

COVER PAGE

CareerSource

Okaloosa Walton

Instructions for
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local and
Regional Workforce Plan Guidelines
January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2028

Primary Contact: Michele
Burns

Telephone: 850-651-2315

Email:
mburns@careersourceow.com

Secondary Contact: Will
Miles

Telephone: 850-651-2315

Email:
wmiles@careersourceow.com

Street Address 109 8th Avenue **City/State/Zip** Shalimar, FL
32579

Website URL:
careersourceokaloosawalton.com

Date Submitted: October 2, _____, 2024

An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

This Project is supported by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and Food and Nutrition Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of awards totaling \$4,223,704.85 with 0% financed from non-governmental sources.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
KEY DATES	5
PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS	5
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	9
ANALYSIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES	27
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS	48
DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES AND PROGRAM SERVICES	59
DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM	102
COORDINATION OF SERVICE	126
PERFORMANCE & EFFECTIVENESS	139
REGIONAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS (See Attached)	

INTRODUCTION

These instructions provide direction for local and regional workforce development plans (plans) submitted under [Public Law 113-128, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) and Chapter 445.003, Florida Statutes](#). WIOA requires each local workforce development board (LWDB), in partnership with the appropriate chief local elected official(s), to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local plan to the state. If the local workforce development area (local area) is part of a planning region, the LWDB will submit its regional plan as part of the local plan and will not submit a separate regional plan. The local and regional plan provides the framework for local areas to define how their workforce development systems will achieve the purposes of WIOA, pursuant to 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 679.500 and 20 CFR 679.540.

Additionally, local and regional plans must be modified at the end of the first two-year period of the four-year local plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions and other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan. Federal regulations require states and LWDBs to regularly revisit and recalibrate local and regional plan strategies in response to changing economic conditions and workforce needs of the state (20 CFR 676.135).

WIOA emphasizes the importance of collaboration and transparency in the development and submission of local and regional plans. LWDBs provide leadership, and should seek broad stakeholder involvement, in the development of their local and regional plans. Chief local elected officials, LWDB members, core program partners, combined planning partners, mandatory one-stop career center partners, and local economic development entities are an integral part of the planning process. WIOA encourages an enhanced, integrated system by including core and combined programs in its planning and performance requirements. Affected entities and the public must have an opportunity to provide input in the development of the plan. LWDBs must make the plan available electronically and in open meetings to ensure transparency to the public.

In addition to the specific requirements outlined in these instructions, local plans must:

- A. Identify and describe policies, procedures, and local activities that are carried out in the local workforce development area (local area), consistent with the strategic and operational elements of the state's WIOA combined plan and [CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.12.09.A.1 – Comprehensive Employment Education and Training Strategy](#).
- B. Align with the CareerSource Florida Board of Director's (state board) business and market-driven principles to be the global leader for talent. These principles include:
 - Increasing the prosperity of workers and employers.
 - Reducing welfare dependency.
 - Meeting employer needs.
 - Enhancing productivity and competitiveness.
- C. Address how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs of the Florida Department of Education's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services and Division of Career and Adult Education, and the following combined state plan partner programs (per WIOA § 103(a)(1) and (2)):

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** authorized under 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 601 et seq. (Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)).
 - Employment and training programs in the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** authorized under Section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2015(d)(4)). (DCF).
 - **Work programs authorized under Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008** (7 U.S.C. § 2015(o)). (Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) and DCF).
 - **Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers** program authorized under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. § 2271 et seq.). (FloridaCommerce).
 - **Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)** program authorized under 38 U.S.C. § 4100 et. seq. (FloridaCommerce).
 - **Unemployment Insurance (UI)** programs, known as Reemployment Assistance in Florida, (UI Federal-State programs administered under state unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable federal law). (FloridaCommerce).
 - **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3056 et seq.) and updated by the OAA Reauthorization Act of 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-144. (Florida Department of Elder Affairs).
 - **Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** Act (42 U.S.C. § 9901 et seq.). (FloridaCommerce).
- D. Be based on current and projected needs of the local workforce investment system, with an increased emphasis on coordination and collaboration at all levels to ensure a seamless system for employers and job seekers, including veterans, SNAP and TANF benefit recipients, individuals with disabilities, and individuals residing in rural areas.
- E. Set forth a strategy to utilize all allowable resources to:
- Assist Floridians with securing employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency and reduces the need for public assistance.
 - Provide opportunities for Floridians to develop skills intended to meet the present and future needs of employers.
 - Ensure that workforce-related programs are responsive to present and future needs of business and industry and complement the initiatives of state and local economic development partners, including SelectFlorida in relation to:
 - Job training;
 - The attainment of a credential of value identified pursuant to Section 445.004(4)(h)4.c., Florida Statutes (F.S).
 - The attainment of a postsecondary degree or credential of value; and
 - Any other program that has, at least in part, the goal of securing employment or better employment for an individual and receives federal funds or a state appropriation.
 - Prioritize evidence-based, results-driven solutions to improve outcomes for Floridians and Florida businesses.
 - Develop collaborative partnerships that leverage multiple sources of funding to provide services to all customers seeking assistance, especially Florida's vulnerable populations.
 - Identify barriers to coordinating and aligning workforce-related programs and develop

solutions to remove such barriers.

- F. Identify the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of the local area and include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of services provided to address identified needs. Assessments include the best available information, evidence of effectiveness, performance information for specific service models and a plan to improve program effectiveness by adopting proven or promising practices as a part of the local vision.
- G. Provide a comprehensive view of the systemwide needs of the local area.
- H. Address how LWDBs foster strategic alignment, improve service integration and ensure the workforce system is industry-relevant, responding to the economic needs of the local workforce development area and matching employers with skilled workers.
- I. Achieve greater efficiencies, reduce duplication, and maximize financial and human resources.
- J. Address current and future strategies and efficiencies to address the continuous improvement of Florida's workforce investment system and its focus on simplified access to quality customer service.

KEY DATES

Florida Combined Plan Public Comment.....	February-March 2024
Florida Combined Plan Reviewed by Federal Agencies.....	April-June
2024 Local Plan Guidelines Issued	April 29, 2024
Final Revisions and Approval of Florida Combined Plan.....	July-August 2024
Regional and Local Plans Due	October 2, 2024
Regional and Local Plans Approved by State Board.	December 2024
Regional and Local Plans Effective	January 1, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Prior to the date on which the LWDB submits a local and regional plan, the LWDB must provide an opportunity for public comment on the development of the plan. To provide adequate opportunity for public comment, the LWDB must:

- (1) Make copies of the proposed plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media (WIOA §108(d)(1) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(1)).**

In accordance with the WIOA regulations, which require local areas to establish a public comment process consistent with state direction, CSOW made this plan available to the public on its website on 8/13/ 2024 with notice advising the community to provide their comments on CSOW WIOA Local Plan.

