.

The GWDB Coordinator holds monthly one-on-one meetings with the Career Center Manager and program managers to ensure customer service, LA policy, and financial procedures are being followed effectively and timely. GWDB management and Career Center management also hold a combined monthly meeting to have honest conversations of any concerns and provide guidance to ensure timely resolutions.

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

Customers are given the option to complete WP, WIOA and follow up services virtually or in person or a hybrid of these. We also utilize MS Teams and texting if needed for quick assistance. NCWorks also allows customers to chat and call through the AWS system and be referred to the proper staff member for assistance based on need. VOS greeter has also been recently added to provide electronic sign-in and allow staff to run reports for those being served and reasons service is rendered. WP, WIOA services can also be completed off site if a customer cannot come to the Career Center due to transportation. Public places such as the library or community college could be used if traveling to the Career Center proves to be difficult. WIOA staff are using Adobe to sign pre-intake documents, ITAs, and supportive service requests. Virtual meeting platforms can be utilized to conduct customers' pre-intake, enrollment and follow up services, if the customer prefers that over in-person services. Both in-office phones and work cell phones also allow for quick and efficient engagement with customers whether in the office or working from a different location. Outreach, recruitment, and workshops can also be provided in-person or using virtual platforms. NCWorks Online Common Intake will be utilized, when applicable & available, to determine all partner services that a customer may want to consider. If a Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Title Partner is not available on-site to assist a customer with the desired partner service, a soft hand-off of the customer to the partner agency is completed by the career center staff or management member to ensure that customer receives appropriate customer service. Desk space, computers, signature pads, and printers are provided on a scheduled basis to career center partners who are interested in providing their services onsite or virtually to the career center customers. WIOA Title Partners are given scheduling priority.

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

The Gaston WDB utilizes a variety of data pulled at varying appropriate intervals from NCWorks Online Reporting, Future Works Reports, JobEQ & LMI Data/Reports, Job Fair Results Reports, Employer Needs Survey Results, Customer Services Surveys for participants, employers, and/or partners to determine if goals are on target to be met and to determine if collaborative efforts are effective. More specifically, the Gaston WDB collects End-Of-the-Month (EOM) Progress Reports from contracted WIOA Service Providers each month, which is used to determine if they are on track to meet quarterly benchmarks, thus enabling the successful completion of contract goals which inevitably leads to a higher probability that they will achieve the state negotiated performance rates for each federal WIOA Performance Indicator. NCWorks Online and Future Works Reports are run at the beginning of each month to track customer numbers served at each career center location (both Adult and Youth Career Centers) as well as determine the progress achieved toward obtainment of performance measures and contract goals. If there are any areas of deficiencies, they are reviewed with the Career Center Manager (if applicable), Program Manager, and (if necessary) Business Services Staff. Job Fair Results Reports & Customer Survey Results will be reviewed monthly and used to determine if the content, location, and attendance of Job Fairs meet the

needs of local employers and job seekers. Annually, JobsEQ & LMI Reports/Data are reviewed along with the results of the most recent annual Employer Needs Survey so that the Gaston WDB can adjust the Occupations considered to be “in demand” for our local area employers. Additionally, Gaston WDB and other workforce partners can meet as often as needed to adjust to the changes in our local economy and to address the needs of local industry sectors or individual businesses. Both NCWorks-Gaston Leadership Team meetings, as well as Gaston’s B.E.S.T member meetings and Sector Strategy meetings, can also be utilized to collaboratively strategize about local changes that are impacting our local economy, to collectively develop new methods that can be used to create a more skilled workforce, to share best practices in innovation between employers (as well as partners), and most importantly – continually establish new ways to uniformly address areas of employer and job seeker concern. Additionally, the NCWorks Career Center provides an updated list of “Hot Jobs” to the staff and any job seekers utilizing the CRC at the Career Center to help clients stay abreast of the sectors and positions in the highest demand locally.

V. Employer Services

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

Utilizing Local & Regional Data:

Our Business Services Representatives, Employer Services Team, and other members of Gaston’s BEST work diligently on behalf of all Gaston Local Area employers/businesses to listen to their challenges first and provide or develop appropriate solutions to their needs. A part of being prepared to do so is by insuring we are educated on local and regional employment and occupational related data and statistics including labor market information, trends, occupational outlooks, commuting patterns and others. The Gaston WDB utilizes NCWorks LMI data, JobsEQ data, US Census Reports and Maps, as well as additional other resources. The Gaston County WDB and other boards in the Southwestern Region have collaborated with regional employers, educators, and other applicable partners to develop and effectively implement three Career Pathways that are relevant to our region and will continue to do so when it is appropriate. We are working with one of our Gaston’s BEST Team Members, from the Gaston Business Association (GBA), along with our other workforce partners to utilize local and/or regional data from industry sector-based groups of employers to offer solutions that addresses the employers’ most significant needs with their indicated highest priorities being given the most significant importance.

Making referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff:

Gaston’s BEST members partnered with our local Economic Development Commission to create an industry-based group called GCAM (Gaston County Advanced Manufacturing). It is comprised of local manufacturing

companies and workforce development partners. Our goal has been to create a space for employers to have questions answered for such items as training, tax incentives, recruitment, and economic development. Additionally, Career Center Staff can make referrals to Ricky Boyd, Agricultural Services Employment Service Consultant for employers requesting Ag Services and/or Foreign Labor. Ricky Boyd has provided a program overview and staff training to Career Center Staff.

Partnering for strategic planning and economic development:

The Gaston WDB makes it a priority to participate in economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers.

