

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area

**Northeast Arkansas Counties
Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence,
Mississippi, Poinsett, and Randolph**

**Regional & Local Plan
Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act Transitional
Plan
PY2016-PY2019**



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Section A: PY 2016 Transitional Regional Plan

WIOA requires regional planning– a broad strategic approach to planning focused on the overarching vision, goals, alignment and shared responsibilities within the region. Arkansas intends to implement a two-tiered regional approach to meeting this requirement by allowing a two-year transitional plan. This approach provides latitude for regions that may not yet be able to fully address all of the outlined elements required in a four-year regional plan.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area's responses are in **bold**.

1.1. Provide the following:

- A. A reference name for the planning region;

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area

- B. Identification of the local workforce development areas that comprise the planning region;

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area

- C. Identification of the county(ies) each local workforce development area serves;

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is comprised of the following seven (7) counties: Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Randolph.

- D. Identification of the key planning region committee members charged with drafting the regional plan;

The persons who drafted the plan are as follows: Michael Polk – Board Chair - Business Sector, Steve Clayton – Board Member – Adult Education, and Judy Duncan – Board Member – Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, and

The other individuals who provided direct input on the plan are as follows: Kelly Aaron – Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Jay Bassett – Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Karen Breashears – Apprenticeship, Kandy Cayce - Arkansas Department of Human Services – Division of Services for the Blind, Kimberly Clayborn – Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Judy Clayton – Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Tammie Lemmons – Adult Education, James Morgan – Employment & Training Services, Inc., Eddie Perdue – Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Tonja Sutton – Arkansas Human Development Corporation, Martha Taussig – Adult Education, and Elizabeth Thompson – Adult Education

As the regional/local plan was being developed, the full Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board and regional partners had a website link from October 13, 2016 to November 22, 2016 that provided 24/7 access to provide input/corrections for each draft of the plan as it was being developed.

The comments from the State on the Regional/Local Plan were provided and discussed at the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting on March 23, 2017.

- E. Indication of the local workforce development area each committee member is associated with; and

The following agencies were directly involved with drafting parts of the regional plan: Adult Education, Arkansas Apprenticeship, Arkansas Human Development Corporation, Arkansas Department of Human Services – Division of Services for the Blind, Arkansas

Rehabilitation Services, Department of Workforce Services (Wagner Peyser, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Governor’s Dislocated Worker Taskforce), and Employment & Training Services, Inc (Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act Title I Services: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth).

F. A list of key planning region committee meeting dates. [WIOA Sec. 106(a) and (c)]

The following meetings were used to develop Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act policies, activities, and services.

- **Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials Meetings:** Tuesday, November 10, 2015, Tuesday, May 3, 2016, and April 4, 2017.
- **Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board Meetings:** Thursday, August 27, 2015, Thursday, October 22, 2015, Thursday, January 28, 2016, Thursday, April 28, 2016, Thursday, June 30, 2016, Thursday, September 22, 2016, Thursday, December 15, 2016, and Thursday, March 23, 2017.
- **Youth Council Meetings:** Thursday, March 31, 2016
- **Regional Partner Meetings:** Wednesday, May 13, 2015, Friday, August 14, 2015, Wednesday, September 23, 2015, Tuesday, October 20, 2015, Tuesday, November 17, 2015, Tuesday, January 26, 2016, Tuesday, March 29, 2016, Tuesday, May 10, 2016, Thursday, September 8, 2016, and Thursday, October 13, 2016; Thursday, January 12, 2017, Thursday, March 9, 2017, and Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

1.2. Provide a labor market and economic analysis of the workforce development planning region. This regional analysis must include:

A. The economic conditions;

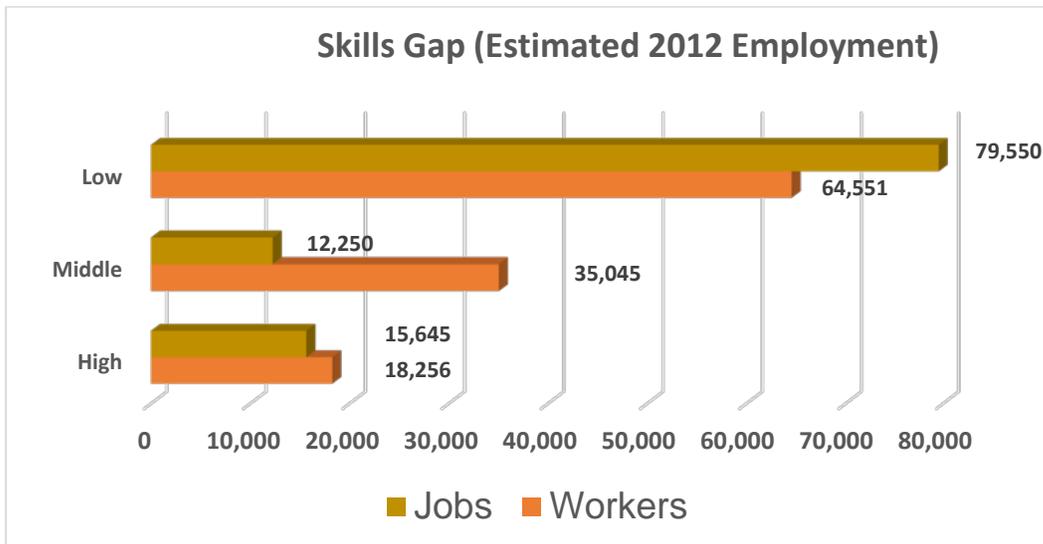
Listed below is an overview of the economic conditions by county for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area: (provided by <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/arkansas-census-data/929-acs-four-page-county-profiles-2011-to-2015.html>) Population information for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area:

Employment Status - Estimate	Clay County	Craighead County	Greene County	Lawrence County	Mississippi County	Poinsett County	Randolph County
Population 16 years +	12,513	79,002	33,938	13,640	34,106	19,036	14,084
In labor force	6,942	49,210	19,447	7,015	19,544	10,063	7,098
Civilian labor force	6,942	49,197	19,407	7,009	19,512	10,063	7,098
Employed	6,283	45,526	17,659	6,527	17,164	9,053	6,714
Unemployed	659	3,671	1,748	482	2,348	1,010	384
Armed Forces	0	13	40	6	32	0	0
Not in labor force	5,571	29,792	14,491	6,625	14,562	8,973	6,986

B. Labor force employment and unemployment data;

Listed below are the Northeast Jobs by skill level and skills gap from 2012 and projection for 2022. The information and chart below was provided by the Arkansas Research Center.

Skill	2012	2022	Net Growth	Percent Growth	Growth Annual Openings	Replacement Annual Openings	Total Annual Openings
High	15,645	17,767	2,122	13.56%	193	314	507
Low	79,550	88,649	9,099	11.44%	944	1,897	2,841
Middle	12,250	14,077	1,827	14.91%	181	238	419



Listed below is the current unemployment rate by county as of March 2017 (provided by www.discover.arkansas.gov):

County	Unemployment Rate
Clay County	4.70%
Craighead County	2.80%
Greene County	3.70%
Lawrence County	3.50%
Mississippi County	5.90%
Poinsett County	4.00%
Randolph County	4.10%

c. Information on labor market trends;

The top 5 high demand occupations are listed below (provided by Labor Market Information):

Standard Occupation Classification Title	Industry	2014 Wages
Registered Nurses	Healthcare	\$56,480
Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	Engineering	\$52,170
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Manufacturing	\$50,240
First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers	Public Safety	\$46,530
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	Aerospace	\$43,240

Listed below is information for the Fastest Growing Occupations 2014 to 2024 as provided by <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Occupation/Growth-Occupations>:

1 SOC Code	2 SOC Title	3 2014 Estimated Employment	4 2024 Projected Employment	5 Percent Growth
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	282	433	53.55%

31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	422	610	44.55%
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,123	1,592	41.76%
29-1071	Physician Assistants	311	430	38.26%
29-1124	Radiation Therapists	199	275	38.19%
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	1,082	1,475	36.32%
29-1123	Physical Therapists	1,786	2,421	35.55%
15-2041	Statisticians	154	207	34.42%
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	429	574	33.80%
21-1011	Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors	563	749	33.04%
19-4092	Forensic Science Technicians	150	199	32.67%
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	9,256	12,175	31.54%
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	986	1,294	31.24%
49-3043	Rail Car Repairers	217	283	30.41%
47-2132	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	149	193	29.53%
29-1066	Psychiatrists	380	492	29.47%
25-1111	Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Teachers, Postsecondary	119	154	29.41%
51-4012	Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	222	286	28.83%
31-9097	Phlebotomists	927	1,191	28.48%
25-1112	Law Teachers, Postsecondary	109	140	28.44%

D. Workforce development activities;

Governor Asa Hutchinson decided to continue and build on former Governor Mike Beebe's Executive Order 10-17 by creating the Employment First initiative to encourage state agencies to hire people with disabilities and serve as a hiring model to the private sector. The initiative also instructs agencies to provide consumer services with the goal of self-sufficiency through employment as the end result, rather than the service as an end in itself.

Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) coordinates with other state agencies to increase employment of Arkansas with disabilities. The order also to focus consumer services first toward the goal of self-sufficiency through employment.

Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and are a proud partner of America's Job Center Network. The three Arkansas Workforce Centers in Blytheville, Jonesboro, and Paragould provide a menu of services linking employers and jobseekers throughout Northeast Arkansas.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board development activities are coordinated as follows:

- **Regional Partner meetings - The following agencies attend these meetings: Arkansas Department of Career Education , Arkansas Northeastern College, Arkansas State University System, Arkansas State University - Newport, Black River Technical College, Department of Workforce Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Adult Education, Chambers of Commerce, Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind, Arkansas Human Development Corporation, and Employment & Training Services, Inc.**

- The three Arkansas Workforce Centers are overseen at the regional/local level by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Local boards are comprised of local businesses, labor, partner agencies, and other key stakeholders to create a diverse and functional group. The boards, in alignment with the State's vision, provide front line strategic implementation for state-wide initiatives in addition to their locally determined priorities. State initiatives include sector strategies, career pathway development, and delivery of standardized business services. Local priorities include layoff aversion, specific career pathway development (occupational skills training, On the Job Training, and other training), youth programs, targeted sector partnerships, work experience, and other services.
- Individuals are greeted at the reception desk of the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The reception desk position is designed to identify the needs of the individual by gathering information and then utilizing the appropriate resources. Customers are connected with staff who can answer their questions and identify barriers/issues.
- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board's supportive services policy can be located at http://www.neaworks.com/uploads/1/5/8/9/15890186/neawdb_policy_2015-05_supportive_services.pdf. other
- The Northeast Arkansas website, www.neaworks.com, provides the following services/information to clients.
 - Contact information for the Arkansas Workforce Centers
 - General Information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
 - Online Application
 - Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting dates/information
 - Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials meeting dates/information
 - Regional partner meeting dates/information
 - List of Partners
 - Menu of Services
 - Customer Survey
 - Job Opportunities
 - Community Events/Job Fairs
 - Local Chambers of Commerce
- Business/Industry Services include but are not limited to use of Arkansas Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as:
 - Assessments – any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee;
 - Hiring events – a customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring for one or more positions;
 - Job fairs – event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring for one or more positions;
 - Job postings – staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff;
 - Labor market information can be located at www.discover.arkansas.gov which provides information on state and local labor market conditions; industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce; area business identified skills needs; employer wage and benefit trends; short and long-term industry and occupational projections; worker supply and demand; and job vacancies survey results;
 - Rapid Response – a variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring and downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition; job placement assistance; and information on unemployment benefits;
 - Training and retraining - any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including On the Job Training, work experience, Incumbent Worker Training, etc.
 - The regional partner meetings are developing a process for sharing/coordinating business services among partners. This process has been mainly accomplished by word of mouth in the past but a more systematic process is being developed.