- (2) Include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education (WIOA §108(d)(2) and**

20 CFR 679.550(b)(2).

Businesses, labor organizations, and education are part of the CSOW Board of Directors. The Plan was also made available to the Education and Industry Consortium, the Eligible Training Providers and the Library Cooperatives in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The Plan was presented to the CSOW Board of Directors on 9/4/2024 for input and approval.

Entities represented on the CSOW LWDB are economic development, public and private education, community-based organizations, chambers, entities representing the disabled, to name a few provided input to the plan by appearing at committee and board meetings to share their thoughts and recommendations regarding the local workforce system.

- (3) Provide no more than a 30-day period for public comment on the plan(s) before its submission to FloridaCommerce, beginning on the date on which the proposed plan is made available (WIOA §108(d)(2) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(1)).**

A draft of the proposed CSOW Local Plan was posted on the CSOW website on 8/13/2024. The public was solicited to submit comments from 8/13/2024 through 9/3/2024.

- (4) Submit any public comments that express disagreement with the plan to FloridaCommerce. WIOA §108(d)(3) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(1).**

Public Comments Results: None.

ATTACHMENTS (With Links to website)

Please provide a link to the local board's website showing the attachments described below or upload attachments in a searchable PDF file with the local and regional plan:

- A. Executed interlocal agreement** that defines how parties carry out roles and responsibilities of the chief local elected officials (if the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA § 107(c)(1)(B).

[Interlocal-Agreement.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

- B. Executed agreement between the chief local elected official(s) and the LWDB.**

[Interlocal-Agreement.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

² A searchable PDF file is a PDF file that includes text that can be searched upon using the standard Adobe Reader "search" functionality [CTRL+F]. In Microsoft Word **ClickFile > Save As** and choose where you want the file to be saved. In the **Save As** dialog box, choose **PDF** in the Save as type list. Click **Options**, make sure the **Document structure tags for accessibility** check box is selected, and then click **OK**.

³ Best practices for making Word and other documents 508 compliant and accessible to those with disabilities includes using built-in title, subtitle, and heading styles; creating accessible lists; adjusting space between sentences and paragraphs and adding alt+text to visuals. For best results, use the

[“Accessibility Checker”](#) in the **Review** tab in MS Word.

- C. Evidence of designation of the fiscal agent by the chief local elected official(s), if other than the chief local elected official(s).**

[Interlocal-Agreement.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

- D. Current by-laws** established by the chief local elected official(s) to address criteria contained in 20 CFR 679.310(g) and [Administrative Policy 110 –Local Workforce Development Area and Board Governance](#).

[Bylaws-all-sign-01 16 24.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

- E. Current board member roster**, meeting minutes for the local plan agenda item, discussions about the plan, and the board’s vote on the local plan.

[Board of Directors & Committees Information – CareerSource Okaloosa Walton](#)

- F. Organizational chart** that outlines the organizational structure of the local area including the local workforce development board staff, one-stop operator, direct provider of workforce services, youth service provider and jointly managed FloridaCommerce staff. The organizational chart should identify specific roles defined in the Grantee-Subgrantee Agreement to include:

- (a) Regional Security Officer.
- (b) Chief Ethics Officer.
- (c) Custodian for purchased property and equipment.
- (d) Personnel Liaison.
- (e) Public Records Coordinator.
- (f) Equal Opportunity Officer.
- (g) Person who promotes opportunities for persons with disabilities.

<https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CSOW-LWDB-2-Organizational-Chart-July-1-2024.pdf>

- G. Agreements describing how any single entity selected to operate in more than one of the following roles:** local fiscal agent, local board staff, one-stop operator, or direct provider of career services, will carry out its multiple responsibilities, including how it develops appropriate firewalls to guard against conflicts of interest. Also attach copies of any processes and procedures that clearly detail a) how functions are sufficiently separated; b) descriptions of the steps the local area has taken to mitigate risks that could lead to impropriety; c) firewalls (physical, technological, policies, etc.) created to ensure such risks are mitigated; and d) oversight and monitoring procedures.

- 1. **Local Board Staff:** [About Us – CareerSource Okaloosa Walton](#)
- 2. **One-Stop Operator:** [One-Stop-Operator-for-website.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)
- 3. **Direct Provider of Career Services:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Direct-Service-Provider-Request.pdf>

- H. Executed Memoranda of Understanding** for all one-stop partners (Section III(b)(2) of the State of Florida WIOA Unified Plan).

1. **Division of Blind Services:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Blind-Services.pdf>.
 2. **Emerald Coast Technical College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/ECTC.pdf>
 3. **National Caucus and Center on Black Aging:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NCCBA.pdf>
 4. **Northwest Florida State College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NWFSC.pdf>
 5. **Okaloosa Technical College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/OTC.pdf>
 6. **Tri-County Community Council:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/TCCC.pdf>
 7. **Vocational Rehabilitation:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/VR-SA-234-A-2-R-1-Final.pdf>
- I. **Executed Infrastructure Funding Agreement** with all applicable WIOA required partners (Section III(b)(2) and Section IV(a)(1)(d) of the State of Florida WIOA Unified Plan).
1. **Division of Blind Services:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-Blind-Services.pdf>
 2. **Emerald Coast Technical College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-ECTC-Executed-11.14.23.pdf>
 3. **National Caucus and Center on Black Aging:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-NCCBA-.pdf>
 4. **Northwest Florida State College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-NWFSC.pdf>
 5. **Okaloosa Technical College:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-OTC-Executed-01.16.24.pdf>
 6. **Tri-County Community Council:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-TCCC.pdf>
 7. **Vocational Rehabilitation:** <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MOU-IFA-Voc-Rehab.pdf>
- J. **Executed cooperative agreements** which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to all services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)(B) between the LWDB or other local entities described in WIOA section 107(d)(11)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross-training staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.
- CSOW does not have a Cooperative Agreement.**
- K. **A description of the process used by the LWDB to obtain input and comment by representatives of business and labor organizations for the development of the plan. The LWDB must make information about the plan available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.**

See Workforce Plan Section A: Organizational Structure; (2) (d) and (e).