Gaston's BEST members meet quarterly to strategize and discuss local/regional priorities; needs of local businesses which require solutions to be provided or developed; new business solutions available through workforce or community partners; and organizing/sponsoring career or employer-related events. Gaston's BEST members also participate in the Apprenticeship 321 quarterly meetings at Gaston College where employers, Gaston & Centralina Workforce Development Boards, and Economic Developers from various local areas meet. The Gaston County WDB has presented previously at these meetings and discussed how the partnership between Gaston College's Apprenticeship 321 and the Gaston WDB's On-the-Job Training (OJT) program works and benefits both apprentices and employers.

Historically Underutilized Businesses:

The Gaston County WDB supports promoting economic opportunities for historically underutilized businesses, through contracting and procurement efforts, to foster their growth and profitability. We utilize the HUB website to advertise our bid opportunities for construction, goods, and services contracts to members of the Historically Underutilized Businesses group. This sends a notification to their members and encourages them to submit appropriate proposals/bids when we have made a solicitation for such that is applicable to the business. We also reach out personally and/or make direct requests for bids/proposals to local historically underutilized businesses/vendors/services providers located in Gaston County when it is appropriate to do so, in a special effort to increase growth in this local identified area.

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

Gaston County along with other boards in the Southwestern Region have collaborated effectively to implement three Career Pathways relevant to our region and will continue to do so. Employer Services, Business Services, and other Employer-facing Partners work together both locally and within our region for the benefit it brings to local & regional businesses. With DWS hosting, the GWDB partners with

CharlotteWorks, Centralina and our bordering neighbor – York County, South Carolina to host the bi-annual “Job Fair of the Carolinas” event, which included participation by seventy employers in September 2022. There were 140 job seekers in attendance. This has since become a bi-annual event with the next scheduled for April 2023.

When new or expanding businesses are identified, our BSR will utilize Gaston’s BEST members and provide solutions needed by the business for locating to Gaston County or successfully expanding its business. If it is determined that a particular need of a business is extensive, the GWDB will expand its reach outward to contacts of surrounding workforce boards who will partner in assisting the business in achieving its opening or expansion goal(s). Economic data is a key resource used to identify where workforce development is and where future priorities need to be for local and regional areas to achieve desired workforce outcomes and economic vitality.

GWDB also collaborates with other regions to provide services to businesses to avert potential layoffs by providing training funds and other no-cost resources. At times the BSR will bring in IES from the state level for training needs that will potentially help avert a layoff from happening. The GWDB BSR has acquired data on businesses that have received economic development grants and businesses that owe Back Taxes to prioritize assistance given to in-need businesses to avoid potential layoffs due to financial instability.

3. Please describe employer-focused partnership efforts in the areas of education and training and economic development in the following areas:

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

The BSR for the Gaston County Workforce Development Board has compiled a packet of flyers and resources that provides an informational summary of all the Work-Based Learning Programs and other services that can be offered. The BSR distributes these packets when attending meetings or making on-site visits and can speak to various groups to provide an explanation of services/programs. The BSR utilizes meetings, both employer facing and with working partners, to educate all and continue to increase the knowledge about WIOA services provided.

The BSR has close connections with several training providers that has enhanced IWT utilization greatly. Some local trainers work with various companies within the same county, which allows for a referral process for the companies to benefit from IWT funds.

The BSR for the Board refers individuals who are looking into entrepreneurship opportunities to the Gaston College Small Business Center.

The GWDB participates in growing partnerships with regional training providers including our local community college as well as universities to participate in state/regional collaborations for green energy and other areas of focus.

VI. Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Positive factors: Gaston County continues to grow with new manufacturers locating to Gaston County. In recent years Gaston County has welcomed seven new companies that offer competitive salaries and benefits. Companies have elected to locate to Gaston County due to the workforce system, economic development system, our education systems in place and more.

Since COVID-19, companies have been flexible with hiring individuals that may not possess the skills needed, have limited work background history, and/or inconsistent work history. This has helped individuals with

barriers obtain critical jobs that they may have not been afforded prior to COVID-19. COVID-19 forced businesses with large vacancies to increase their knowledge about what resources are available in the community to fill their vacancies. This led to greater relationships between the workforce, school systems, economic development, and other community partners. There was and continues to be an ongoing demand for business services to train and educate the workforce and the GWDB continues to provide it. \

NextGen has been positively impacted by seeing an increase in enrollment due to word of mouth through recruitment and participation from previous and current participants. Others have been able to see the success and supportive services offered to those enrolled in WIOA.

Negative factors: Due to COVID-19, businesses were not able to be as selective with their potential candidates as before. This has led to businesses hiring unqualified candidates, therefore increasing the training process, and hurting production. During COVID-19 more individuals were unemployed, took early retirement, and others became self-employed which removed active workers from the workforce. This has made it difficult to recruit and retain individuals, causing employers to increase their wages and incentives to recruit and retain workers. Companies continue to find themselves unable to recover after the pandemic due to the inability of competing with county, regional, and national salary increases.

COVID-19 has negatively impacted the NextGen program by offering more manufactory skilled employment which forces participants to seek employment in adjacent areas. There is a disconnect due to local area employment not trending with the current NextGen population.