- E. The educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers; and

Per the United States Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/EDU635214/05>), 84.3% of Arkansans (25 years or older) have obtained a High School diploma or higher and 20.6% of Arkansans (25 years or older) have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

Education Title	2014 Estimated Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth
Doctoral or professional degree	2,115	2,179	64	3.03%
Master's degree	1,641	1,681	40	2.44%
Bachelor's degree	12,738	13,001	263	2.06%
Associate's degree	3,613	3,730	117	3.24%
Postsecondary non-degree award	7,320	7,622	302	4.13%
Some college, no degree	1,282	1,297	15	1.17%
High school diploma or equivalent	49,273	50,668	1,395	2.83%
Less than high school	29,505	30,463	958	3.25%

- F. The development and implementation of sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region.

Listed below are the top five Standard Occupation Classification Titles for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area as provided by the Department of Workforce Services - Labor Market Information.

Standard Occupational Classification Title	Industry	2014 Wages
Registered Nurses	Healthcare	\$56,480
Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	Engineering	\$52,170
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Manufacturing	\$50,240
First-Line Supervisors of Fire Fighting and Prevention Workers	Public Safety	\$46,530
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	Aerospace	\$43,240

During the Fall 2016 & Spring 2017 Semester, the following participants have received an Individual Training Account in three of the above sectors utilizing WIOA Title I Services.

Standard Occupational Classification Title	Individual Training Accounts
Healthcare - Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Physical Therapy Assistant, Respiratory Technician, and Surgical Technology	78
Engineering - Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical	5
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	2

With the training provided, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will focus on incorporating businesses into these sectors.

While the above areas have been determined to be sectors in high demand, other occupations/areas may be served based on the Projected Employment Opportunities List and the process utilized by the Arkansas Consumer Reporting System. The Projected Employment Opportunities List provides an

annual list of occupations and training programs. The list provides the estimated annual wage for each occupation. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act eligible participants may be placed in training at approved 2 and 4 year State colleges. Past performance measures demonstrate the success of the training participants in demand occupations which led to self-sufficiency. A copy of the Projected Employment Opportunities List document can be located at

<http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Occupation/Projected-Employment-Opportunities-List#414144840-view-the-list>

Indicate the sources of regional labor market and economic data. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1)(C)]

The following websites/sources were utilized:

- Discover Arkansas
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Department of Workforce Services – Labor Market Information

1.3. Based upon the regional labor market and economic conditions analysis and *Arkansas's Workforce Development Plan (PY 2016 –PY 2019)* describe the planning region's economic and workforce development oriented vision and strategic goals. [WIOA Sec. 106(c) and Sec. 107(d)]

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area's vision parallels the state's vision by providing employers with a skilled workforce. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area will focus on completing objectives for State Strategic Goal #1 and #2.

State Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Listed below are some ways the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is currently supporting Strategic Goal 1:

- Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area provides tuition assistance to eligible WIOA participants in demand occupations at 2 and 4 year State colleges.
- Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area provides a community calendar for employers and other partner agencies for job fairs, community outreach, hiring events, and other activities.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area is setting the following objectives to ensure the success of Strategic Goal 1:

- The Regional Partners are looking at options for a more unified approach to employers. Determining ways to reach out to employers without multiple contacts to the employer.
- The Regional Partner meetings have provided an initial networking opportunity between agencies. Since the initial networking has been developed, partners will begin to work on processes to deliver a streamlined referral system for partners and ways in which to minimize duplication.
- Find ways to grow not just maintain the productivity level of regional partner meetings.
- Develop new sector strategy partnerships in the Healthcare industry for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area by June 30, 2019. The Healthcare industry is a broad industry and has multiple in demand jobs and is not solely limited to one occupation. Development of the sector will be focused on but not limited to licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, radiation technicians, respiratory care technicians, physical therapy assistants, occupational therapy assistants, and Bachelor of Science nurses.

State Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Listed below are some ways the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is currently supporting Strategic Goal 2:

- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/application.html>, has an online application for jobseekers. Based on the information entered by the jobseekers, referrals will be provided to appropriate partners.
- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/jobs.html>, provides jobseekers with a list of website links for job opportunities by company/industry.
- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/community.html>, provides a forum for employers' and agencies' upcoming events.
- A menu of services is available at the front desk of each Arkansas Workforce Center and through the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/services.html>.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area is setting the following objectives to ensure the success of Strategic Goal 2:

- Develop new outreach tools for serving employers and jobseekers.
- Develop a process for business/employer outreach among partners in order to minimize confusion and optimize efficiency.
- Determine means in which to increase service/presence in the counties without an Arkansas Workforce Center location.
- Develop a monitoring and/or survey tool to measure success and areas for improvement with employers and jobseekers.

1.4. Describe regional strategies used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the regional workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)]

The Regional Partners are focusing on the following areas:

- Cross training agencies about each partner's available services.
- Development of a uniform outreach packet. Agency information is being developed by each partner. This process will give a comprehensive presentation and help ensure consistent information is provided to small business and industry.
- Providing business/industry with an overall menu of services. Once provided, the business/industry can request information on specific services.
- Coordination of business outreach to minimize duplicate appointments and simplify the process.

The Regional Partners are developing a process/format for engaging employers. This uniform process is in the early stages of development but will encourage coordination between partners and will have a system in place for proper feedback. A tentative timeline of December 31, 2017 has been set for a uniform process for engaging employers to be developed.

1.5. Describe how the planning region will define and establish regional workforce development service strategies. Describe how the planning region will develop and use cooperative workforce development service delivery agreements. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(B)]

The strategies will be based on the State's Strategic Goal and the SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, & Threat). The strategies will be defined and established by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board, the Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials, and regional partners. Assistance from the State level may be necessary to ensure proper coordination/structure by all local partner agencies.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area will utilize the Memorandum of Understandings once finalized by the State. Memorandum of Understandings are currently being developed by the State of Arkansas and specific strategy needs have not been finalized.

Employers need reliable skilled labor. The strategies will be developed to help address this need and will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if the service strategies are serving the needs of employers in this area.

1.6. Describe how the planning region will define and establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(E)]

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board is currently developing the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement. Once approved, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will begin to develop cost arrangements with partners.

1.7. Describe how the planning region will determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services for the region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(F)]

Listed below are some items utilized to determine and coordinate transportation and other supportive services for the region:

- 1. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board approved a supportive services policy for the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. A copy of the policy is located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>**
- 2. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services has compiled a list of various community entities/vendors who provide supportive services through the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area. If a local community organization provides the service, it is beneficial to utilize available local resources instead of utilizing partner funds.**
- 3. For clients who are co-enrolled in partner program services, staff will coordinate between the agencies to ensure duplication does not occur.**

1.8. Describe strategies and services the planning region will employ to coordinate workforce development programs/services with regional economic development services and providers. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(G)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board coordinates services with partner agencies to ensure non-duplication and braided services are provided by various agencies. The following items have been beneficial:

- 1. Usage of the Regional Partner meetings:**
 - a. At the Regional Partner meetings, partner agencies have hosted each meeting to provide an overview of the services provided and the proper contact for their area by county. By cross training partners, partner agencies are better equipped to refer clients and serve the needs of the community.**
 - b. Local chambers of commerce are engaged in the regional partner meetings.**
 - c. Business Representatives from the 2 & 4 year colleges are engaged in the regional partner meetings.**
 - d. Maher & Maher has facilitated discussion regarding Sector Strategies for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area and the following items were discussed:**
 - i. Identify specific areas where partners provide similar services.**
 - ii. Past ways partners have/haven't engaged employers and how to build sector strategies.**
- 2. The website, www.neaworks.com/community, provides a centralized location for all partners regarding upcoming community events, job fairs, and hiring events. The community calendar**

provides a uniform process to notify each agency of available regional services and events. This communication has led to more participation of partner agencies at each event.

- 3. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an On the Job Training policy and hopes to build on training paths to employers. A copy of the On the Job Training policy can be located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>.**

The above items are steps toward developing strategies and services. This process is still in early development and is a work in progress.

- 1.9. Describe how the planning region will establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the State on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c), for local areas and the planning region. [WIOA Sec. 106(c)(H)] [proposed 20 CFR 677.210(b) and (c)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2)]**

The State and the Local Workforce Development Areas discussed the options on performance measure levels at the Director's meeting on 10-6-16. After some discussion, the Local Workforce Development Areas agreed to keep the same performance measures as the State level.

Section B: PY 2016 Transitional Local Plan

WIOA requires each local workforce area to develop a local plan that supports and is submitted as a component of its associated regional plan. The narratives framed in the local plan will include more detailed, actionable plans and objectives, consistent with the local plan's respective regional plan strategic visions and goals.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area's responses are in **bold**.

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 1.1. Provide an analysis of the economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Note: Per WIOA Sec. 108(c), existing economic regional and/or local area analyses may be used if sourced data and/or derived analyses are economically relevant and current (i.e., within two years of the issuance of this guidance)

Listed below is an overview of the economic conditions by county for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area: (provided by <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/arkansas-census-data/929-acf-four-page-county-profiles-2011-to-2015.html>)

1. Wage information for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area:

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area (2010-2015 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates)	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Clay County	\$32,552	\$19,166
Craighead County	\$42,475	\$23,091
Greene County	\$41,286	\$20,689
Lawrence County	\$32,379	\$17,312
Mississippi County	\$34,612	\$19,073
Poinsett County	\$33,070	\$17,202
Randolph County	\$34,044	\$19,011

2. Population information for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area:

Employment Status - Estimate	Clay County	Craighead County	Greene County	Lawrence County	Mississippi County	Poinsett County	Randolph County
Population 16 years +	12,513	79,002	33,938	13,640	34,106	19,036	14,084
In labor force	6,942	49,210	19,447	7,015	19,544	10,063	7,098
Civilian labor force	6,942	49,197	19,407	7,009	19,512	10,063	7,098
Employed	6,283	45,526	17,659	6,527	17,164	9,053	6,714
Unemployed	659	3,671	1,748	482	2,348	1,010	384
Armed Forces	0	13	40	6	32	0	0
Not in labor force	5,571	29,792	14,491	6,625	14,562	8,973	6,986

1.2. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

The chart below was provided by Department of Workforce Services – Labor Market Information.

Skill Levels	2012	2022	Net Growth	Percent Growth	Growth Annual Openings	Replacement Annual Openings	Total Annual Openings
Low	79,550	88,649	9,099	11.44%	944	1,897	2,841
Middle	12,250	14,077	1,827	14.91%	181	238	419
High	15,645	17,767	2,122	13.56%	193	314	507
Total	107,445	120,493	13,048	12.14%	1,318	2,449	3,767

The definitions for the three different skill levels are as follows:

- **Low Skill** – high school diploma or less;
- **Middle Skill** – more than high school, less than bachelor’s degree;
- **High Skill** – bachelor’s degree or higher.