- L. **Planning Region Agreements** between the participating LWDBs of the planning region and agreements between the planning region and regional partners to include cooperative service agreements, memoranda of understanding, regional policies, etc.

Planning Region Agreement: <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Regional-Plan-Addendum.pdf>

A. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The local plan must describe the organizational structure and delivery systems in place in the local area, including:

(1) Chief Elected Official(s)

- (a) Identify and list the chief local elected official(s) by name, title, mailing address, phone number, and email address.

RESPONSE

Commissioner Paul Mixon
Okaloosa County Commissioner
302 N. Wilson Street, Ste, 302
Crestview, FL 32536
(850)689-5030
pmixon@myokaloosa.com

Commissioner Tony Anderson
Walton County Commissioner
70 Logan Lane
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
(850) 231-2978
andtony@co.walton.fl.us

- (b) Describe how the chief local elected official(s) was involved in the development, review, and approval of the local plan.

RESPONSE

The Chief Elected Officials (or representatives) are notified of the plan requirements during the preparation process.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton draft plan is presented to the CEOs before being presented to the full Board of County Commissioners for review/approval.

(c) If the chief local elected official is a consortium, identify the members of the consortium and which member(s) has the authority to sign on behalf of the consortium.

RESPONSE

This section does not apply to CSOW.

(2) Local Workforce Development Board

(a) Identify the chairperson of the LWDB by name, title, mailing address, phone number, and email address. Identify the business that the chairperson represents.

RESPONSE

Board Chair: Michelle Crocker
HR Manager

Business: FirstNation Group
4566 E Hwy 20, Suite 208
Niceville, FL 32578
850-389-8464
mcrocker@firstnationgroup.com

(b) If applicable, identify the vice-chairperson of the LWDB by name, title, mailing address, phone number, and email address. Identify the business or organization the vice-chairperson represents.

RESPONSE

Board Vice-Chair: Leslie Sheekley
Attorney

Business: Hand Arendall Harrison Sale, LLC
35008 Emerald Coast Pkwy, 5th Floor
Destin, FL 32541
850-650-0010
lsheekley@handfirm.com

- (c) LWDB member roster which includes name, title, term of appointment, mailing address, phone number, and email address. Identify the business that the board member represents.**

RESPONSE

The LWDB member roster is included in the attachments.

- (d) Describe how the LWDB members, including those described in Public Law 113-128 § 107(b)(2), were involved in the development, review, and approval of the local plan.**

RESPONSE

The Board members are notified of the plan requirements during the preparation process.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton draft plan is presented to the Board members during the development phase of the plan and before presentation to the full Board for input and consideration. The local plan will be presented by the Executive Director at the regularly scheduled CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board of Directors meeting on September 4, 2024, for review and approval. The final plan document will be provided to each Board member before the meeting.

- (e) Describe how the LWDB convened or obtained input from local workforce development system stakeholders including LWDB committee members, combined state plan partners, education, industry, and representatives of disability populations and those with barriers to employment to assist in the development of the local plan.**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's request for public comment on the Plan is widespread. The Board uses both a formal and an informal process of soliciting comments from the public, which includes Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners and Walton County Board of Commissioners, Board members, committee members, combined state plan partners, education, industry, and representatives of disability populations and those with barriers to employment, community and faith-based organizations, organized labor, Okaloosa County and Walton County Public Library Cooperatives and One-Stop customers (jobseekers and businesses).

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton draft plan is posted via the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton website for review and comments. Copies are maintained in the career center and affiliate sites. The Plan is also distributed in e-mail blasts and a notice is posted in the CSOW newsletter.

(3) Local Grant Subrecipient (local fiscal agent or administrative entity)

- (a) Provide the name of the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent) if other than the chief local elected official. WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(1)(iii); 20 CFR 679.420 and 20 CFR 560(6)(14)**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and Board staff serve as its fiscal agent entity.

Reference – [Interlocal-Agreement.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

- (b) Provide the name of the entity selected to staff the LWDB (commonly referred to as the administrative entity) and assist the LWDB in carrying out its responsibilities as a board organized under WIOA (20 CFR 679.430).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and Board staff serve as its administrative entity.

Reference – [Interlocal-Agreement.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

(4) One-Stop Operator and One-Stop Career Centers

- (a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected through a competitive process to serve as the one-stop operator. Include the effective date and end date of the current agreement in place between the LWDB and the one-stop operator. (20 CFR 678.605)**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton serves as its one-stop operator.

The term of this Agreement begins on July 1, 2023, and shall continue till June 30, 2026.

[One-Stop-Operator.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

- (b) Describe the steps taken to ensure a competitive process for selecting the one-stop operator(s) (WIOA §121(d)(2)(A) and 20 CFR 678.605).**

RESPONSE

Competitive Process for Awards to the One-Stop Operator

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board believes in and practices open and full competition to procure the best services possible at a reasonable price. The process includes advertisements in the local newspapers, the CSOW website, workforce regions within Florida, and the vendor list for services. Written notification of Intent to Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) is sent to each addressee on the Vendor's list with instructions on how to request a copy of the solicitation. To continually improve the solicitation process and to ensure open and fair competition, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board has a policy of conducting periodic surveys of vendors who request copies of the solicitation and then do not submit proposals or bids. This is done to determine if the process discouraged competition or if other factors were the primary reasons for the decision not to submit a proposal or bid.

The final selection of Service Providers is made by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board following a recommendation from an appointed Ad-Hoc Selection Committee named by the Board Chair. The Board staff is charged with the responsibility of certifying the integrity of the solicitation process by ensuring that all requirements of the RFP are met with each proposal submitted; that the proposal was received by the published deadline; and that the proposal was responsive to the RFP. After the proposals have been received and deemed responsive by the Board staff, the proposals are provided to the named members of the Ad-Hoc Selection Committee for review, evaluation, and rating. The Ad-Hoc Committee then meets in an open and advertised public meeting to complete the evaluation and rating process. If the Proposal is for Youth Services, one or more members of the Youth & Career Committee must be included on the Ad-Hoc Committee. The Ad-Hoc Committee will report its results and make a recommendation to the full CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board for selection of the Service Provider/s. The Competitive Solicitation process includes a provision for any proposing agency to protest the decision of the Ad-Hoc Selection Committee or the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board. The final decision is made by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board.