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

Our LA Performance Accountability Specialist is responsible for tracking performance with our contracted staff. Our PAS utilizes FutureWorks at the minimum monthly to compare to NCWorks Reports to ensure accuracy of data. Any deficiencies identified are communicated to the contractors. In addition, all contractors are required to track performance and submit monthly reports. The PAS will review these reports as they are submitted to ensure they stay on top of performance issues and that we are on track to maintain or improve performance for all goals. The PAS will work closely with the contractors, providing technical assistance, including training, one-on-one meetings, and constant communication with staff as needed. The specialist requires our program managers to run quality checks on their staff's intake and case management activities at least monthly and the WDB monitors at least annually. WIOA contracted staff and/or career center staff participate in weekly strategic meetings with their management at the career centers to discuss performance, outreach efforts, and enrollments. These staff are also provided quarterly program performance data and trained as needed on procedures related to entering performance data in NCWorks online by their management. Program managers submit a yearly performance plan that details their action plan on meeting performance measures and contract goals for the upcoming program year. The specialist will meet regularly with contractors to discuss performance measures as needed, as these strategies are essential in order to maintain and improve performance in our local area. Our WDB performance is positively impacted by awareness at all staff levels. Training is provided by the board to program and career center management when policies are implemented and/or updated, or as needed due to performance or other issues. Career Center staff training and refreshers are provided by Career Center and/or Program Managers throughout the program year and as needed when performance issues arises in order to ensure staff is properly entering information in NCWorks Online and are aware of how the system modules correlate to Federal Performance

Indicators. All WDB Career Center staff have been formally trained on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance and are provided a handout/summary to keep at their desk. NCWorks related training is conducted by the Performance Accountability specialist for all career center and board staff as well as new hires.

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

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

The Performance Accountability Specialist monitors performance monthly and tracks each contractor's performance measures to ensure contractors are meeting their annual negotiated performance measures and contract goals. If performance or goal issues arise, the WDB Coordinator will be made aware and board staff will meet with the contracted program management (and one stop operator - if applicable) to discuss the issue, to put corrective actions in place to improve performance levels. Failing to meet yearly negotiated performance rates directly affects the Adult/DW contractor's profit payments. They are paid profit only for each performance measure that is successfully achieved at 100% of the negotiated performance rate at each quarterly interval. At the end of the program year, if the contractor achieves 90% of the state negotiated annual performance rate, a profit payment adjustment can be issued for that performance measure at year-end. The Youth Contractor is the community college system and is not a "for-profit" business, therefore they do not earn profit payments. Where contractor deficiencies are identified with performance measures or contract goals, required improvements will be implemented by board staff under existing contract mandates. If performance issues arise, the WDB Director will be made aware and board staff will meet with the contracted management including the contracted one stop operator to discuss the issue, to put a corrective action plan in place to improve performance levels. Achieving contract goals is set in their signed service contract and can also affect their ability to continue receiving contracts to provide services. Non-Profit/Public contractors (example - the community college system) do not earn profit payments.

Where deficiencies are identified, board staff schedules time to discuss the deficiency(ies) with contracted program management and/or contracted career center management. Any available reports, local guides, and training are provided to contracted program management (and career center staff – if necessary) to assist in all necessary changes being made within 30 days (or other timeframes, as specified) that will result in the required improvements being accomplished. If the required results are not achieved, the local board can place the contracting entity on a corrective action plan. If the contracted program management fails to provide required training to staff; fails to implement required changes; fails to make adequate corrections; and/or fails to accomplish required performance improvements, the local board can evaluate the program contract for potential modifications. If the deficiency is egregious in manner, the program contractor can be given notice to end the current contract immediately or within 30 days – whichever the Workforce Development Board Director (or designee) feels is most appropriate given the situation.

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

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

Gaston has a designated Performance Accountability Specialist whose primary function is to review activities within NCWorks and oversee adherence to performance goals and outcomes. The WIOA Coordinator and Performance Accountability Specialist review performance outcomes in Futureworks as the updated data becomes available monthly. The performance reports are emailed and printed out, then shared at least quarterly (but most often monthly) with its contracted program managers and one stop operator (career center manager) either at their in-person/virtual monthly manager meetings or via electronic means. The contracted management would then relay the reports to WIOA (Adult/DW/Youth) & WP career center staff members. This allows staff to be aware of the progression toward our performance goals and focus on areas where there could potentially be issues. Additionally, program managers are highly encouraged to utilize NCWorks predictive reports on a regular basis to further focus in areas of weakness and address it with their staff.

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

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

The measurable skill gains measure is an early indication of the student's probability of successfully completion of their credential. The measurable skill gain indicator helps disclose any issues the student may be experiencing. The information from the Measurable Skill Gains has helped our service providers be more accountable for our students' progress while in training. Each Career Advisor must enter at least one Measurable Skill Gains for every year the participant is active in WIOA Title I. Participants enrolled in occupational skills training will be required to enter Measurable Skill Gains each semester in order to monitor the progress the participant is making toward successfully completing training. This will allow the Career Advisor to provide additional services in the event the student is not attaining Measurable Skill Gains in an effort to assist them so they can successfully complete training and attain their credential. Case managers are required to meet or connect virtually due to COVID-19 with students monthly for counseling services. During the meetings, the case managers are responsible for addressing any issues with the student and to go over the student's progress. Doing monthly meetings allows the case managers to assist and address any concerns or

issues the student may have to avoid the student dropping out of school or failing a class, which may lead to a negative performance for the credential attained measure. If additional resources are needed, they can be provided ahead of time. The Gaston WDB diligently records as many MSGs as possible throughout the course of the participant's training and when work-based training milestones are reached. This allows Case Managers to keep track of the participant's benchmarks established in the IEP/ISS.