Based on the above information, the chart shows there will be growth in all three skill levels for Northeast Arkansas. The following tools are being utilized to help determine the skills levels and the workforce needs:

- The Arkansas Workforce Center utilizes the Career Readiness Certificate as an assessment tool for employers to determine the skill set of individuals. Even if a job seeker has a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) test, or post-secondary degree, the Career Readiness Certificate provides detailed information on the individual’s ability to complete regular tasks such as reading instructions, understanding directions, and being able to locate information. Individuals with low skills may request services/assistance in increasing their skill level, partners may be able to provide the necessary services to assist the participant.
- WIOA Youth services utilize the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine the reading and math skill levels of clients. This process provides one of many components WIOA staff use to properly determine the steps needed to develop a workforce entry strategy.
- The State of Arkansas has developed a Projected Employment Opportunity List which provides the demand occupations based on employer input. This list allows the Local Workforce Development Areas to enroll eligible participants in demand occupations at 2 and 4 year State colleges. This process provides employers with a skilled workforce for the in demand industry sections and occupations.

- 1.3. Provide an analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.
 [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)]

Listed below is the current labor force employment data as of May 2016 (provided by Bureau of Labor Statistics http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ar_jonesboro_msa.htm)

Labor Force Data	May 2016
Civilian Labor Force	\$62,500
Employment	\$60,500
Unemployment	\$2,000
Unemployment Rate %	\$3.2%
Total Nonfarm	\$55,800
12-month % change	\$3.0%
Government	\$9,000
12-month % change	1.1%

Listed below is the current unemployment rate by county as of March 2017 (provided by www.discover.arkansas.gov):

County	Unemployment Rate
Clay County	4.70%
Craighead County	2.80%
Greene County	3.70%
Lawrence County	3.50%
Mississippi County	5.90%
Poinsett County	4.00%
Randolph County	4.10%

Labor Market Trends:

Listed below are charts provided by <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northeast-Arkansas>):

Projected Industry Growth 2012-2022	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total All Industries	107445	120493	13048	12.14%
Natural Resources and Mining	2159	2394	235	10.88%
Construction	3103	3460	357	11.51%
Manufacturing	19486	21836	2350	12.06%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	19256	20320	1064	5.53%
Information	826	804	-22	-2.66%
Financial Activities	3145	3297	152	4.83%
Professional and Business Services	7320	8127	807	11.02%
Education and Health Services	25309	29936	4627	18.28%
Leisure and Hospitality	8029	9671	1642	20.45%
Other Services (except Government)	2709	3087	378	13.95%
Government	6642	6719	77	1.16%

Industry - Top Ten Growth Industries, 2012-2022 (Ranked by Net Growth)	Base Employment	Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Food Services and Drinking Places	7,018	8,657	1,639	23.35%
Educational Services	10,537	11,921	1,384	13.13%
Food Manufacturing	2,219	3,451	1,232	55.52%
Social Assistance	3,645	4,797	1,152	31.6%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	4,329	5,454	1,125	25.99%
Administrative and Support Services	5,032	5,746	714	14.19%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	3,941	4,645	704	17.86%
Hospitals	4,345	4,878	533	12.27%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	2,453	2,886	433	17.65%
Specialty Trade Contractors	1,974	2,290	316	16.01%

Occupation - Projected Occupational Growth 2015-2017	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Growth	Percent Growth (%)
Total Occupations	108,732	114,056	5,324	4.90%
Management	9,822	10,007	185	1.88%
Business and Financial Operations	2,239	2,336	97	4.33%
Computer and Mathematical	649	675	26	4.01%
Architecture and Engineering	767	813	46	6.00%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	406	418	12	2.96%
Community and Social Service	2,185	2,259	74	3.39%
Legal	278	287	9	3.24%
Education, Training, and Library	6,706	6,815	109	1.63%

Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	879	897	18	2.05%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	6,169	6,388	219	3.55%
Healthcare Support	3,135	3,218	83	2.65%
Protective Service	1,538	1,586	48	3.12%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	8,747	9,042	295	3.37%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	3,311	3,479	168	5.07%
Personal Care and Service	3,198	3,311	113	3.53%
Sales and Related Occupations	11,226	11,760	534	4.76%
Office and Administrative Support	13,759	14,219	460	3.34%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1,140	1,144	4	0.35%
Construction and Extraction	4,099	4,297	198	4.83%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	4,853	5,239	386	7.95%
Production	14,350	15,746	1,396	9.73%
Transportation and Material Moving	9,276	10,120	844	9.10%

Per the United States Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/EDU635214/05>), 84.3% of Arkansans (25 years or older) have obtained a High School diploma or higher and 20.6% of Arkansans (25 years or older) have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.

Education Title	2014 Estimated Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Net Growth	Percent Growth
Doctoral or professional degree	2,115	2,179	64	3.03%
Master's degree	1,641	1,681	40	2.44%
Bachelor's degree	12,738	13,001	263	2.06%
Associate's degree	3,613	3,730	117	3.24%
Postsecondary non-degree award	7,320	7,622	302	4.13%
Some college, no degree	1,282	1,297	15	1.17%
High school diploma or equivalent	49,273	50,668	1,395	2.83%
Less than high school	29,505	30,463	958	3.25%

Department of Labor has established Hard to Serve populations for Arkansas. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has focused on outreach to these populations. Individuals may have one or more barriers to employment. The Regional Partners are networking with each other to serve the needs of these populations. These populations may increase based on the needs of the area and other agencies needs.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has established a priority of services policy based on individuals who are low income, on public assistance, or basic skills deficient. The Regional Partners will review current service/outreach to this population and ways in which obstacles can be removed to lead to self sufficiency.

In order to improve outreach/services to persons with disabilities, Regional Partners will seek training and/or guidance from partner agencies such as Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Arkansas Department of Human Services – Division of Services for the Blind.

In order to improve outreach/services to ex-offenders, Regional Partners are working on ways to assist this population by addressing the obstacles faced by ex-offenders and forming a more established pathway to industries who hire ex-offenders.

1.4. Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)] Put industries are the high growth and provide the educational entities. May be covered in 1.2 Regional.

The recruitment of new business/industry is dependent on the skill level of the workforce. Based on the data obtained in Section 1.3, the workforce skill level is equal to a high school diploma or less.

Based on the information from the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board members and regional partners, the following SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis information below has been developed for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

Strengths:

- **Established communication among partner agencies.**
- **Diverse Economy.**
- **High quality P-16 education.**
- **Multiple quality healthcare providers.**

Weaknesses:

- **Rural areas do not have public transportation.**
- **Rural areas have limited internet access.**
- **Skill level gaps.**
- **Jobs available but low unemployment rate.**

Opportunities:

- **Partner agencies are beginning offender re-entry programs.**
- **Partner agencies providing training to address skill level gap.**
- **Partner agencies hosting job fairs for employers.**
- **Co-enrollment among partners to increase participant success rate.**

Threats:

- **Unskilled workforce may lead to industry not moving to the area.**
- **Limited communication between employers and agencies equals failed opportunities.**
- **Inability to hire skilled labor may result in factory relocation.**
- **Lack of partner participation may impact future funding.**

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will review the above chart for additional recommendations/revisions. WIOA Title I Services will address business/industry need for an improved workforce skill level in the following ways:

- **Career Pathway Training - The Labor Market Information Department has developed the Projected Employment Opportunity List. The Projected Employment Opportunity List provides occupations in demand for the State of Arkansas. Based on this information, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board is able to determine current and projected employment opportunities in the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area utilizes 2 and 4 year state colleges/institutions to provide Career Pathway training to meet this need.**
- **On the Job Training - The service refers to a program of occupational on the job training that uses instruction combined with supervised work at the job/worksites to train participants for a**

particular occupation. It is understood that one of the objectives of this program is to target suitable WIOA Title I eligible Adult & Dislocated Worker participants.

- **Work Experience** – The service is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. The purpose of work experience is to gain new job skills and valuable experience.
- **Supportive Services** – The service is available to eligible clients to promote individual self-sufficiency and remove barriers to participation.

A copy of the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board’s policies on Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, Work Experience, and Supportive Services can be located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>.

The Eligible Training Providers for Northeast Arkansas are as follows:

- Arkansas Northeastern College – <http://www.anc.edu/>
- Arkansas State University – <http://www.astate.edu/>
- Arkansas State University Newport – <http://www.asun.edu/>
- Black River Technical College - <http://www.blackrivertech.org/>

The above services increase the skilled workforce pool to meet the needs of current and future employers. A summary of required and optional program partners and the services available are located in Section 4.1.D.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Section 2 responses will require input from members of the local workforce development board and other local stakeholders. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 2.1 Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

Maintain a flexible and accountable workforce training system in collaboration with business, industry, labor and citizens through the Arkansas Workforce Centers. The network will offer employers a resource for workers in existing and emerging occupations and empower Arkansans to receive employment/skilled services as well as job specific training. The strategic goals for Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development are listed in Section 2.3.

- 2.2 Describe how the local board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)

The vision of Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board is to improve the educational skills and economic status of the workforce through a coordinated menu of services made available at the Arkansas Workforce Centers. Northeast’s vision and goals align with the State’s workforce development system.

- 2.3 Describe how the local board’s vision and goals contributes to each of the governor’s goals. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)] (See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources)
Note: The State Plan includes a number of objectives under each goal.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area’s vision parallels the state’s vision by providing employers with a skilled workforce. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area will focus on completing objectives for State Strategic Goal #1 and #2.

State Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Listed below are some ways the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is currently serving Strategic Goal 1:

- Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area provides tuition assistance to eligible WIOA participants in demand occupations at 2 and 4 year State colleges.
- Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area provides a community calendar for employers and other partner agencies for job fairs, community outreach, hiring events, and other activities.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area is setting the following objectives to ensure the success of Strategic Goal 1:

- The Regional Partners are looking at options for a more unified approach to employers. Determining ways to reach out to employers without multiple contacts to the client.
- The Regional Partner meetings have provided an initial networking opportunity between agencies. Since the initial networking has been developed, partners will begin to work on processes to deliver a streamlined referral system for partners and ways in which to minimize duplication.
- Find ways to grow not just maintain the productivity level of regional partner meetings.
- Develop one new sector strategy partnership in the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area by June 30, 2019.

State Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Listed below are some ways the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is currently serving Strategic Goal 2:

- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/application.html>, has an online application for jobseekers. Based on the information entered by the jobseekers, referrals will be provided to appropriate partners.
- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/jobs.html>, provides jobseekers with a list of website links for job opportunities by company/industry.
- The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/community.html>, provides a forum for employers' and agencies' upcoming events.
- A menu of services is available at the front desk of each Arkansas Workforce Center and through the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area website, <http://www.neaworks.com/services.html>.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development area is setting the following objectives to ensure the success of Strategic Goal 2:

- Develop new outreach tools for serving employers and jobseekers.
- Develop a process for business/employer outreach among partners in order to minimize confusion and optimize efficiency.
- Determine means in which to increase service/presence in the counties without an Arkansas Workforce Center location.
- Develop a monitoring and/or survey tool to measure success and areas for improvement with employers and jobseekers.