All potential respondents are **strongly encouraged** to attend the Bidders' Conference since this will be the best opportunity for having technical and other concerns addressed. A copy of the proposal review/rating sheet will be distributed at the Bidders' Conference.

The Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal must identify the proposer, any subcontractor(s), and the activities/services that each subcontractor will deliver. A Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal does not commit a proposer to submit a proposal; however, a **Letter of Intent must be submitted to propose**.

The Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal may be faxed to the phone number or e-mailed to the address provided in the instructions. The Letter of Intent may also be hand delivered, electronically submitted, or mailed to the address indicated in the instructions. PROPOSALS must be hand delivered or mailed to the address indicated in the instructions. The prospective proposer is solely responsible for assuring that anything mailed to CareerSource Okaloosa Walton arrives safely and on time at the address indicated in the instructions.

(c) If the LWDB serves as the one-stop operator, provide the last date the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors granted approval to the LWDB to serve in this capacity and provide the approved duration. ([Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Operator Procurement](#))

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton serves as its One-Stop Operator for three years, from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026.

Date of Agreement with CareerSource Florida Board of Directors: September 19, 2023.

[One-Stop-Operator.pdf \(careersourceokaloosawalton.com\)](#)

(d) Describe the roles and responsibilities the LWDB has identified and assigned to the one-stop operator (20 CFR 678.620).

RESPONSE

A. ONE-STOP OPERATOR ROLE

The One-Stop Operator will play a critical role in supporting the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's (CSOW) workforce system by coordinating its diverse partners to achieve the CSOW's service delivery vision and any defined performance goals.

B. ONE-STOP OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Operator will develop, review, Implement, and monitor appropriate memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Board and the one-stop partners to ensure the efficient operation of the one-stop delivery system in the region. These duties will include at a minimum:

a. The required content of MOUs:

- (1) The Operator will develop and review the required content of the MOUs and oversee the execution and implementation of MOUs within the one-stop career center and affiliate sites. The Operator will implement the approved MOUs with partnering agencies and programs, to establish an integrated workforce system that extends beyond basic workforce services. The provisions of services will be included in the MOUs.

b. The manner in which the services will be coordinated and delivered through such system:

- (1) The Operator will use an Integrated Service Delivery Model for delivering services to customers throughout the region. All one-stop programs and partner services are fully integrated with an entire menu of services offered through the one-stop system. All functions are carried out with oversight from the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board and committees.
- (2) The Integrated Services Model views all core programs as **one workforce system**, assessing strategic needs and aligning them with service strategies that ensure the workforce system meets the employment and skill needs of all workers and employers. The Operator will collaborate with other career center partner programs, and other partners at the state and local levels to ensure the needs of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's customers are met. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the State use a certification process and competition to help achieve this vision and ensure continuous improvement in the workforce's one-stop system.
- (3) To better serve all customers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Board procured a Mobile One-Stop Unit to use as a Mobile Career Center. This ensures that various services, including special events for employers, can be taken directly to the various customer groups as part of a comprehensive service delivery system.
- (4) The Mobile Career Center has printing, copying, and fax capability; including enough computers (13 stations) to be able to accommodate various classes, seminars, and training sessions that can be delivered to employees, program participants, job seekers, and employer customers. The Mobile Career Center can travel to remote locations within the region to bring services to customers that may not otherwise be able to access services at the career center.
- (5) The Operator will coordinate with senior management and key partners on the use of the mobile and service delivery efficiencies and make recommendations for best practices and training options for continuous improvement.

c. How the costs of such services and the operating costs of such a system will be funded?

- (1) 20 CFR 678.420 requires each "required" partner to provide access to its programs or activities through the one-stop delivery system, in addition to any other appropriate locations. They also must use a portion of the funds made available to the partner's program, to the extent consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program and with Federal cost principles in 2 CFR parts

200 and 2900 to contribute to the infrastructure cost of the one-stop delivery system. One stipulation is that costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

- (2) The Operator will ensure the one-stop delivery system's operating budget and Infrastructure Funding Cost (IFA) Agreement are agreed to by each required partner. The Agreement will be formalized in the MOUs.

d. Methods of referral of individuals between the one-stop operator and the one-stop partners for appropriate services and activities:

- (1) The Operator will ensure a referral system is formalized in the MOUs. The Operator will ensure participants receive every opportunity to be successful in their job search efforts, or businesses looking to fill their employment needs. The Operator will ensure procedures are in place to offer the appropriate services to participants registered or enrolled in a one-stop system program through direct services, or referral to a partner agency for services where appropriate. Such services may include:
 - (a) Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the one-stop delivery system.
 - (b) Referral to housing assistance & other supportive services.
 - (c) Referrals to the CSOW Veterans Team for services as appropriate.
 - (d) Career Coaching and job search assistance.
 - (e) Personalized instruction to prepare for specific job interviews.
 - (f) Occupational Training where applicable.
 - (g) Intervention with potential employers on behalf of specific program participants where appropriate.
 - (h) Transportation assistance where allowable.
 - (i) Childcare referrals as needed.

e. Methods to ensure the needs of workers and youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, are addressed in the provision of necessary and appropriate access to services, including access to technology and materials, made available through the one-stop delivery system:

- (1) The Operator will ensure practices are in place to meet the employment needs of workers and youth. Procedures will be operationalized in a manner that encourages staff and one-stop partners to provide services to individuals with disabilities, and other individuals with barriers to employment, including, those who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment training, or education services.
- (2) In coordinating services and serving as the One-Stop Operator, The Operator will encourage staff and one-stop partners to refrain from establishing practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services.
- (3) The Operator will ensure at a minimum, at least once every three years CSOW completes a comprehensive, **assessment of the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility**, and continuous improvement of **one-stop** centers and the one-stop delivery system.
- (4) Procedurally, an assessment is completed annually and includes compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding 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.

f. The duration of the MOU and the procedures for amending its duration, and assurances that such MOU shall be reviewed not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services.

The Operator will ensure MOUs are fully executed with all required partner agencies. The MOUs will contain all the required elements as prescribed by 20 CFR 678.500, including the duration of the MOU and the procedures for amending its duration, and assurances that such MOU shall be reviewed not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding for the delivery of services.

g. Such other provisions, consistent with the requirements, as the parties to the agreement determine to be appropriate.