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

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

Training Providers and Programs are reviewed by a NC ETP representative at the state level when one of two situations arises: the WIOA customer chooses a training provider that is not currently on the ETPL and the training provider wants to apply to be added or a local area provider contacts the GWDB directly and requests to apply to be added to the NC ETPL. The LA ETPL representative refers the training provider to the NC ETP representative to be moved through the state's ETP application & approval process. Once the training provider is approved and added to the NC ETPL, the Training Provider can submit any training programs that it chooses to be evaluated for approval to be added to the LA ETPL. Apprenticeship providers can be evaluated to be added to our local ETPL, as well. The Gaston LA WDB has a "Provider Review Team" that consists of the Provider Specialist & WDB's WIOA Supervisor. The LA Provider Review Team meets weekly to review and approve/deny training providers requests to have their programs certified and added to the ETPL. To submit training programs for LA ETPL certification, the provider must have completed program descriptions in NCWorks Online for each program that they are seeking approval for. Training providers may submit programs for review at any time, this creates an opportunity to submit in-demand training programs as the needs of the local employers, workers, and jobseekers change and/or grow.

It is up to the Local WDB's discretion to issue any additional application/questionnaire/screening document(s), to be completed by the training provider, at this point.

For Gaston WDB Certification, the training provider must provide proof of the following:

- List of partnerships with specific local area employers (optional)
- Proof that the training program has been in existence for one year,
- Leads to an occupational skill resulting in a national and/or industry recognized credential identified by the Gaston WDB as in high demand.
- A list of employers who have hired graduates
- Description of how the program is different than others (time, cost, quality, and outcomes).

The following documentation is also requested by the local area, but is not considered a requirement:

- Graduation/completion rate of the program for the last calendar year

- Job placement rate of graduates in the program for the last calendar year
- Percentage of graduates that obtained employment related to the program.

The Gaston LA Provider Review Team will review and either approve or deny the provider's programs for the local area based on the WDB's criteria. Program approvals for BCTPs are completed by the Gaston WDB switching the program "on" (under the provider certification section in NCWorks Online – click the LWIA button). Approval notifications are sent by the method in which the training provider selected (NCWorks Online internal messaging or email) when initially registering in NCWorks Online.

If all application steps are completed correctly, and the Gaston LA Provider Review Team approves, the program shall be designated as a BCTP within thirty days of application approval. If the Local WDB has required additional forms to be completed, these forms must be submitted prior to certification as a BCTP.

Training providers have the option to either submit the application documents electronically by mail to the following:

Gaston Workforce Development Board
330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way
Gastonia, NC 28052
Attn: Angela Karchmer

Once the Training Provider receives approval for its program(s) to be add to the LA ETPL, a member of the local Provider Review Team notifies the NCWorks-Gaston Career Center Manager, WIOA Adult/DW Program Manager, and the WIOA Youth Nextgen Program Manager. If the Training Provider is new to our local area, a presentation to career center staff and management at the adult and youth career centers can be arranged with the provider by the provider specialist.

If any of the provider's programs are denied, a provider case note is added to NCWorks and a notice is sent to the provider. The provider has rights to appeal the decision, should they choose to do so.

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

There is more than one community college and/or private training provider (who is approved to be on the NCWorks ETPL) within a 30-minute driving distance of the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston and/or Gaston County and thus the Local Area considers that we have a “significant number of competent providers” for our local area. Competency of providers and their programs is proven when the provider meets the local area’s training provider and program requirements, which states they must be a proven legitimate provider; in existence for at least one year; possesses liability insurance; its programs are completed by a significant percentage of its students, resulting in credentials and employment. Additionally, a specified percentage of program completers should obtain employment related to their training field.

The Gaston Local Area requires that Approved Training Provider’s “programs” must be in demand in our local area/region and have been in existence for at least one year before they can be approved here.

- Attach if a separate policy.
 - Name Document: *Gaston County WDB ETPL Policy*.

VII. Equal Opportunity

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

GWDB staff conducts EO training for all center staff annually and as needed. GWDB staff operates its program, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws. No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), disability, religion, sex, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of our programs. GWDB staff completes random case monitoring monthly to ensure that individuals are being provided proper access to services without discrimination. The WDB also requires that it be provided with a copy of any claims of discrimination by consumers within two business days and follow up immediately to investigate and/ or resolve any issues. Each Career Center staff must post EO guidance and information for consumers to follow should they feel that discrimination has occurred. The GWDB does not tolerate discriminatory conduct of any kind. The GWDB require all staff to adhere to EO policy and would recommend disciplinary action up to and including discharge of any individual or contractor determined to have willfully engaged in discriminatory actions.

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB EO Complaint Grievance Procedure*.

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

Danyale Williams – Gaston Local Area Equal Opportunity Officer.

Mose Dorsey – The State EO Officer

Mose provides the Gaston County WDB Staff and NCWorks Career Center – Gaston Staff with Annual EO & LEP Training each year either in person or through the NCWorks Training Center. Mose advises the board if any changes have been made to the state or federal EO Requirements so that Local Area Policies and Procedures are updated with the most recent EO criteria for providing participants with services in a manner that supports EO compliance.

VIII. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

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

a. The services are provided in a timely and efficient way from the start of the pre-intake process to the time of review team and WIOA enrollment. If there are issues with training providers, the case manager notifies the Program Manager who sends information to the WDB to look into and contact service provider. Our WIOA team tries to ensure that each customer feels heard and taken care of through the training period and following through monthly counsel and follow up.

b. Any weaknesses of training providers are identified and forwarded to the WDB and any weaknesses that are identified by the Program Manager in terms of case managers is addressed through counsel, group and individual training or retraining.