- 2.4 Describe how the local board's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

The WIOA Title I Service Provider will strive to meet the needs of the customer, both employers and jobseekers, by providing quality services while meeting performance requirements, maximizing financial resources, and carrying out directives of the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board/Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials.

The WIOA Title I Service Provider will assist individuals in obtaining employment that leads to self-sufficiency, eliminate duplication of services, reduce operational costs, accommodate the workforce needs of employers, and improve customer satisfaction.

The skills of the jobseeker may be improved through occupational skills training, work experience, and OJT services. This design not only improves the job skills of the jobseeker, but provides a more qualified employee to the employer.

Regional partners are developing a process/format for engaging employers. This uniform process is in the early stages of development but will encourage coordination between partners.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Many of the responses in this section, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 3.1 Taking into account the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, describe the local board's strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, in order to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in element 2.1. This analysis should include:

A description of the local workforce development system; include key stakeholders and entities associated with administrative and programmatic/service delivery functions. Examples include elected officials, advocacy groups, local workforce development board and committee structure, fiscal agent, operator(s), required program partners, and major contractors providing Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth program elements. Describe respective roles and functional relationships to one another;

Description of the local workforce development system:

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development contains seven counties in which two are metro and five are non-metro. The counties range dramatically between 2.8% unemployment up to 5.9% unemployment as of March 2017 per the website, <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/>. The needs vary depending on the county.

Three Arkansas Workforce Centers (Blytheville, Jonesboro, and Paragould) are physically located in Northeast Arkansas. Each Arkansas Workforce Center contains at a minimum but is not limited to the following partners:

- **Department of Workforce Services provides services for Career Readiness Certificate, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Unemployment Insurance, Labor Market Information, Veteran Services, Wagner Peyser, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.**
- **Employment & Training Services, Inc. provides the WIOA Title I Services (Adult, DLW, & Youth)**
- **Arkansas Human Development Corporation provides the National Farmworker Jobs Program**
- **Adult Education provides the following services: GED® offers adults the opportunity to earn the GED® credential, English as a Second Language (ESL) serves individuals whose native language is not English, correctional education provides basic skills education to incarcerated individuals who lack a high school diploma, family literacy classes serve the basic skills needs of children and their parents, and Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) offers academic and job skills instruction to unemployed and underemployed Arkansans.**

- **Arkansas Rehabilitation Services provides the following services: career and technical education and training; transition services for high school students with disabilities who are moving from high school to post-secondary education or work; scholarships and leadership programs for students with disabilities; diagnosis and evaluation of capacities and limitations; guidance and counseling; job placement; OJT; physical and cognitive restorative services; assistive technology; community rehabilitation programs; and supported employment services.**

Additional information on partner services can be located at 4.1.D.

The following organizations have been utilized to develop WIOA policies, activities, and services.

- **Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials Meetings – consists of county judges and mayors from the seven county area.**
- **Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board Meetings – consists of board members from the business sector (majority 51% or greater), state/federal agencies, and other members as required by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act.**
- **Youth Council Meetings - consists of various individuals and agencies who interact with the youth and/or want to help the youth. The council provides input as needed on serving the eligible youth of Northeast Arkansas.**
- **Regional Partner Meetings consists of core and non core partners in Northeast Arkansas in order to streamline interaction with each other (networking), promote co-enrollment in services, and develop various processes/strategies to serve the employers and individuals in the community.**

The organizational chart for Northeast Arkansas is listed as Attachment A.

- A. A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers (AWC) in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and

**Arkansas Workforce Center (Comprehensive) 2311 East Nettleton Jonesboro, AR 72401
Phone Number: 870.910.8129, Fax Number: 870.932.5310
Days of Operation: Monday – Friday
Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Arkansas Workforce Center (Satellite) 1015 Linwood Suite 4 Paragould, AR 72450
Phone Number: 870.236.8220 Fax Number: 870.236.8270
Days of Operation: Monday – Friday
Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Arkansas Workforce Center (Satellite) 2825 S. Division St. Blytheville, AR 72315
Phone Number: 870.762.5365 Fax Number: 870.762.0975
Days of Operation: Monday –Friday
Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

- B. An attached organization chart that depicts the local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

The organizational chart is Attachment A.

- 3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized

under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq), that support the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b)(1)(E). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

Note: The six (6) core programs identified by WIOA are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The local board will ensure the One Stop Operator coordinates with the core programs and other workforce development programs to ensure individuals entering the workforce center are made aware of available services and ensure the individual is connected with the agency providing the service. In order to support alignment to provide services, partners will coordinate with 2 and 4 year state colleges and apprenticeship programs that support the strategies of the local plan.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area has identified the following areas to help ensure alignment of services under the State plan:

- **Regional Partner meetings provide a forum in which individual agencies present information on their available services. The agencies representing the core programs listed above attend these meetings on a regular basis. Listed below are some benefits from these meetings:**
 - **The meetings provide a forum for partners to discuss their program services and the delivery of those services.**
 - **Partners are able to coordinate upcoming events with the other agencies and ensure alignment. This allows partners to utilize available services and minimize duplication.**
 - **2 and 4 year colleges attend the meetings and coordinate/update partner agencies regarding program of study and other items.**
- **An online application has been developed that provides a snapshot on the possible needs of the client. This simplified process helps staff develop a strategy to meet the client's needs and also collaborate with partner agencies on available services.**

A list of the partner services can be found at 4.1.D.

- 3.3 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Each Arkansas Workforce Center has a resource room in which the universal core services are made available to clients. Employment resources (job search, resume building, etc.) are available at the Arkansas Workforce Centers, Arkansas Job Link, and the website, www.neaworks.com.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has representation on its board for the core programs. The members provide input on policies including access to employment, training, education and supportive services. A copy of the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board's policies on Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, Work Experience, Additional Assistance Youth Barrier, and Supportive Services can be located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has utilized the regional partner meetings as a platform to address clients with barriers, improving access to services, and providing the next step in employment and/or education. This process is in its infancy but over time is expected to grow ideas/solutions to the needs of the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area. Each agency's participation is crucial to the success of the community and may require State intervention to ensure all agencies participate.

When the new Memorandum of Understanding is approved at the State level, the proper steps will be taken to get the documents in place.

3.4 Identify and describe (for each category below) the strategies and services that are and/or will be used to:

- A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs in addition to targeted sector strategies;

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area Regional Partners will work together strategically to engage employers. This will occur by taking advantage of various partners' resources such as community events, human resource meetings, chamber of commerce meetings, and other community outreach.

Maher & Maher provided two on location workshops for the regional partners regarding sector strategies. Based on the workshops, the regional partners are in the process of determining the next step. This step includes developing the framework and determining the proper approach for engaging one of the high demand sectors/industries for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area region.

In order to engage industry sectors, listening groups will be held for employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations to understand the current needs of the local industry. The local industry's voice is a valuable compass navigating where regional partners should invest time, energy, and resources to develop unified business service strategies which effectively meet employer needs. Based on the information provided, partners will develop services and make adjustments to assist the top recommendations received.

- B. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses;

Section B PY2016 Transitional Local Plan 1.4 lists the threat of a limited skilled labor pool which may result in relocation of industry or no new industry. Regional partners are discussing this item and looking at avenues to meet current industry needs. Sector strategies are being developed for one of the industry sectors to receive input from employers on specific needs and the steps needed to meet those needs.

- C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and

The Regional Partner meetings have incorporated local chambers of commerce into their regular meetings and partners are in the process of developing a better relationship with the chambers. The meetings also facilitate announcements of upcoming job fairs and community events. Once notified of an event, the item is added to the website, www.neaworks.com/community.html.

Since the local chambers of commerce have a long established relationship with the regions business sector, their input and network will be crucial in developing future sector strategies.

- D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Department of Workforce Services (UI department) is co-located with WIOA at all Northeast Arkansas Workforce Centers. There is regular interaction between Department of Workforce Services and WIOA Title I staff. The agencies meet on a regular basis (Regional Partner meetings) to discuss services and strategies in Northeast Arkansas. Department of Workforce Services is also represented on the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs,
Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area

industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4)(A) and (B)].

- 3.5 Describe local and regional efforts to support and/or promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, in coordination with economic development and other partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area will collaborate with chambers of commerce and 2 and 4 year state colleges to foster entrepreneurship and microenterprise services. The following resources are available in the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area:

- **Arkansas State University has various entrepreneurial resources available such as:**
 - **The Delta Center for Economic Development which is located on the Jonesboro campus. Their website, <http://www.astate.edu/deltaced/>, provides additional information on this subject.**
 - **The Arkansas State University library provides a website guide for providing resources which assist in entrepreneurship. The link is <http://libguides.astate.edu/smallbusiness>.**
- **Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration's website, <http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/exciseTax/TaxCredits/Pages/BusinessIncentivesandTaxCreditPrograms.aspx>, provides various programs available to assist small business and other agencies.**
- **Local Chambers of Commerce. A list of the chambers of commerce for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area is located at <http://www.neaworks.com/chambers-of-commerce.html>.**

Agencies assist individuals or businesses interested in entrepreneurial skills training by referring them to the above organizations for additional information.

- 3.6 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The Projected Employment Opportunity List provides an annual list of occupations and training programs. The list provides the estimated annual wage for each occupation. WIOA eligible participants may be placed in training at approved 2 and 4 year State colleges. Past performance measures demonstrate the success of the training participants in demand occupations which led to self-sufficiency.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an Individual Training Account Policy for providing tuition and fee assistance to WIOA participants. The 2 and 4 year State colleges must submit applications for demand occupations into the Arkansas Consumer Reporting System (ACRS) for approval by the local Workforce Development Board. WIOA staff will coordinate with the 2 and 4 year State colleges to determine the unmet need of the WIOA participant and avoid duplication of services among partners.

- 3.7 Describe efforts to coordinate supportive services provided through workforce investment activities in the local area, including facilitating transportation for customers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board's supportive service policy is located at the following link: <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>. The policy provides the process/requirements for supportive services. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services has developed resource manuals of available supportive services from the local community (not partner agencies). This resource has been beneficial in assisting the needs of the community and minimizing duplication.

- 3.8 Describe strategies to implement the operational goals of the local one-stop system, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State’s employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), and the local board’s service providers in order to improve services and avoid duplication. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

Regional Partner meetings have been an effective vehicle for disseminating information to various partners, the community, and employers. These meetings are being utilized to coordinate job fairs, community events, business outreach, and community outreach.

Department of Workforce Services and Employment & Training Services, Inc. are co-located at each of the three Arkansas Workforce Centers. There are no standalone Wagner Peyser or WIOA Title I Service Provider offices that provide direct services to clients. By co-locating, the community receives collaborated services and the staff are cross trained in relevant services.

Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement are being developed by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Once approved, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area will implement the new agreements to designate costs and properly allocate them among benefiting partners.