The Operator will perform additional relevant services at the option of the CSOW Board and Executive Director as necessary for the operations of the career center and affiliate sites. Additional services may include areas such as skill gap reviews, labor market studies, cross-regional labor market/labor studies and comparisons, and coordination with other workforce development boards and operators for 'regional' planning purposes.

- (e) Provide the location (address) and type of each access point, indicating whether it is a comprehensive center⁴, affiliate site or specialized center, as described in [Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements](#).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has one designated physical comprehensive one-stop career center, as well as other specialized/affiliated sites and one mobile unit.

The designated physical comprehensive One-Stop Career Center is:

Fort Walton Beach Career Center

409 Racetrack Road NE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Services Provided: Career services for job seekers, adults, dislocated workers, and youth, including individuals with disabilities; employer services.

Additional service delivery affiliate center currently located at:

Emerald Coast Technical College

761 North 20th Street

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Services Provided: Career services for job seekers **(Monday – Friday, by appointment)**

Services Provided: WT, SNAP E&T, and WIOA Services (Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:00pm)

Additional service delivery specialized centers are currently located at:

Northwest Florida State College

100 College Blvd. E

Building 400 – Student Services Center

Niceville, FL 32579

By Appointment Only

Services Provided: WIOA services only

Okaloosa Technical College

1976 Lewis Turner Blvd.

Building 14, Room 109

Ft Walton Beach, FL 32547

By Appointment Only

Services Provided: WIOA services only

Eglin Education Center

Bldg. 251, Room 117; 502 West D Ave.

Eglin AFB, FL 32542

Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Services Provided: MFEA services only

Hurlburt Field Airman & Family Readiness Center

Bldg. 90213; 220 Lukasik Ave.

Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

Wednesdays, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Services Provided: MFEA and DVOP services only**7th SFG Soldiers Support Center**

4385 El Salvador Way

Camp Bull Simons

Eglin AFB, FL 32542

Tuesdays, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Services Provided: MFEA services only

- (f) Identify the days and times when each access point is open to customers. Comprehensive career centers must be open to the general public for walk-in service for a minimum of eight hours per day during regular business days, Monday through Friday.

[\(Administrative Policy 093– One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements\)](#)

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has one designated physical comprehensive one-stop career center, as well as other specialized/affiliated sites and one mobile unit.

The designated physical comprehensive One-Stop Career Center is:

Fort Walton Beach Career Center

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Additional service delivery affiliate center currently located at:

Emerald Coast Technical College

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Additional service delivery specialized centers are currently located at:

Northwest Florida State College

By Appointment Only

Okaloosa Technical College

By Appointment Only

Eglin Education Center

Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm

Hurlburt Field Airman & Family Readiness Center

Wednesdays, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

7th SFG Soldiers Support Center

Tuesdays, 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

- (g) For each access point, identify how each local area provides customers with access to each required (and any approved optional) one-stop career center partners' programs, services and activities (physical co-location, electronic methods, and/or referrals).**

(Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements)

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton career center staff utilize a common intake form to ensure coordination of services at the point of entry. The common intake is the foundation of the initial assessment and ensures one-stop customers are referred for the appropriate services. This includes a referral to the appropriate programs/partners; and a determination of whether individualized career services are appropriate. In addition to the common intake, customers are asked to sign a "Release of Information" so that information can be exchanged between One-Stop Career Center staff and partner agencies, to allow for coordination of efforts and prevent duplication of services.

- (h) Provide the required attestation that at least one comprehensive one-stop center in the local area meets the certification requirements contained therein. (Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements).**

RESPONSE

CSOW attests that at least one comprehensive one-stop career center in the local area meets the certification requirements.

The comprehensive center and affiliate sites are certified at least annually.

- (i) Describe any additional criteria (or higher levels of service coordination than required in Administrative Policy 093 – One-Stop Delivery System and One-Stop Career Center Certification Requirements) relating to service coordination achieved by the one-stop delivery system, to respond to education/training needs, labor market, economic, and demographic conditions and trends in the local area (WIOA §121(g)(3)).**

RESPONSE

The CSOW Board ensures the continuous improvement of eligible providers of education and training services through the system and ensures that providers meet the employment needs of local

employers, workers, and job seekers.

The Board's emphasis on continuous process improvement and performance outcomes ensures accountability. The service model used by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides the management team with the capability to react more quickly to changing conditions in education/training needs, labor market, economic, and demographic conditions, and trends in the local area and workforce environment. A value-added benefit to this level of coordination with partner agencies, allows more resources to be allocated to serve more people and provide more services to meet the specific needs of each customer.

(5) Provider of Workforce Services

- (a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected to provide workforce services (except training services) within the local one-stop delivery system. (Administrative Policy 083-Direct Provider of Workforce Services)**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is the **entity selected** to provide workforce services within the local one-stop delivery system.

- (b) Provide the effective date and end date that workforce services will be provided, as defined in the current executed agreement between the LWDB and the provider of workforce services.**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is the **entity selected** to provide workforce services within the local one-stop delivery system.

- (c) Identify and describe which career services are provided by the selected one-stop operator, if any.**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is designated as the One-Stop Operator.

- (d) Identify and describe what career services are provided by the designated provider of workforce services (except training services).**

RESPONSE

All One-Stop programs and services are fully integrated for the job seeking customers with an entire menu of services offered through the Career Centers. To highlight the value of the Workforce Development System, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will offer a full array of career services to the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton customers. The three basic types of career services are:

- a. Basic Career Services.
- b. Individualized Career Services; and
- c. Follow-up Services.

Basic Career Service

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board will ensure that Basic Career Services are made available and, at a minimum, will include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities, partner programs, and Federal cost principles.

- a. Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- b. Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the One-Stop Delivery System.
- c. Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and need for supportive services.
- d. Labor exchange services, including:
 - (1) Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including:
 - (a) Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and
 - (b) Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and
 - (2) Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the One-Stop Delivery System;

- e. Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the One-Stop Delivery System and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- f. Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
 - (1) Job vacancy listings in labor market areas.
 - (2) Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
 - (3) Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.
- g. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
- h. Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System;
- i. Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under SNAP; assistance through the earned income tax credit; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- j. Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the Career Center must provide meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation.
 - (1) Meaningful assistance means:
 - (a) Providing assistance on-site using staff who are well-trained in unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants; or
 - (b) Providing assistance by phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.