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

a. Identify any service provider contract extensions.

Competitive Procurement:

- Released request for proposal – 4/23/2021
- Question submittal deadline – 5/7/2021
- Q & A document - provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference – 4/30/2021 at 11am
- Proposals due - 5/14/2021 12pm
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation – 6/24/2021
- Notification of Award to Awardee– 6/24/2021
- Proposed Start date for contract/services – 7/1/2021
- Gaston WDB chose to extend this award for Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023)

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

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

Competitive Procurement:

- Released request for proposal - 9/22/2020
- Question submittal deadline - 10/2/2020 Noon
- Q & A document - provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference - 10/6/2020 10am
- Proposals due - 10/21/2020 4pm > Amended - Proposal Due Date 11/6/2020 4pm
- Proposals Evaluation Committee Meeting – 11/10/2020
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation – 12/4/2020 12pm
- Notification of Award to Awardee– 12/4/2020
- Posted to Board Website for Public Comment – 12/10/2020
- Proposed Start date for contract /services - 1/11/2021

-Gaston WDB chose to extend this award for Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) and Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). Gaston Workforce Development Board will not exceed a total of 3 years in the overall award under the executed contract.

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB PY 2023 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List.*

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

GWDB vision for servicing the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers services are that each strive to reach goals to ensure that adults seeking more prominent careers and dislocated workers aiming to regain employment in our workforce. We help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance North Carolina's workforce capabilities by partnering with Gaston County DHHS to refer TANF recipients, Non-custodial Parents of active child support cases, Foster Care Youth and the Food and Nutrition Services for staff assisted services at the NCWorks Career Centers.

The vision we have is to continue further implementing a seamless, integrated service environment, where jobseekers, workforce partners, business/industry, training providers, economic development, community organizations, and the faith community can collaborate to provide meaningful workforce related service and assistance delivered with a quality customer service focus. We intend to maximize the concepts of the One Stop as we introduce, guide, counsel, and coordinate with existing staff and partners on integrating service focus and incorporating Board expectations for Center relevance and productivity.

We have greatly increased our outreach and social media presence so that individuals can find and be referred to our services on a frequent basis. We have built relationships with our partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston College, Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center, Hope United, Catherine's House, Recovery Court, and many others to ensure growth and exposure to groups that have not been reached in the past. Coordination with Division of Workforce Solutions is paramount to reach dislocated workers with this outreach to this customer base occurs in the Career Center and Rapid Response sessions. Customers that are currently receiving UI are provided WIOA service information through the welcome team.

Through continuous outreach and quality services provided, we expect the WIOA to meet the following outcomes: attain employment, improved retention, increased credentialing, improved penetration in employer market, increased usage of Centers by customers, and relevance and high value perception by communities.

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

We ensure that those that are low income, receiving public assistance, or have basic skills deficiencies are served in a variety of ways. We partner closely with the SNAP and TANF programs with the Department of Social Services and complete WPs as a requirement for those receiving TANF. This allows us to speak further into our WIOA services for those customers. We also work closely with Gaston College for those who needed to receive TABE testing to gauge BSD status and provide proper referrals upon completion of TABE for ABE, GED, or AHS services. We also work with Gaston Literacy Council for BSD or those with language barriers that could affect their job search process.

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

Once a customer exists, they are contacted at least once a quarter of a year to assess job status, the need for further services and overall well-being. If customer expresses need for further services, we seek to provide a quick turnaround to update WP, provide job search and resume and overall employment related assistance.

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

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

The WIOA Program Manager monitors 100% of cases over a set period by completing monitoring checklist and notifying case managers of any corrections needed. Review Team, WIOA enrollment, and case exit procedures are also times when cases are checked for quality and accuracy. The Contractor has an internal monitor that checks cases and provides instruction for case managers and Program Manager for corrections quarterly. GWDB Performance Accountability Specialist also monitors cases and prepares those results yearly so that case files are accurate and organized.

IX. Youth Services

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

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

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

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

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

Youth Workforce Activity	For Persons with Disabilities?	Brief Assessment/Model Used	Success Rating
Holland Code - Career Match	YES	Classify jobs into job categories, interest clusters, or work personality environments.	SUCCESSFUL
Career Cluster	YES	Group of occupations with similar features. If someone enjoys a job in a particular cluster, they are more likely to enjoy related occupations in the group.	SUCCESSFUL
Talent SHL Assessment	YES	Evaluate job-related	SUCCESSFUL

		behaviors, skills, and competencies with patented assessments.	
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2. Describe how the Local Area WDB’s broad Young Adult (NextGen) Program design is unique to include:
- a. providing objective assessments;
 - b. supportive services needed; and
 - c. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)]

Gaston LA is committed to providing high quality services for all eligible youth and young adults. The LA’s NextGen program is designed to assist youth with one or more barriers towards self-sufficiency; including preparation into secondary education, skills training, credential attainment, work place experience, financial literacy, knowledge of labor market info, etc.

To ensure seamless deliver of program services for program participants, each youth shall receive an Objective Assessment of the academic levels, skill levels and service needs for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways. The assessment will include a review of:

- Basic Skills
- Occupational Skills
- Prior Work Experience
- Employability
- Interests
- Aptitudes
- Supportive Service Needs
- Developmental Needs

Furthermore, these assessments should also consider a youth’s strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement. This objective assessment will help build the framework of the ISS which is jointly developed between the case manager and youth.