- 3.9 Describe how the local board will carry out a review of local applications submitted under WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, consistent with the local plan (as described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11) and WIOA Sec. 232). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

The Arkansas Department of Career Education has provided the following criteria to be reviewed by the local boards for eligible applicants:

- **Demonstrates its participation in carrying out activities related to the development and implementation of career pathways in the local area;**
- **Describes a plan for fulfilling its education and training and administrative responsibilities as a one-stop partner and for participating on the local workforce board;**
- **Aligns adult education and literacy activities with the education and training objectives and activities of the local workforce plan and the One Stop Delivery System, including concurrent enrollment in Title I & Title II programs under WIOA, as appropriate;**
- **Demonstrates a plan and strategies for effectively working with workforce partners identified by the local plan to share resources;**
- **Contributes to regional education and training efforts, including career pathways programs.**

As requested, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board’s Ad Hoc Committee reviewed the Adult Education applications provided on March 7, 2017 and submitted the committee’s recommendations to the Arkansas Department of Career Education.

- 3.10 Based on the analysis described in Appendix B - Section 1, identify the industries where a sector partnership is currently being convened in the local area or where there will be an attempt to convene a sector partnership and the timeframe. Categorize the sector partnerships as active, emerging, or exploring as defined below.

- **Active**
 - Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;
 - Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;
 - Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
 - Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;
 - Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”

- Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
- Operates under some kind of shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.

At this time, WIOA does not have any sector partnerships meeting the “Active” criteria.

- **Emerging**
 - Has at least an interim coordinator, convener, or convening team;
 - Has engaged at least one private sector champion to help drive the launch and implementation of a sector partnership;
 - Includes individuals from workforce development, education, economic development and other programs or organizations in strategic partner roles;
 - Actively working to implement strategic priorities outlined in a launch meeting.

At this time, WIOA does not have any sector partnerships meeting the “Emerging” criteria.

- **Exploring**
 - Is in the infancy stage, but actively considering or planning the preparation needed to launch a partnership;
 - Working to identify partners who would be involved;
 - Determining if the partnership really makes sense for the community.

1. Exploring the Healthcare Industry –

WIOA has had great success with participants who graduate with a certificate/diploma from the 2 and 4 year State colleges in these demand occupations. The graduates are being hired by local medical industries.

2. Exploring the Engineering Field –

WIOA has had great success with participants who graduate from the 4 year State colleges in these demand occupations. The graduates are being hired by local engineering industries.

Maher & Maher has facilitated regional partner meetings regarding Sector Strategies and the following items were discussed:

- Identify specific areas where partners provide similar services.**
- Past ways partners have/haven’t engaged employers and how to build sector strategies.**

Based on the above workshops, the regional partners are in the process of determining the next step. This step includes developing the framework and determining the proper approach for engaging one of the high demand sectors/industries for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area region.

- 3.11 Does the local board currently leverage or have oversight of funding outside of WIOA Title I funding to support the local workforce development system? Briefly describe the additional funding and how it will impact the local system. If the local board does not currently have oversight of additional funding, describe any future plans to pursue them.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board currently utilizes PROMISE (Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplementary Security Income) funds to assist with overall infrastructure. Listed below is information regarding PROMISE.

The Arkansas PROMISE Model Demonstration Project is a \$32 million, five-year grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to the University of Arkansas College of Education and Health

Professions and the Arkansas Department of Education. Arkansas PROMISE is a research project open to youth ages 14 to 16 who currently receive SSI benefits. Participants must enroll before their 17th birthday. Once enrolled, PROMISE will provide services through September 2018. PROMISE will only enroll 2000 youth. For 1000 youth, PROMISE will provide additional services to youth and their families to support their education and career goals. Services include: Intensive case management, two paid competitive work experiences, education and employment training and support for youth and families, benefits counseling, and health & wellness training.

Arkansas PROMISE is part of a new program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to help youth who are receiving disability benefits and their families improve their educational and employment outcomes. This project is being implemented in 11 states. In Arkansas, the program is being administered by the Department of Education and the University of Arkansas, in partnership with several other state agencies and private organizations. A team of researchers at Mathematica Policy Research is evaluating the program. Approximately 2,000 youth in Arkansas will be in the evaluation. Additional information about the Arkansas PROMISE can be found on their website, <http://www.promisear.org/>.

The PROMISE grant assists the workforce development system by sharing the operational overhead (lease space/utilities/internet/communication) among multiple funding streams, additional WIOA funds may be redirected to serving additional participants in work experience and occupational training services.

Leveraging funds allows for the opportunity to network and/or coordinate with agencies who are unaware of WIOA services. Networking increases the community awareness, maximization of services, and helps avoid duplication.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Many of the responses below should be based on strategic discussions between the local board and one-stop partners. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

4.1 Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area including:

- A. The local board's efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted service providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

The following items are key tools utilized by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area:

- **Internal Monitoring is an internal review of the program and financial operations to ensure compliance of federal, state, and local requirements.**
- **Financial Expenditure Reports are used to inform members of current expenditures to prevent potential over and under expenditures from occurring.**
- **Slot In Agreements with local 2 and 4 year State colleges provide a standard for procedures for training reimbursement.**
- **Surveys via website for local Arkansas Workforce Centers provides clients an opportunity to notify the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area of any areas of concern or areas in which someone is excelling in service.**
- **Occupational Questionnaire of WIOA participants provides clients an opportunity to notify the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area of the quality of service they are receiving.**
- **Annual audit of Employment & Training Services, Inc. provides a third party entity's financial report to the boards of the organization.**
- **Legislative audit of 2 and 4 year State colleges provides a third party entity's financial report.**

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will be seeking additional information on the proper ways to obtain input from employers regarding meeting employment needs and actual performance by school for participants. This information may be obtained from the State level and/or other third party.

- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in remote areas, through the use of technology, and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area has developed a website, www.neaworks.com, for providing technological access to rural communities. The website provides location address/contact information, job listings, partner services, community events, online application, and meeting dates for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board/Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials/Regional Partners, etc.

- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)] (See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

The State of Arkansas' Equal Opportunity Manager provides the local Equal Opportunity officer with the required documentation to comply with various provisions of the state and federal government. Arkansas Workforce Centers have an annual Americans with Disability Act compliance checklist and a complaint log is provided as requested.

The WIOA Equal Opportunity officer assesses the physical and program accessibility of the three Arkansas Workforce Centers to ensure compliance for individuals with disabilities and other groups.

Each Arkansas Workforce Center has a computer with JAWS (Job Access With Speech) software on the computers. Partners are responsible for compliance at locations separate from the Arkansas Workforce Centers.

As required, the State of Arkansas provides training.

- D. List all required and optional program partners; indicate the program(s) each partner provides and the physical location where the program(s) can be accessed. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

Listed below are the required and optional program partners with their contact information and services provided.

Adult Education

Adult education programs provide basic skills classes to adults with less than a high school education. Adult education in Arkansas is based on the following philosophy:

- **All adults can learn.**
- **All adults have the right to education that enhances their ability to effect positive changes in their lives.**
- **All adults have the right to obtain the life skills that they need to become self-sufficient, actively participating members of society.**
- **All adults have the right to complete their education through the high school level.**

The following services are available but not limited to:

- Adult Basic Education and General Adult Education serve adults with less than a high school education.
- GED® offers adults the opportunity to earn the GED® credential.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) serves individuals whose native language is not English.
- Correctional education provides basic skills education to incarcerated individuals who lack a high school diploma.
- Family literacy classes serve the basic skills needs of children and their parents.
- Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) offers academic and job skills instruction to unemployed and underemployed Arkansans.

Apprenticeship

Arkansas Apprenticeship along with other sponsors hosted an Apprenticeship Workshop on February 16, 2017 in Northeast Arkansas. The workshop was beneficial in providing an overall summary of how apprenticeship works, recognizing potential partners, sharing contact information, and how the community can benefit from coordinating services.

Due to this workshop, Regional partners came away with a better understanding of the basics of apprenticeship and the local agencies. A directory of the local apprenticeship agencies can be found on the following website, <http://arkansasapprenticeship.com/directory/>.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (NEAWDB) has two members who are affiliated with the apprenticeship program. With their guidance and the contacts/information provided at the workshop, the NEAWDB and regional partners will continue to develop their relationship with apprenticeship, the community, and employers.

Additional information can be located on the Arkansas Apprenticeship website, <http://arkansasapprenticeship.com>.

Arkansas Department of Human Services – Division of Services for the Blind

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind is dedicated to the independence of Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired and is committed to the principle that these individuals have the right to make informed choices regarding where they live, where they work, how they participate in the community, and how they interact with others.

Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) works in partnership with these Arkansans by assisting them in obtaining the information they need to make informed choices and by providing them with access to services that increase their opportunities to live as they choose. Listed below are some of the programs and services available:

- Transition Services – DSB provides transition services for students to promote movement from school to post-school activities. These activities must be coordinated, goal-oriented, and based on the student's needs and interests. The services include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation. Transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment (IPE).
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – In addition to counseling and guidance, DSB provides or arranges for the following core services: career exploration, work-based learning, internships, post-secondary training opportunities, work readiness training, self-advocacy, and independent living and social skills. Additional optional services may also be available. One of the Pre-ETS programs is Jump Start.
 - Jump Start Program – The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) host Jump Start, a career development program that is open to youth ages 16-19 years who are blind and severely visually impaired. DSB

places students in part-time jobs in the mornings and has educational and recreational activities in the afternoons and evenings. The three-week summer program is designed to assist students in transitioning from high school to employment or post-secondary education. Participants stay on the ASBVI campus during the week and return home on the weekends. Students learn independent living skills; orientation and mobility; computer skills; and job readiness skills. The students learn about coordination of benefits, accommodations at work, self-advocacy, and blindness consumer groups. They tour companies and colleges and hear presentations. Working part-time and interacting with other students who are blind or visually impaired increases the students' confidence, social skills and self-esteem.

- **Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB)** – This program provides independent living skills training to older individuals who are blind and severely visually impaired, are age 55 or older, and do not plan to enter the workforce. Individuals are taught adaptive ways for personal care, travel using a white cane, and home management skills. DSB contracts this service.
- **Vending Facility Program (VFP)** – The Vending Facility Program is available to eligible persons who are blind and are interested in and have the necessary skills to manage a snack bar location. VFP locates the sales site; equips and stocks the facility; maintains the equipment; and provides oversight and record keeping.
- **Small Business Program** – DSB assists persons who are blind and severely visually impaired and are interested in owning their own business by helping them develop realistic business plans and providing start-up funding and guidance.
- **Technology Training** – DSB trains consumers on the use of assistive technology and computer skills to increase their independence and employability.
- **Independent Living Rehabilitation Services (ILRS)** – This is a coordinated system of services to improve the ability of an individual who is blind or severely visually impaired to function independently in the family, community or work environment.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** – This program prepares individuals who are blind and severely visually impaired for employment through training and/or other job-related services. Such services are available to eligible consumers who are not currently employed, are seeking to advance in their present careers, or are in danger of losing their jobs due to vision loss.
- **Supported Employment** – DSB places consumers with the most severe disabilities who are blind and severely visually impaired in jobs in the community and provides or arranges needed training and supports during employment. These consumers need extended, ongoing support to maintain employment and community inclusion.
- **Arkansas Information Reading Services for the Blind (AIRS) and Newslines** – AIRS broadcasts news and information 24 hours a day through the facilities of Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) and can be heard at airs.aetn.org on computers, smart phones, and laptop computers. The signal is also broadcast on the secondary audio (MTS) of AETN-4, and is carried by many cable TV systems. AIRS Plus is a local phone service which allows customers to access articles from the top Arkansas newspapers, as well as AIRS programs, on demand, toll free at (844) 888-0981. In conjunction with AIRS, DSB provides NFB- NEWSLINE®. Through the service, consumers who are blind and severely visually impaired can independently access over 300 newspapers and magazines from around the nation and the world over a standard touch-tone telephone, through the Internet, or by download to a digital talking-book player or mp3-playing device.