- (2) The costs associated in providing this assistance may be paid for by the State's unemployment insurance program, or the WIOA adult or dislocated worker programs, or some combination thereof. Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

k. Individualized Career Services

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board must ensure that Individualized Career Services are made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include the following services, as consistent with program requirements and Federal cost principles:

- (1) Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
 - (a) Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - (b) In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- (2) Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers (As described in § 680.180);
- (3) Group counseling.
- (4) Individual counseling.
- (5) Career planning.
- (6) Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- (7) Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers (as described in § 680.170);
- (8) Workforce preparation activities.
- (9) Financial literacy services (As described in sec. 129(b)(2)(D) of WIOA and § 681.500);
- (10) Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- (11) English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Follow-up Services

Follow-up Services must be provided, as appropriate, including, counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in adult or dislocated worker workforce investment activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

(e) If the LWDB serves as the direct provider of workforce services (except training services), provide the last date the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors granted approval to the LWDB to serve in this capacity and the approved duration.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton serves as a direct provider of workforce services for three years July 1, 2023- June 30, 2026.

Date of Agreement with CareerSource Florida Board of Directors: June 7, 2023.

(6) Youth Service Provider

(a) Provide the name of the entity or entities selected to provide youth workforce investment activities (youth program services) and, if the entity was competitively procured, the term through which the entity is contracted to provide these services. ([Administrative Policy 120 Youth Service Provider Selection](#))

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides its Youth Services.

(b) Provide the effective date and end date that youth services will be provided, as defined in the current executed agreement between the LWDB and the provider of youth services.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides its Youth Services.

(c) Describe the steps taken to ensure a competitive process for the selection of the youth service provider(s) in the local area, if the LWDB does not provide these services.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton serves as the provider of youth workforce investment activities.

(d) Describe the roles and responsibilities the LWDB has identified and assigned to the youth service provider.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides its youth workforce investment activities.

(e) Describe any additional criteria⁵ the LWDB has established to ensure providers best positioned to deliver required youth program elements resulting in strong outcomes for youth participants are used, if applicable.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides its youth workforce investment activities.

(f) Identify and describe the youth program element(s) provided by each provider.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides its youth workforce investment activities.

(7) Career Center Staff

(a) List the position title and number of positions that are considered as local county or municipality employees.

RESPONSE

CSOW does not have any positions that are considered local county or municipality employees.

B. ANALYSIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The local workforce plan must describe strategic planning elements, including:

(1) A regional analysis of:

(a) **Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(i)); and**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton focuses on identifying and addressing workforce needs in Okaloosa and Walton counties. Here are some key points about the economic conditions and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in this area:

Existing and Emerging In-Demand Sectors

- a. **Healthcare:** There is a growing demand for healthcare professionals, including nurses, medical technicians, and healthcare support staff.
- b. **Information Technology:** IT roles such as software developers, network administrators, and cybersecurity experts are increasingly in demand.
- c. **Manufacturing:** Skilled trades and advanced manufacturing positions are critical, with a focus on precision machining and electronics.
- d. **Aerospace and Defense:** Given the proximity to military bases, there is a significant need for aerospace engineers, defense contractors, and related support roles.
- e. **Hospitality and Tourism:** This sector remains vital, with ongoing demand for hospitality management, culinary arts, and tourism services.

Workforce Development Initiatives

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton offers various programs to support workforce development, including:

- **Training and Education Programs:** These are designed to equip individuals with the skills needed for high-demand occupations.
- **Scholarships and Funding Opportunities:** Financial assistance is available for those pursuing education and training in targeted sectors.

- **Job Placement Services:** Assistance with job searches, resume building, and interview preparation.

These efforts aim to ensure that both job seekers and employers have the resources they need to thrive in the local economy.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses the targeted occupations compiled by the Labor Estimating Conference (LEC) and Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics office. The LEC identifies in-demand high-skill/high-wage occupations. The LEC develops the official statewide demand occupations list based on industry and occupational employment projections and wages data prepared by the Florida Department of Commerce, Labor Market Statistics office.

Below are the fastest-growing occupations in CareerSource Okaloosa Walton.

FASTEST-GROWING OCCUPATIONS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 2 - OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

Rank	SOC Code	SOC Title	Employment		Percent Growth	Total Job Openings
			2023	2031		
1	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	145	233	60.7	165
2	31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	120	166	38.3	206
3	15-1212	Information Security Analysts	225	306	36.0	235
4	29-1071	Physician Assistants	93	122	31.2	77
5	15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	265	342	29.1	242
6	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	298	382	28.2	297
7	43-4131	Loan Interviewers and Clerks	115	145	26.1	129
8	15-2051	Data Scientists	137	172	25.5	123
9	35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	1,118	1,391	24.4	1,814
10	17-2112	Industrial Engineers	213	264	23.9	168
11	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	2,650	3,283	23.9	4,275
12	47-2044	Tile and Stone Setters	133	164	23.3	134
13	13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	617	759	23.0	679
14	35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	4,596	5,645	22.8	9,354
15	35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Sh	881	1,082	22.8	2,090
16	31-9092	Medical Assistants	541	661	22.2	787
17	13-1111	Management Analysts	1,316	1,607	22.1	1,351
18	35-9021	Dishwashers	811	989	21.9	1,399
19	11-3031	Financial Managers	420	512	21.9	369
20	35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,092	3,760	21.6	6,593
21	29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	411	499	21.4	441
22	31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	363	440	21.2	696

23	29-1122	Occupational Therapists	85	103	21.2	61
24	15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	261	316	21.1	219
25	49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	157	190	21.0	148

Below are the emerging industries in CareerSource Okaloosa Walton.

(b) The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging

FASTEST-GROWING INDUSTRIES**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 2 - OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES**

Rank	NAICS Code	NAICS Title	Employment			Percent Growth
			2023	2031	Growth	
1	511	Publishing Industries	768	1,055	287	37.4
2	562	Waste Management and Remediation Service	515	660	145	28.2
3	722	Food Services and Drinking Places	18,114	22,227	4,113	22.7
4	523	Financial Investment & Related Activity	404	491	87	21.5
5	236	Construction of Buildings	1,558	1,852	294	18.9
6	624	Social Assistance	1,583	1,881	298	18.8
7	444	Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	1,855	2,204	349	18.8
8	611	Educational Services	1,084	1,278	194	17.9
9	532	Rental and Leasing Services	954	1,122	168	17.6
10	621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,889	6,923	1,034	17.6
11	541	Professional and Technical Services	14,787	17,369	2,582	17.5
12	336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,396	1,625	229	16.4
13	524	Insurance Carriers & Related Activities	839	958	119	14.2
14	910	Federal Government	9,598	10,890	1,292	13.5
15	452	General Merchandise Stores	3,178	3,601	423	13.3
16	237	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,007	1,135	128	12.7
17	522	Credit Intermediation & Related Activity	1,862	2,098	236	12.7
18	326	Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	168	187	19	11.3
19	442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	666	741	75	11.3
20	445	Food and Beverage Stores	3,758	4,179	421	11.2

in-demand industry sectors and occupations⁵ (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii)).