To relieve barriers and to receive a comprehensive array of youth services (14 elements), supportive services are made available to youth participants. To the extent possible, support services will be provided by referral through links to area human service agencies. Where these resources are unavailable, WIOA funds may be used for Youth. Supportive services may include assistance with transportation, Child Care & Dependent Care, Housing, Educational Testing, Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities, Uniforms or other work related attire and tools, Items Necessary for Students who are Enrolled in Post-Secondary, Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, and certifications

Each youth that applies for enrollment in to the WIOA program is TABE tested, if they have not finished their secondary education, to determine the developmental need of each youth. This helps to identify the customer’s current skill level and/or any learning disabilities that could pose a barrier to them achieving their education/training goals and/or obtaining employment. If a learning disability is identified, the case manager will encourage co-enrollment in Vocational Rehabilitation Services and ensure that the customer receives accommodations (if necessary) to provide the customer a greater opportunity for achieving his/her education

and/or employment goals as well as provide additional services and appropriate career pathways for the customer.

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

GWDB ensures 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 through individualized case management services and comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs for the youth. ISS is unique to everyone as each youth meets with their case manager in a one-on-one setting to build a unique relationship based on the needs of the participant.

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

Youth who enter the WIOA NextGen Youth Program are offered a TABE test to assess their education level. Additionally, they are offered an interest assessment test to determine their area of career interest which can lead to youth enrolling in post-secondary education after completion of GED or AHS. If a youth's first priority is obtaining employment, we support the customer's choice of activity while providing them with every opportunity to further explore career development options. Thus, encouraging their continued education without pushing the participant in to something they may not be ready for or willing to commit.

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

The Gaston LA provides the following during participants' 12 months of follow-up:

- o Additional Job Search Assistance
- o Job Retention Information
- o Conflict Resolution/Work Place Counseling
- o Individual Counseling
- o Supportive Services (refer to LA Policy for Support Services to see what is available during follow-up)

Follow-up Services are provided to all Gaston County WIOA participants who have soft exited, to ensure that the participant remains successful in meeting their long-term goal – self-sufficiency employment that lasts 12 months or longer. When appropriate, the case manager schedules the customer to meet with them so the case manager can determine if the customer is still working in unsubsidized employment or still in post-secondary education and whether the participant needs additional assistance. The case manager scans the necessary proofs of contacts made into the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

Follow-up results are keyed in to NCWorks, within 15 days from the last day of the each required quarter.

In the Gaston LA, we do not require follow-up services on participants who meet the requirement(s) for hard exit (due to global exclusion). Neither do we require follow-up services on participants who soft-exit due to at least two “unsuccessful attempts to locate” in writing.

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

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

GWDB NextGen program provides Hybrid services to youth and young adults, with the majority of services housed at Gaston College. The NextGen program also provides services weekly at the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston by having a NextGen case manager provide services at the Career Center. NextGen also has the capability to work at satellite locations such as the library and community agencies to reach individuals who may not frequent Gaston College or NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

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

- Name the document: *PY 2023 Gaston County WDB Youth Service Provider List.*

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

Competitive Procurement:

- Released request for proposal – 4/23/2021
- Question submittal deadline – 5/7/2021
- Q & A document - provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference – 4/30/2021 at 11am
- Proposals due - 5/14/2021 12pm
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation – 6/24/2021
- Notification of Award to Awardee– 6/24/2021
- Proposed Start date for contract/services – 7/1/2021
- Gaston WDB chose to extend this award for Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Gaston WDB requires that our WIOA NextGen Youth contractor enroll a minimum of 90% of OSY and a maximum of 10% of ISY. Currently, the Gaston Local Area does not have any ISY enrolled. Outreach efforts are achieved through social media, websites, communications across the college campus and at the Life Skills Building where GED classes are offered. Additionally, monthly community service projects take current Youth participants out into the community and are able to share their experiences in the Youth program with other youth in the community. Gaston College also allows a NextGen Youth Staff member to attend the GED Orientation session to promote the NextGen WIOA program and recruit interested individuals.

GWDB has found it challenging to target, enroll, and maintain participation for the OSY. With the decrease of the expected OSY to be served and the increase of ISY to be served, GWDB anticipates meeting programmatic goals. GWDB has implemented a relationship with DSS Child Protection Services to make automatic referrals for all Foster Care Youth to WIOA. Our local area Foster Care youth and young adults are primarily considered ISY and with the referral process in place, we are expecting a natural increase of in school youth served.

GWDB will rely on the partnerships that already exist with other agencies to continue the referral process for all youth to WIOA. GWDB is fortunate in its close relationship with Gaston County schools and DSS Child Protection Services. GWDB staff will continue to hold refresher training to promote WIOA services offered with partner agencies that assist youth to remind them of the services that are available.

10. How does the Local Area WDB ensure that the minimum of 20% of funds is spent on work experience and

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

Gaston County WDB has not been meeting the minimum of 20% funds spent on WEX positions this fiscal year, which has provided us an opportunity to focus on how we can best utilize the resources already in place to increase these positions currently and ongoing.

Our Youth service provider, Gaston College, and the WDB staff have experienced transitions in staffing that have caused several vacancies. The vacancy that greatly impacts WEX positions is the full-time Youth Program Manager. Gaston College and the WDB have been diligently promoting and interviewing potential applicants to fill this position.

The Youth service provider, Gaston College, had a barrier with procuring a WEX contractor during this fiscal year. The RFP for the WEX contractor was finalized in February 2023, which allowed the Youth program to initiate WEX positions for interested participants.

The Youth program has also experienced low enrollment numbers and those that are enrolled are gaining employment upon completion of certificates, training, education, etc. The NextGen Program has been able to create partnerships with specific vendors for direct WEX for participants upon completion plus providing additional focus on programs without direct employment upon completion.