Division of the Services for the Blind has two offices that serve the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area. The office information is listed below.

Office Information	Counties in NEAWDA
Division of Services for the Blind 1600 Browns Lane Access Road Jonesboro, AR 72401 Phone: 870-268-2230	Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Poinsett, and Randolph Counties
Division of Services for the Blind	Mississippi County

401 South College Blvd West Memphis, AR 72301 Phone: 870-732-5170	
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Additional information can be located on the Division of Services for the Blind website, <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx>.

Arkansas Human Development Corporation

The National Farmworker Jobs Program serves eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents. Eligible farmworkers are those who primarily depend on employment in agricultural labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment and underemployment. To be eligible for participation in the National Farmworker Jobs Program a person must meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen of the United States or legally authorized to work in the United States;
- Performed agricultural labor in an occupation recognized by the United States Department of Labor;
- Earned at least 50% of his/her income from recognized agricultural labor during any consecutive 12-month period out of the most recent 24 months. Minimum earnings must total at least \$800.00 or the applicant must have worked at least 25 days in a recognized occupation during the eligibility period;
- Earned less than poverty guidelines based on size of family; and,
- Registered with Selective Service if a male born on or after January 1, 1960.

Available Services

- **Core Services** – include skills assessments, job search, eligibility determination and access for MSFW’s to the other core services of the local One-Stop Career Center.
- **Intensive Services** – include objective assessment, basic education and employment development planning achieved through a case management based individual service strategy.
- **Training Services** – include occupational skills and job training, which also encompass on-the-job training.
- **Related Assistance Services (Support Services)** – include short-term direct assistance to address an urgent or life threatening matter enable farmworkers and their dependent family members to retain their agricultural employment or to participate in Intensive or Training Service activities. The costs may be borne by grant funding when local community resources are not available.

Arkansas Human Development Corporation is located at the Arkansas Workforce Center 2825 South Division Street Blytheville, Arkansas 72315.

Additional information can be obtained at <http://www.arhdc.org/national-farmworkers.html>.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

To achieve its mission of preparing Arkansans with disabilities to work and lead productive and independent lives, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) provides a variety of training and career preparation programs.

Services include: career and technical education and training; transition services for high school students with disabilities who are moving from high school to post-secondary education or work; scholarships and leadership programs for students with disabilities; diagnosis and evaluation of capacities and limitations; guidance and counseling; job placement; OJT; physical and cognitive restorative services; assistive technology; community rehabilitation programs; and supported employment services.

Northeast Arkansas is served out of the Jonesboro Field Office located at 2920 Longview Drive, Jonesboro, AR 72401. This office serves the following counties: Craighead, Poinsett, Greene, Clay, Randolph, Jackson, and Lawrence.

Job Corps

Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a good job. For eligible young people at least 16 years of age that qualify as low income, Job Corps provides the all-around skills needed to succeed in a career and in life.

Job Corps does not have currently have a location within the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area. The location to contact is listed below:

Little Rock Job Corps Center
6900 Scott Hamilton Drive
Little Rock, AR 72209
Tel: (501) 618-2500
Fax: (501) 570-0410
<http://littlerock.jobcorps.gov>

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF was created to help families stay together by empowering family leaders with job skills, resources, and assistance. With that in mind, TANF serves four functions:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
- Reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Listed below are some of the programs/services available through TANF:

- **Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)** - The TEA program is federally funded and provides time-limited cash assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children. In addition, TEA furnishes parents with work training and other supportive services they need in order to attain permanent self-sufficiency. The TEA program also provides assistance to children being cared for by non-parental guardians.
- **Work Pays** - Arkansas Work Pays is a post-employment program that provides assistance to prior participants of the TEA program. Participating families are eligible for the same support services and assistance as families enrolled in the TEA program and will receive a monthly cash assistance payment. The extra income provided is designed to help families make an easier transition to self-sufficiency.
- **Career Pathways** - Under the Career Pathways Initiative, Arkansas invests public funds to support the development and implementation of career pathway programs in the state's two-year colleges and technical institutions for low-income families. In addition, career pathway programs provide training in local high-demand occupations and career fields, in addition to intensive counseling and supplemental services such as child care and transportation assistance.
- **Community Investment Initiative** - Workforce contracts with private or community organizations, including faith-based organizations, to offer services and supports to parents, child, and youth in their communities. The Community Investment Initiative focuses on improving outcomes for youth; parenting and family functioning, marriage and relationship skills, employment skills and family connections of parents who leave state jails and prisons; and support devices to child-only cases in the TEA program.

TANF is co-located in the Blytheville, Jonesboro, and Paragould Arkansas Workforce Centers.

**Additional information can be located on the TANF website,
<http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/Programs/TANF/index.htm>.**

Wagner Peyser

The One Stop delivery system provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need in one stop and frequently under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

The Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. Depending on the needs of the labor market other services such as job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops and referral to training may be available.

The services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include assistance in development of job order requirements, matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills and other attributes, assisting employers with special recruitment needs, arranging for Job Fairs, assisting employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders, assisting with job restructuring and helping employers deal with layoffs.

Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities and older workers.

WIOA Title I Services

Employment & Training Services, Inc. (WIOA Title I Services) provides Adult, Dislocated Worker (DLW), and Youth services to Northeast Arkansas. Services include but are not limited to work experience, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, referrals to partner agencies, are co-located at each of the three Arkansas Workforce Centers. There are no standalone Wagner Peyser or WIOA Title I Service Provider offices that provide direct services to clients. By co-locating, the community receives collaborated services and the staff are cross trained in relevant services.

- E. Describe how the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

Our Local Area advocates and supports an integrated information system at the state and local level that would allow entities that carry out core programs to better coordinate service delivery for mutual customers and cross program referrals. Currently, all DOL-funded partner programs utilize Arkansas Job Link (AJL) as a technology platform. The State is exploring Information Technology options that will assist in the transitioning to an integrated common intake component which acts as the front end to the state's workforce programs. Until such an option exists, our workforce center staff maximizes the utilization of currently available technology to consolidate, streamline services and enhance the overall customer experience.

- 4.2 Describe the local board's assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(7)]

The local board will review and utilize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's allowable employment and training activities that may be provided to adults and dislocated workers. The activities are occupational skills training, on-the-job training, incumbent working training, workplace training with related instruction, training programs operated by the private sector, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs, job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities, and customized training.

Employment & Training Services, Inc. has a long history of success with utilizing occupational skills training and work experience services in assisting individuals to obtain self sufficiency.

Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training at 2 and 4 year state colleges such as Arkansas State University (Jonesboro campus), Arkansas State University - Newport (Jonesboro & Marked Tree campuses), Arkansas Northeastern College (Blytheville and Paragould campuses), and Black River Technical College (Pocahontas and Paragould campuses). This service closes the gap between job seekers in the community and employers who need a skilled workforce for their industry. By meeting the needs of current employers, the skilled workforce will help attract new industry to the area. During the Fall 2016 semester, over 190 participants were served in occupational skills training with Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds. The training includes but is not limited to fields in health care, automotive repair, teaching, engineering, education, finance, etc.

Work experience provides another avenue for growing the skill set of jobseekers in the local area. Work experience takes a "hands on approach" by developing good work habits and new job skills for individuals. These items are crucial for jobseekers to obtain full time employment. WIOA staff have worked diligently to establish worksites who will embrace this job skill process. Between July 2016 to February 2017, over 150 participants were served in work experience services with Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds.

The local board will continue to build on the above success while looking at the other available training options allowed by WIOA.

- 4.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

Employment and Training Services, Inc. collaborates with the Governor's Dislocated Worker Taskforce and Department of Workforce Services in the following ways:

- Presenting information regarding Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Services and partner services at local workshops.
- Providing information on available layoff aversion tools such as the Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program and Work Opportunity Tax Credits to employers and local community leaders.
- Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program provides an alternative for employers faced with a reduction in work force. It allows an employer to divide available work or hours of work among a specific group(s) of employees in lieu of a layoff, and it allows the employees to receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours. To qualify for benefits under the Shared Work (SW) Program, employees must be regularly employed by an employer whose plan to stabilize the work force has been approved by the Administrator of the Department of Workforce Services or his duly authorized representative. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Department of Workforce Services Local Office in your area.
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire workers from targeted groups. The tax credit is designed to help job seekers gain on-the-job experience, move towards economic self-sufficiency, and help reduce employer's federal tax liability. Additional information is available at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/Employers/WOTC.htm>

- **Employment & Training Services, Inc. notifies the Governor’s Dislocated Worker Taskforce and Department of Workforce Services of any closings/potential layoffs in the area in order to ensure client needs are addressed in the area.**

4.4 Describe the local board’s assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities, including activities for youth with disabilities. Identify successful models and best practices for youth workforce activities relevant to the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(9)]

Note: This section must include a description of the program design elements as well as how the local area will implement the 14 program elements.

Program element #1 - Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;

Tutoring – designed to improve the academic knowledge and skills of youth in specific areas. It involves a tutor helping a youth acquire knowledge and skills in a specific area. The tutor provides instruction on a one-on-one basis, group setting or internet based. The tutor provides feedback on the youth’s performance allowing the youth to learn from his or her mistakes. Tutoring should be available to those who need additional help with school subjects, or who have fallen behind academically. Those transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education may also benefit from tutoring. Some youth have learning disabilities or have a learning style that requires additional instructional assistance.

Study skills - a set of abilities that allow youth to learn effectively and efficiently on their own. Good study skills allow a youth to do well in all phases of education and to make all phases of life an opportunity for learning. Study skills training involves instruction and practice activities on a range of strategies from planning and organizing time to reading comprehension, increasing concentration, and test taking. Instruction may be one-on-one, a group activity. Youth may work alone in some practice activities and in groups for others. The purpose of a study skills program is to help youth improve the skills needed to learn and understand information.

Dropout prevention strategies - interventions designed to keep youth in school until graduation from high school. These strategies ensure that youth stay in school to get their high school diploma and continue with some postsecondary education or long term employment. WIOA staff work with local guidance counselors to identify and address potential obstacles for graduation.

Recovery strategies - the Arkansas Workforce Centers collaborate with Adult Education who provides basic academic skills, basic computer skills, General Education Development (GED) preparation, and reading/writing proficiency, classes to WIOA Youth. These services can be provided at the Adult Education locations and some services may be provided online. Adult Education has the ability to assist 16-17 year olds who waived out of high school with earning their General Education Development.

Program element #2 - Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

Alternative schools offer specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public school system which may provide work, study, and/or academic intervention for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at risk of dropping out, who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth and/or youth who are in legal custody of the Department of Human Services (or similar entity) and are residing in an institution. This service will be offered through the local Alternative Schools.

Northeast works closely with alternative schools throughout the area. Alternative schools will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED.