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board focuses on connecting employers with job seekers in Okaloosa and Walton counties. They aim to address the employment needs of employers in both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as outlined in the federal regulation 20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii).

The CSOW services include job training, funding opportunities, assessments, and various programs to support job seekers, veterans, young adults, and military families. The Board also works closely with local businesses to ensure they have access to a skilled workforce that meets their needs

In addition to the local projected employment opportunities data provided by the Florida Department of Commerce, the One Okaloosa EDC, Walton County Economic Alliance, and Florida's Great

Northwest, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton supplements that data with intensive industry reviews by the Education and Industry Consortium.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton relies on the Florida Labor Estimating Conference data to identify occupations with high growth, high skill, and high wages to target public training dollars intended for workforce development. The recommendations/data from the Estimating Conference are reviewed by the Executive Director, COO, and the full CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board.

As outlined in the State Plan, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton acknowledges industry sectors most severely impacted by the most recent recessionary conditions, such as construction and financial activities, and recognizes that these industries may currently show the least employment demand. Occupations expected to be in greatest demand are a direct result of the industry sectors that are projected to have the most growth.

Below is a chart displaying occupations gaining the newest jobs between 2023-2031.

INDUSTRIES GAINING THE MOST NEW JOBS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA 2 - OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

Rank	NAICS Code	NAICS Title	Employment			Percent Growth
			2023	2031	Growth	
1	722	Food Services and Drinking Places	18,114	22,227	4,113	22.7
2	541	Professional and Technical Services	14,787	17,369	2,582	17.5
3	910	Federal Government	9,598	10,890	1,292	13.5
4	621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	5,889	6,923	1,034	17.6
5	930	Local Government	10,133	10,784	651	6.4
6	561	Administrative and Support Services	7,077	7,688	611	8.6
7	452	General Merchandise Stores	3,178	3,601	423	13.3
8	445	Food and Beverage Stores	3,758	4,179	421	11.2
9	721	Accommodation	4,046	4,460	414	10.2
10	238	Specialty Trade Contractors	5,424	5,808	384	7.1
11	444	Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	1,855	2,204	349	18.8
12	624	Social Assistance	1,583	1,881	298	18.8
13	236	Construction of Buildings	1,558	1,852	294	18.9
14	511	Publishing Industries	768	1,055	287	37.4
15	813	Membership Organizations & Associations	3,539	3,795	256	7.2
16	522	Credit Intermediation & Related Activity	1,862	2,098	236	12.7
17	336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	1,396	1,625	229	16.4
18	531	Real Estate	3,667	3,864	197	5.4
19	611	Educational Services	1,084	1,278	194	17.9
20	441	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	2,202	2,376	174	7.9

- (2) An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(B) and 20 CFR 679.560(a)(2)).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, along with its business, community, and educational partners, works closely to identify and develop appropriate training and employment recruitment strategies to meet the needs of regional employers, for both new and existing employed workers.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton conducts a thorough analysis of workforce development activities and needs in the local area, focusing on several key aspects:

- a. **Education and Training Programs:** CSOW offers a variety of educational and training programs designed to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. These programs include vocational training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and continuing education opportunities.
- b. **Strengths of Workforce Development Activities:**
 - (1) **Comprehensive Services:** CSOW provides a wide range of services, from job placement assistance to career counseling and skills assessments.
 - (2) **Collaboration with Local Businesses:** Strong partnerships with local employers ensure that training programs are aligned with industry needs.
 - (3) **Support for Individuals with Barriers:** Special programs are in place to support veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other groups facing employment challenges.
- c. **Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities:**
 - (1) **Resource Limitations:** Limited funding and resources can sometimes restrict the scope and reach of certain programs.
 - (2) **Awareness and Accessibility:** Not all job seekers are aware of the available resources, and some may face challenges accessing them due to transportation or other barriers.
- d. **Capacity to Address Education and Skill Needs:**
 - (1) **Targeted Training Programs:** By identifying skill gaps in the local workforce, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can develop targeted training programs to bridge these gaps.
 - (2) **Customized Support:** CSOW offers personalized support to help individuals overcome barriers to employment, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.
- e. **Employment Needs of Employers:**
 - (1) **Industry-Relevant Training:** Training programs are designed to meet the specific needs of local industries, ensuring that employers have access to a skilled workforce.
 - (2) **Ongoing Collaboration:** Continuous feedback from employers helps CareerSource Okaloosa Walton adapt and improve its programs to better meet the evolving needs of the job market.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Business Services model allows account managers to specialize in the specific training and employment recruitment needs associated with industry sectors. This model supports the specialization of account managers who continually strive to better understand, assess the skill needs, and develop workforce solutions for industry sector employers. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's account managers connect with in-demand industry employers to identify industry trends as well as the immediate, intermediate, and long-term training and employment recruitment needs of regional employers.

In addition, training institutions have advisory boards and ad hoc committees with representatives from in-demand industry sectors. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's continued involvement with these

regional training institutions helps guide the evolution of the training being offered in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's workforce is strongly influenced by retired or recently separated military veterans who chose to live in Northwest Florida after serving our country. This large military presence draws a great diversity of technology-based firms, many of which are contracted with the Department of Defense. With many of the men and women separating from the military choosing to reside in Northwest Florida each year, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton offers an educated, highly skilled, and disciplined workforce. This growing workforce is uniquely qualified to meet the knowledge, skills, and abilities being sought by regional, statewide, national, and international defense contractors and suppliers.

The Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network (TeCMEN) is a collaborative network of high-technology manufacturing and engineering service companies working together to gain access to larger projects by partnering and teaming. One Okaloosa Economic Development Council created TeCMEN to further its commitment to growing the technology industry in our area. In partnership with the One Okaloosa and TeCMEN employers, educational institutions in Northwest Florida play a key role by developing and offering associate, undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as certification programs and technology-transfer services.