GWDB has taken action by providing NextGen youth staff with refresher training, specializing one case manager as a WEX specialist on staff to assist with subsidized placement in work experience opportunities, and increasing outreach on youth WEX positions specifically.

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

The Gaston Count Workforce Development Board has one Business Services Representative that provides services to Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

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

GWDB does not have special programs for young adults that are Justice-Involved or have a substance disorder, however youth needing these specialty programs are referred to community agencies for such services resulting in collaborative partnerships.

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

- a. Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies.
- b. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies.
- c. Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as

Local Area WDB's and the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]

The Gaston WDB partners with Gaston College's GED & AHS Programs, as well as the Gaston Literacy Council and Vocational Rehabilitation to do co-enrollments and provide services to individuals with basic skills deficiencies, learning disabilities and other barriers to employment. Gaston College leverages resources by providing TABE testing to anyone with a potential basic skills deficiency or learning disability including individuals who could potentially be WIOA eligible. The Gaston Co WDB is able to align employment, training, education, and supportive services with Title II youth that have barriers to employment – which meets requirements for developing and implementing career pathways for youth through alignment of employment, training, education and supportive services. We are able to do this by continuing to nurture our partnerships with Gaston College ABE, the Gaston Literacy Council, and Vocational Rehabilitation partnerships and achieving co-enrollments of youth in our partnering programs. Our WIOA Youth Program contractor partners with Gaston College Life Skills Programs. This is accomplished by Gaston College allowing WIOA staff to attend the AHS/GED/ABE Orientation classes to present WIOA Youth Program information to youth and young adults who may potentially be WIOA OSY eligible, in an effort to achieve co-enrollment of Title II youth who may need financial assistance with education, training, and/or support services. Additionally, the WIOA Youth Program provides financial and supportive service assistance to Gaston College's GED students who co-enroll to take college level classes while finishing their GED.

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

If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include:

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB Youth Incentive Policy*.

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

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

GWDB does offer incentives for NEXTGEN youth.

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

The local strategy to prepare the youth (NextGen) for unsubsidized employment includes work readiness skill training which includes a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Youth are engaged in such

trainings with both their case manager and WEX Specialist. The types of services may be provided through instruction, or other activities where the student can learn and apply knowledge. Additionally, youth are provided with job training services, search techniques and knowledge on local jobs in demand along with wage data.

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

- Name document: Gaston WDB Youth Program Elements Chart.

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

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

Yes. The Gaston County WDB has a Youth Committee.

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

a) Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

The committee's purpose is to provide a holistic approach to lifting youths' barriers by facilitating the sharing of information, opportunities, and resources that are available in the community for youth between local agencies and partners including law enforcement, DSS Foster Care Program, Gastonia Housing Authority, and a youth who can share a youth participant's prospective. Information is shared by the WIOA NextGen Service Provider regarding opportunities that available through the WIOA Youth Program and also to provide the WIOA Next-Gen Youth Contractor with the regular opportunity to provide input into local planning as well as seek information from local partners that can benefit their youth.

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

1. Increase Youth Outreach

2. Program oversight and performance/goal tracking

3. Provide Youth with the best resources and support their pathway to a solid career

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

- Name document: Gaston County WDB Youth Committee Members [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

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

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
August 17, 2023	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS-330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 -4th floor board room
November 16, 2023	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS-330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 -4th floor board room
February 15, 2024	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS-330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 -4th floor board room

X. Local Area WDB Innovations

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

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
FLG	Provides emergency assistance to students, who have completed 50% or more of their training, with an immediate need that could interrupt their ability to continue with their classes.	12/14/2021-12/31/2022	SW Activity Funds \$1885.27 FLG	Gaston College
NDWG	Provides funding for WEX or training opportunities to individuals who have been dislocated temporarily or permanently due to a national disaster.	6/11/2020-3/31/2023	National Disaster Funds \$90,000 Program National Disaster Funds \$90,000 Program \$10,000 Admin	N/A
Employer Services Grant	Support the increase in the number of businesses and employers utilizing NCWorks workforce.	1/10/2023-6/30/2023	NC Dept of Commerce, DWS \$20,000	N/A

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

During COVID-19 we saw a need to develop a pre-intake logging sheet due to the great increase in referrals

from various agencies. We have continued to use this sheet as a way to track those customers who are interested in WIOA, those who we tried to contact but weren't successful, or those we were able to contact later as well as outcomes to contact attempts.

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

One of GWDB's best and promising Youth program practices that has yielded positive results is monthly workshops for NextGen youth. Workshops provide participants the opportunity to learn new skills, gain community resources in a group setting, and learn from each other through conversation. These workshops allow participants to engage with specific guest speakers and organizations while also connecting with their fellow NextGen cohort through family style dinner.

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

The development of regionally aligned Career Pathways and Regional Occupations In Demand Lists allows for better participant access to common training providers, programs, and pathways shared by neighboring counties. Additionally, the development of regional job fairs between multiple partners and employers.

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

Networking is our biggest strategy that has been proven to be successful. Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) staff are members of other boards, teams, local Chambers of Commerce, and regularly attend meetings and trainings that allows the opportunity to network with businesses and share business services.

GWDB continues to expand on social media presence and have tracked the social media performance percentages increase in post reach, engagement, and followers. In surveying businesses and participants on how they became aware of WIOA services and events, social media is the main catalyst in outreach.