Program element #3 - Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences: (i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) Internships and job shadowing; and (iv) On-the-job training opportunities;

Work Experience is a planned/structured learning experience that takes place in a private for-profit, non-profit, or public sectors workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience is temporary. Work experience for a participant in WIOA helps individuals obtain the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Work experience provides a helpful means for an individual to gain experience that leads to unsubsidized employment. It should promote the development of good work habits and work skills. Work experience for youth has an academic and occupational education component. The academic component is currently being provided by partner agencies (such as Adult Education, Literacy Council, etc.) and/or WIOA staff.

The summer employment opportunities (SEO) include a planned and structured learning experience that takes place in a private or public worksite for approximately six (6) weeks. Summer employment opportunities provide new academic/work skills that will lead to future employment. Students that are at a high risk of dropping out of school will be followed throughout the year as a part of a year-round intervention strategy. SEO will offer work experience and provide academic enrichment activities to enhance employability skills. Academic enrichment activities consist of effective and comprehensive services provided to eligible youth, which improves their academic skills and provides effective connections to employers.

Program element #4 - Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;

Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training at 2 and 4 year state colleges. This service closes the gap between job seekers in the community and employers who need a skilled workforce for their industry. By meeting the needs of current employers, the skilled workforce will help attract new industry to the area.

Program element #5 - Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

Northeast works closely with local apprenticeship throughout the area. Local apprenticeship organizations will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to be trained and employed in a demand occupation that leads self sufficiency.

Program element #6 - Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;

Leadership development opportunities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Other activities included such as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work and other activities. Leadership development is a broad set of activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social

behaviors. The purpose of leadership development activities is to develop skills and attitudes that are important in all areas of life to include education, employment, family, and community. Many youth do not have those skills and attitudes. Leadership development provides encouragement and support to youth and assist in developing skills and instilling confidence as they transition into adulthood. Types of leadership development opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Exposure to postsecondary education
- Community and service learning projects
- Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring
- Organizational and team work training, including team leadership training
- Training in decision-making, including determining priorities
- Citizenship training, including life-skills training such as parenting, work-behavior training, and budgeting of resources

Positive Social Behaviors include but not limited to:

- Positive attitudinal development
- Self-esteem building
- Openness to working with individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free
- Maintaining positive relationships with responsible adults and peers, and contributing to the well being of one's community, including voting
- Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success
- Avoiding delinquency
- Postponed and responsible parenting
- Positive job attitudes and work skills

Leadership Development Activities include but are not limited to:

- Community volunteering
- Service learning
- Peer mentoring or tutoring
- Serving on youth councils, community, or advocacy organization boards
- Leadership training, such as how to work in a team, how to run meetings, diversity training
- Life skills training, such as parent education, financial education, goal setting, conflict resolution

Leadership Development Opportunities are available through several community based organizations throughout the local area. Their events are posted on the website community calendar, www.neaworks.com/community.

Program element #7 - Supportive services, including the services listed in §681.570:

Supportive services include assistance such as transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing that is necessary to enable an individual to participate in WIOA youth program activities. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services developed a resource directory by county.

Program element #8 - Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation:

Adult mentoring is a one-on-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth that is based on trust. High-quality adult mentoring programs include an adult role model who builds a working relationship with a youth and who fosters the development of positive life skills in youth. Youth should receive adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

The purpose of mentoring activities is to help youth succeed in the school or the workplace, facilitate positive social behaviors and learn leadership and citizenship skills.

Benefits of adult mentoring include self-confidence/self-esteem, increase motivation, enhance achievements/aspirations, and ease transition to adulthood. Adult mentoring is available through several community based organizations throughout the local area.

Program element #9 - Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in §681.580:

Follow-up services are activities after completion of participation to monitor youths' success during their transition to employment and further education and to provide assistance as needed for a successful transition.

Program element #10 - Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth:

Comprehensive guidance and counseling is a process of helping youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs impart skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development. An effective comprehensive guidance and counseling program develops a youth's competencies in self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning.

Many at-risk youth need assistance in making informed decisions and choices. The purpose of comprehensive guidance and counseling is to promote growth in each youth's educational, personal, social, and employability skills. Career and employment counseling includes but is not limited to the provision of career and occupational information to include Labor Market Information (LMI). Participants may receive information on various occupations that will assist them in making career choices.

As needed, WIOA staff will refer participants to partner programs for counseling in drug, alcohol, mental health, etc.

Program element #11 - Financial literacy education:

Financial literacy education includes direct training of one or more participants with staff. Staff uses online information to teach basic skills in bank transactions (bank statement reconciliation, debit/credit), debt management (loans, credit cards, etc), budgeting (actual vs estimated, savings, etc.), and other useful real life skills as needed.

Program element #12 - Entrepreneurial skills training:

Northeast will partner with local 2 and 4 year state colleges, local chambers of commerce, and economic development agencies. These members are represented in the Regional Partner meetings.

Program element #13 - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services: and

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Centers utilize www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov for up to date information about labor market information, employment information, in demand industry sectors. This access point is beneficial to metro and non-metro areas due to the 24 hour online access.

Northeast partners with DWS to provide access for career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Program element #14 - Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Northeast provides individual guidance and counseling, including career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at Post-secondary institutions.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an Additional Assistance Youth Barrier Policy. A copy of the policy can be located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>.

Adult Education has the ability to assist 16-17 year olds who waived out of high school with earning their General Education Development.

Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Services for the Blind provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In addition to counseling and guidance, Division of Services for the Blind provides or arranges for the following core services: career exploration, work-based learning, internships, post-secondary training opportunities, work readiness training, self-advocacy, and independent living and social skills. Additional optional services may also be available.

- 4.5 Describe local board actions to become and/or remain a high-performing local board, consistent with the factors developed by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. These factors have not been determined but will include effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria for local boards. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(18)] (See Appendix C: *Transitional Planning References and Resources*)

Northeast will develop strategies to adhere to the factors as determined by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Maher & Maher has provided two sector strategy workshops to the regional partners. With this training and additional preparation, regional partners can develop a sector strategy to present to the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board meetings provide crucial information such as budget vs expenditures, performance measures, policies, etc. This information ensures the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has the necessary tools to serve the people and employers of Northeast Arkansas.

Arkansas Apprenticeship along with other sponsors hosted an Apprenticeship Workshop on February 16, 2017 in Northeast Arkansas. The workshop was beneficial in providing an overall summary of how apprenticeship works, recognizing potential partners, sharing contact information, and how the community can benefit from coordinating services.

Due to this workshop, Regional partners came away with a better understanding of the basics of apprenticeship and the local agencies. A directory of the local apprenticeship agencies can be found on the following website, <http://arkansasapprenticeship.com/directory/>. The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board is looking at ways in which to partner with apprenticeship to benefit the community.

- 4.6 Describe how training services will be provided in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G), the process and criteria for issuing individual training accounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has developed an Individual Training Account (ITA) policy for the Northeast Arkansas. The policy provides guidelines for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area in which the ITAs will be issued and maintained.

Training services (except on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and received by eligible individuals through the One-Stop delivery system. If the eligible individual is determined to need training in order to obtain appropriate employment, that individual will be issued an ITA voucher. The ITA shall be used in exchange for skill training that is directly linked to occupations in demand, by using training providers on the approved list of eligible training providers. This training may be course work that leads to a certificate, undergraduate degree, associate degree, or a competency that is recognized by employers. Also, the training may provide the individual with additional skills generally recognized by employers. Other sources of funding must first be sought before WIOA funding is approved.

A copy of the ITA policy is located at <http://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-policies.html>.

- 4.7 If contracts for training services are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area utilizes the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list. An ETP list is available to staff in the workforce center via the Arkansas Consumer Reporting System website. Participants who have been approved for training must choose one of the approved programs in order to receive an Individual Training Account.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board utilizes an Eligible Training Provider Application for new applicants (institutions/colleges who have not been approved previously). This option allows for adding additional training providers who have not been utilized previously to provide performance/history/other requested information to the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Once provided, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will review for approval.

- 4.8 Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(22)] and [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area utilizes the Arkansas Consumer Reporting System (ACRS). All training providers must complete an online electronic application. The application must be linked to an in-demand occupation/industry at the state or local level. Each application must be approved by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board prior to issuing an Individual Training Account. Demand occupations from neighboring workforce areas may be used as well.

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board utilizes an Eligible Training Provider Application for new applicants (institutions/colleges who have not been approved previously). This option allows for adding additional training providers who have not been utilized previously to provide performance/history/other requested information to the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Once provided, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board will review for approval.

Section 5: Compliance

Responses are focused on the local area's compliance with federal or state requirements. Please provide a separate response for each of the elements listed below.

- 5.1 Describe the replicated cooperative agreements, as defined by WIOA 107(d)(11), in place between the local board and the Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated in the area with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

Local Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Field offices or other Arkansas Rehabilitation Services organizational units will replicate cooperative agreements in part or in whole with local divisions of WIOA core programs. These may include the following:

- provision of intercomponent staff training and technical assistance with regard to:
- the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services; and
- the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities in the State through the promotion of program accessibility, the use of nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, and the provision of reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology, for individuals with disabilities;
- use of information and financial management systems that link all components of the statewide workforce development system, that link the components to other electronic networks, including nonvisual electronic networks, and that relate to such subjects as employment statistics, and information on job vacancies, career planning, and workforce innovation and opportunity activities; use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines;
- establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to: facilitate job placement; and
- carry out any other activities that the designated State unit and the employers determine to be appropriate; identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources, and specification of the financial responsibility of each component of the statewide workforce investment system with regard to paying for necessary services (consistent with State law and Federal requirements); and specification of procedures for resolving disputes among such components.

Development of these agreements at the local level must include the local manager (field office district manager or the top executive at the organizational units of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services). The agreement must be signed by the local manager, the supervising Senior Leader from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services or his/her designee. Copies of the agreement will be maintained by the local manager and Chief Fiscal Officer of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services .

- 5.2 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Official(s). [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

Employment & Training Services, Inc.
2805 Forest Home Road
Jonesboro, AR 72401
E-mail: etsinc@suddenlinkmail.com
Phone: 870.932.1564

- 5.3 Describe the competitive processes to award the subgrants and contracts for activities funded by WIOA Title I programs within the local area. This includes, but is not limited to, the process used to award funds to a one-stop operator and other sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

The Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials and Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board has designated Employment & Training Services, Inc. to be the grant recipient/fiscal agent/administrative entity and WIOA Title I Service Provider (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth). The One-Stop Operator must be procured as per TEGL 15-16.

In order for the procurement process to be fair and competitive, the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board requested the Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials handle the procurement. The Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials are currently soliciting Requests for Proposal for One Stop Operator Services. The deadline for submission of proposals is Thursday, May 25, 2017. Once all submissions are received, the Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials will review and make a decision. As of July 1, 2017, all existing and new one-stop operators must have been selected using a competitive process.

- 5.4 Describe the local area's negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]
Note: See Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources "Performance Targets Template".

Department of Labor has developed performance measures for the State. The performance measures are used by Department of Labor as a tool to determine the success of the program.

At the October 11, 2016 Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting, the Arkansas Workforce Development Board approved the committees' recommendation for the 10 Local Workforce Development Areas to adhere to the state performance level requirements.

The local performance levels are provided in Appendix C. Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals of the plan.

- 5.5 Describe the indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board is provided the following information at quarterly meetings:

- a. Current Expenditures vs. Budget – allows members to review current expenditures and ask questions if concerned with under/over expenditures by funding stream.**
- b. Current Performance vs. Required – allows members to review current performance and ask questions as to why performance is low or high. If needed, inquire about corrective action needed to address any concerns.**
- c. Participant Expenditures by service categories - allows members to review participant expenditures by service category and ask questions if concerned with under/over expenditures by funding streams.**
- d. New enrollments by semester for Occupational Skills Training – this information was requested by members to see the number of clients served by county and the institution in which they are enrolled.**
- e. Preparation and approval of Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board policies – these policies will determine how clients are effectively served in the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area and provides guidelines to minimize duplication and errors.**

The other reports are provided as received:

- Internal Monitoring - Internal Monitoring is an internal review of the program and financial operations to ensure compliance of federal, state, and local requirements.**
- Department of Workforce Services Monitoring provides the local board with information regarding the local area by a third party. This tool is beneficial in assisting the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board of any potential concerns/findings and/or questioned/disallowed costs.**
- Vendor's List provides the local board with vendors utilized by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area to ensure that members do not have any conflicts of interest.**

- 5.6 Describe the process used by the local board for the receipt and consideration of input into the development of the local plan in compliance with WIOA section 108(d). Describe the process to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to submission of the local plan. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108 (b)(20)]

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area provided the following opportunities for public comment on the regional and local plan:

- 1. Northeast requested input on the regional and local plan draft during the Regional Partner meetings, One Stop consortium meetings, and Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board meetings. A website link with each new draft was made available to the above parties for comment during development.**
- 2. The local plan draft was advertised in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette and the local website, notifying the community of the 30 day comment period (11-27-16 to 12-28-16). The regional & local plan was made available electronically, by mail, and in person.**

No comments were received and a copy of the plan was sent to the State.

- 5.7 Prior to the date on which the local board submits a proposed local plan, the proposed local plan must be made available to members of the public through electronic and other means.

- A. Describe how the local board made the proposed local plan available for public comment. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(1)];

The regional & local plan was made available electronically, by mail, and in person.

- B. Describe how the local board collected and considered public comments for inclusion in the proposed local plan. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(2)]; and

All comments are to be in written form and should be sent to Employment & Training Services, Inc. 2805 Forest Home Road, Jonesboro, AR 72401. No comments were received.

- C. If any comments were received that represent disagreement with the proposed local plan, include such comments within the local plan's attachments. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)(3)]

Any written comments received during the public comment period will be included as an attachment to this plan with a response by the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board or its agent, Employment & Training Services, Inc. No comments were received.

- 5.8 List the name, organization, and contact information of the designated equal opportunity officer for each workforce center within the local area.

Mike Willyerd, Paragould Workforce Center, 1015 Linwood Suite #4, Paragould, AR 72450

Section 6: Plan Assurances

	Planning Process and Public Comment	References
☒	6.1 The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the general public for a period that is no less than 30 days.	WIOA Sections 108(d); proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)
☒	6.2 The final local plan is available and accessible to the general public.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
☒	6.3 The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIOA Section 107(e); proposed 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550
	Required Policies and Procedures	References
☒	6.4 The local board makes publicly-available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.	Proposed 20 CFR 679.390
☒	6.5 The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent, and provides for the resolution of conflicts.	WIOA Section 107(h); proposed 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)
☒	6.6 The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.	WIOA Section 121(c); proposed 20 CFR 678.500-510
☒	6.7 The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one-stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.	WIOA Section 121(c)(v)
☒	6.8 The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and the Governor.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(9) and 116(c); proposed 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b)
☒	6.9 The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA.	WIOA Sections 121(d) and 123; proposed 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400
☒	6.10 The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; Proposed 20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) and 680.410-430
☒	6.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts.	WIOA Section 181(c); proposed 20 CFR 683.600

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.	WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); proposed 20 CFR 678.305
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements	2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.	WIOA Section 167
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sections 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; proposed 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
	Administration of Funds	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIOA Section 108(b)(16); proposed 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); proposed 20 CFR 680.300-310
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.22 The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.	WIOA Section 108(b)(15)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6.23 The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Section 184(a)(3); proposed 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410

☒	6.24 The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; proposed 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750
☒	6.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Section 181(b)(7); proposed 20 CFR 680.850
	Eligibility	References
☒	6.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	Proposed 20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; proposed 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A
☒	6.27 The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); Proposed 20 CFR 680.300-320
☒	6.28 The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I programs.	WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); proposed 20 CFR 680.900-970; proposed 20 CFR 681.570
☒	6.29 The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.	Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09

Appendix C: Transitional Planning References and Resources

I. State of Arkansas's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (*State Plan*)

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providing a framework for Governors and states to make changes to their workforce systems. The federal law sets the parameters for the workforce system which is an integral part of the State's ability to serve jobseekers and employers. WIOA will enable the State to align workforce priorities across multiple partners, training providers, employers and others to ensure we are creating a skilled workforce for today and the future.

An effective workforce development system will be built on a foundation of alignment, innovation, employer engagement, accountability structures and improved data. Arkansas will look beyond WIOA to set broad goals for a comprehensive workforce development system. We will do this by providing the highest quality of service to jobseekers and employers through well-coordinated approaches at the state and local levels. System access will be enhanced through the use of technology and creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers. While access will be improved for all jobseekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve.

The four main goals in the State's Combined WIOA Plan are as follows:

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community -based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Expand employer partnerships through the support of industry engagement.
2. Identify and promote best practices (private and public) for developing and sustaining partnerships.
3. Expand partnership with economic development to refine sector strategies.
4. Improve communication/participation between education entities, local and state boards, government agencies, community-based organizations, and employers.
5. Increase accountability and clarity of action between all workforce related boards.
6. Increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities.
7. Increase connections with employers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to provide support and employment for youth and adults with disabilities.
8. Partner with K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education to provide consistent rules and eliminate barriers to implementing training programs around the State.
9. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).
10. Expand small business participation.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance service delivery to employers and jobseekers.

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Develop a common intake process for jobseekers and businesses that will efficiently connect them with services available from all workforce development partner programs and identify any barriers to employment that need to be addressed.
2. Develop an integrated data system that will enable the sharing of information between partner agencies to more efficiently service both employers and jobseekers.
3. Promote training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification.
4. Support transportable skill sets for transportable careers.
5. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives as a way to meet business and industry needs.
6. Expand service delivery access points by the use of virtual services.
7. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by all workforce system partners.
8. Develop a menu of services available at each service delivery access point that provides a list of the services and training opportunities available through Arkansas's talent development system.
9. Utilize customer satisfaction surveys to ensure continuous improvement of the State's talent development system.
10. Explore data sharing opportunities with non-governmental organizations that are committed partners to the state's workforce center system that will lead to improved intake, referral, and case management for customers served by multiple agencies (both public and private).

Strategic Goal 3: Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Increase access to the workforce development system through a no wrong door approach to services.
2. Change employer and jobseeker perceptions of the workforce system.
3. Develop an image-building outreach campaign that educates Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in the State.

4. Utilize technology, including social media and search engine optimization, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Arkansas.
5. Develop a user-friendly website that provides a common repository of information about career development opportunities that are relevant to K-12 education, parents, educators, adults, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps

Goal 4 Objectives:

1. Conduct a statewide skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gap present and resources available to solve the skills issue.
2. Develop and implement an action plan to close the basic core, technical, and soft skills gaps in Arkansas.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of currently used job readiness standards and ensure coordination between the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program and the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) program.

PY 2016 – PY 2019 Combined State Plan to be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

II. State Policy and Guidance.

State policy can be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

III. Labor Market and Workforce Information.

A. Discover Arkansas

Labor Market Information Portal Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) is posted online using the Discover Arkansas web portal located at www.discoverarkansas.net and is available to the general public.

B. Arkansas State Plan Economic and Workforce Analysis

The Arkansas Combined State Plan includes an analysis of the current workforce. The data provided in Section II of the state plan under strategic elements may be very helpful to local boards in conducting a local area and regional economic and workforce analysis.

To provide local workforce boards in the state with tools for development planning in their own areas, data were downloaded and prepared from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services Labor Market Information (LMI) website, <http://www.discoverarkansas.net>. These data were then turned into interactive visualizations, which are available at the following websites. These visualizations can be downloaded as an image or in PDF format. The goal is to help stakeholders at the state and local level better understand future industry and occupational needs and to provide workforce development boards with the tools needed to better serve their areas.

The data available at <http://arkansasresearchcenter.org/arc/index.php?cID=153> includes:

- Industries in 2012
- Job Growth in 2022
- Projected Job Growth by Workforce Development Area
- Projected Job Growth by Industry
- Percent Workforce in 2022

These data demonstrate the current makeup of the workforce by major industry, as well as projections of the number of jobs these industries will need in 2022. To the right of the visualizations are "filters" to help explore the data choosing multiple regions to compare, such as United States vs. Arkansas, Arkansas vs. workforce region, or directly compare regions.

The data available at <http://arkansasresearchcenter.org/arc/index.php?cID=154> includes:

- Arkansas Occupations, Current and 2022 Projections, which includes data visualizations concerning occupations in Arkansas, both currently and projections for 2022. Occupations are listed by their Standard Occupation Code (SOC) title. The SOC system is hierarchical. SOC Major codes are the top level occupational areas, such as "Construction and Extraction

Occupations." At the next level would be SOC Minor, one of which for the above would be "Construction Trades Workers." Finally there is SOC Detail, such as "Stonemasons" or "Carpenters." This web tool allows users to manipulate the data by indicating the level of detail desired.

IV. PY 2016 Performance Targets Template. (Attached)

V. Other Resources.

- TEN 1-15; Promising Practices in Achieving Universal Access and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide; July 6, 2015
- TEGL 37-14; Update on Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Stereotyping are Prohibited Forms of Sex Discrimination in the Workforce Development System; May 29, 2015
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Transitional PY2016 - PY 2019 Local Plan

Appendix C: Local Area WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

Name of local workforce development area: Northeast Arkansas

WIOA Performance Measures	Local Area PY16 Performance Goals
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	82.50%
Dislocated Worker	77.00%
Youth	75.00%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	78.00%
Dislocated Worker	74.50%
Youth	71.20%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	Negotiated Goals
Adult	\$5,842.00
Dislocated Worker	\$6,400.00
Credential Attainment Rate	Negotiated Goals
Adult	75.30%
Dislocated Worker	75.00%
Youth	70.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	Negotiated Goals
Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Negotiated Goals
Adult	Baseline
Dislocated Worker	Baseline
Youth	Baseline

Baseline Indicator Explanation: Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

To effect an orderly transition to the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA, the Departments will use the transition authority under WIOA sec. 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the first plan submission. A “baseline” indicator is one for which States will not propose an expected level of performance in the plan submission and will not come to agreement with the Departments on adjusted levels of performance. “Baseline” indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The selection of primary indicators for the designation as a baseline indicator is made based on the likelihood of a state having adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance and such a designation will vary across core programs.

**Workforce Development Area Organizational Chart
for Northeast Arkansas**

**Counties: Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence,
Mississippi, Poinsett, & Randolph**