GWDB utilizes Survey Monkey to survey businesses on their feedback on interactions with staff the services provided. Through these surveys GWDB has been able to take business feedback and implement solutions. GWDB continues to update and modernize all WIOA business and program flyers that are shared on social media platforms, at all events, and meetings to attract more viewers.

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

Virtual Face-to-Face services and supportive services provided through the utilization of virtual service platforms and Adobe Sign Software for those that prefer virtual services, to include those with disabilities, phobias, and transportation or daycare issues.

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

Gaston County Workforce Development Board is a member of two groups in Gaston County that are strictly employer driven. One is Gaston County Association of Manufactures (GCAM) led by Gaston County Economic Development Commission that is employer driven. Attendees such as workforce staff and partners are there to listen and offer solutions as needed.

The other group is led by the Gaston Business Association (GBA), and it is the Talent Partnership/Pipeline Management (TPM). This initiative is employer driven by data that has been collected by sending out surveys. Businesses have voiced to the TPM their concerns and biggest demands and the partners working within the TPM work diligently to address those needs with solutions.

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

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

- Name Each Document: *Gaston County WDB, Policy Name.*

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

Required Local Area WDB Policies	Attached (Yes/No). If no, why?	Revised for PY 2023 (Yes/No) and needs review
1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy	YES	NO
2. Competitive Procurement Policy	Included in Financial Mgmt	NO
3. Conflict of Interest Policy	YES	NO
4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures	YES	NO
5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I	YES	NO
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	YES	NO
7. On-the-Job Training Policy	YES	NO
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	YES	NO
9. Priority of Service Policy	YES	NO
10. Youth Work Experience Policy	Included with Adult WEX	NO
11. Supportive Services Policy	YES	NO
12. Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy	NO	Gaston County WDB is working on implementing PY2023

2.

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

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

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

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

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

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Dollar Amounts	\$8000 per Year / \$12,000 Lifetime
Time Limits	Seven semesters
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor’s, other)	Certificate, Degree, Diploma, Last year of a bachelor’s degree
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	Training can be approved, even if not on OID list, if written promise of employment is received from the employer

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
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.)	None – The Gaston Co WDB does not count Supportive Services toward the participants lifetime max for Tuition, Books, Fees & School Supplies.
Other	Semester

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

Transportation	Childcare	Supplies <i>(include examples)</i>	Emergency <i>(include examples)</i>	Other <i>(include examples)</i>
Bus Tickets Gas Cards Mileage Reimbursement Contracted Trans	\$95 per week with a total family max of \$190 per week	Any additional school supplies required by the class instructor, on the class syllabus, and are not disposable. Exp: Texas Instrument Calculator.	Vehicle Expenses (Car Repairs, Car Insurance) Utility costs (cut off notice for power) Housing Expenses (Deposit, first month rent, or Amt on Eviction notice) Other Items (as approved)	Educational or work-related: Testing fees Accommodations for individuals' w/ disabilities Tools Equipment Uniforms Work/Interview Attire Work Boots/Shoes Other required items to complete activities

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

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

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

Gaston County WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy not attached. Expected PY2023.

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

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

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

*Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned DWS Planner at

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

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

Appendices

NC Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements

[Appendix A](#)

By-Laws Guidance

[Appendix B](#)

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

[Appendix C](#)

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

[Appendix D](#)

NC Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements

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

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

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

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

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

By-Laws Guidance

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

Article 1

Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

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

Section 2. Purpose and Responsibilities

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

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

The Board responsibilities shall include:

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

By-Laws Guidance

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

Article 2

Board Members

Section 1. Appointment

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

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

By-Laws Guidance

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

Section 2. Composition

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

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

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

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

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

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

By-Laws Guidance

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

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

Section 3. Tenure

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

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

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

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

Section 4. Termination for Cause

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

Section 5. Resignation

By-Laws Guidance

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

Section 6. Vacancies

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

Article 3 Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

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

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

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

Section 2. Special Meetings

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

Section 3. Quorum

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

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Section 4. Conduct of Meetings

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

Section 5. Open Meetings

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

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

Section 6. Proxy Representation and Voting

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

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

Section 7. Conflict of Interest and Voting

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

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

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

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

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

Article 4 Organization

Section 1. Officers

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

Section 2. Election of Officers

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

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

Section 3. Chair

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

Section 4. Vice-Chair

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

Section 5. Secretary

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

Section 6. Executive Committee

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

Section 7. Vacancy

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

Article 5 Committees

Section 1.

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

Section 2.

Electronic meetings shall be permissible in lieu of face-to-face committee meetings at the discretion of the Committee Chair. An electronic meeting of the Committee occurs when Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through audio, video, or both. All votes taken during an electronic

By-Laws Guidance

meeting shall be by roll call. All scheduled electronic meetings shall be held in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time. When speaking, each member will be asked to clearly identify himself, so that proper recognition is given and recorded. All Board policies, administrative practices, and by-laws shall apply equally to electronic meetings.

Section 3.

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

Article 6 Amendments

Section 1. Amendment Procedure

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

Section 2. Vote Needed

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

Article 7 Severability

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

Adopted This NUMBER DATE Day of MONTH, YEAR.

Board Director, Printed Name and Signature

Date

Chief Local Elected Official Printed Name and Signature

Date

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Board Chair, Printed Name and Signature

Date

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

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

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

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

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

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

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

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

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

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

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

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

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

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

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

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

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

Not less than 20% of the members of the Local Area WDB **must** be workforce representatives. These representatives:

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

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

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

Community College representatives would not be appropriate for this category.

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

Who May Satisfy the Requirements:

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

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

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

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

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

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