Okaloosa County continues to experience unprecedented growth as a leading technology center in Northwest Florida. The increase in military spending creates the foundation for the expansion of area employers, many of which are obtaining new contracts each year requiring hundreds of new employees.

The charts below display education awards. Data as of the 2021-2022 academic year.

Education Awards

Data available as of the 2021-2022 academic year reveals the most common post-secondary educational attainment level for NFWC Planning Region 2 is certificates and two-year awards. They represent 91.54% of all education programs awarded, followed by four-year awards at 8.46%; and post-graduate awards at 0%. The combined high school diploma award is 89.25%.

Below are the top five programs of study:

<u>Programs of Study</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
• Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	46.42%
• Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	6.84%
• Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT)	5.01%
• Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	4.49%
• Welding Technology/Welder	2.93%

Note: See a list of the top 20 programs of study in the chart below.

CIP Code	Title	Certificates and 2yr Awards	4yr Awards	Postgraduate Awards	Total Awards
24.0101	Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	713	0	0	713
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	73	32	0	105
51.0904	Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	77	0	0	77
51.3901	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	69	0	0	69
48.0508	Welding Technology/Welder	45	0	0	45
52.0299	Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other	0	41	0	41
15.0501	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering Technology/Technician	41	0	0	41
12.0401	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	36	0	0	36
13.1210	Early Childhood Education and Teaching	6	25	0	31
11.1003	Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance	27	0	0	27
51.1009	Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist	26	0	0	26
43.0203	Fire Science/Fire-fighting	24	0	0	24
47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	23	0	0	23
52.0202	Purchasing, Procurement/Acquisitions and Contracts Management	0	21	0	21
46.0302	Electrician	19	0	0	19
15.1202	Computer/Computer Systems Technology/Technician	18	0	0	18
31.0507	Physical Fitness Technician	18	0	0	18
46.0415	Building Construction Technology/Technician	17	0	0	17
51.0714	Medical Insurance Specialist/Medical Biller	17	0	0	17
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	13	0	0	13
51.0911	Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	13	0	0	13

- (3) **An analysis of the workforce in the local area, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment and current skill gaps (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(C) and 20 CFR 679.560(a)(3)).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton services a two-county Region (Okaloosa and Walton Counties) located in the Panhandle of Florida. Parts of the two-county region are rural and widespread. Thousands of temporary residents and visitors who come to the area seasonally have a significant impact on the economy and the job market, especially in the services industries. As a popular growing retirement and vacation community, service-related industries continue to grow.

Away from the coast, there are several communities with fully developed industrial parks and enterprise zones.

Okaloosa and Walton Counties are home to several Air Force and Army facilities including Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, Duke Field, and the Army 7th Special Forces located south of Crestview, Florida. Eglin is the largest Air Force base by size and Eglin's Air Armament Center is responsible for the development, acquisition, testing, and deployment of all air-delivered weapons. Eglin is also home to the training wing for the F35 Joint Strike Fighter. Hurlburt Field is the headquarters of the Air Force Special Operations.

There is a high number of defense contractors in the local community in support of the military presence.

Job Seekers continue to be challenged by a lack of affordable housing, transportation, and childcare for non-standard operating hours. Despite notable improvements, public transportation is almost nonexistent and access to affordable and responsive transportation remains an obstacle for many who are transitioning into or re-entering the workforce.

Because of the rural nature of parts of the workforce region and the long distances to commute from home to work, transportation continues to be an issue even after employment is secured. The rising fuel costs have increased this challenge. Improvements have been made; however, gaps still exist in the availability of affordable, reliable transportation. Availability of childcare for nighttime and shift work remains in short supply for those employees of businesses operating on a schedule different from traditional hours between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton continues to expand partnerships with applicable local community entities to move forward with solutions to the noted barriers to employment.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides a comprehensive analysis of the local workforce, focusing on several key areas:

- a. **Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data:** CSOW tracks current employment rates and unemployment statistics to understand the economic health of Okaloosa and Walton counties.

- b. **Labor Market Trends:** CSOW includes identifying growing industries, job opportunities, and shifts in the job market that can impact both job seekers and employers.
- c. **Educational and Skill Levels:** CSOW assesses the educational background and skill levels of the workforce, which helps in identifying areas where additional training or education might be needed.
- d. **Individuals with Barriers to Employment:** Special attention is given to individuals who face challenges in finding employment, such as those with disabilities, veterans, and young adults. Programs and resources are tailored to help these groups overcome obstacles.
- e. **Current Skill Gaps:** By identifying gaps between the skills employers need and the skills available in the workforce, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can develop targeted training programs to bridge these gaps.

Recognizing that the populations in both Okaloosa and Walton Counties are not nearly as diverse as more metropolitan areas of the State, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff is provided ongoing training to address the needs of customers in all populations with special emphasis on the needs of the economically disadvantaged populations and age groups. Challenges associated with the local sub-populations are identified and addressed by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff and partners throughout the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton services and One-Stop Centers each employ mechanisms for being able to communicate with non-English speaking clients.

Training and educational challenges associated with the local population are reviewed by the Youth and Career Committee. The Committee reviews job seeker analysis data compiled by the One-Stop Center staff. Local services are reviewed and adjusted as data is presented. The membership of the Board's Youth and Career Committee includes local community members representing the private sector, education, and economic development. The members of the council ensure that the needs of the job seeker and employer are afforded an immediate response by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton. One of the challenges identified consistently is meeting the needs of those associated with a high presence of military (active duty, veterans, and military families) and military support personnel in the local community.

While some special populations are more prevalent in the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton One-Stop Career Centers than others, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton with its Committees and the One-Stop System will address the challenges involved in reaching out to these special populations. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has adopted an approach for providing workforce services to special populations including increased involvement with faith-based organizations and services that strengthen families through mentoring and other related services.

It is a continuing challenge for all personnel at each One-Stop center to reach out to the special populations, coordinate program activities customized to these clients, and provide real-time data for job seekers to pursue education, skills, and training needs that will lead to employment.

See the data analysis on the following pages for CareerSource Okaloosa Walton:

Demographic Profile

The population in the Okaloosa / Walton 2024 was 288,639 per American Community Survey data for 2018-2022.

The region has a civilian labor force of 134,101 with a participation rate of 60.8%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Okaloosa / Walton 2024, 33.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 35.8% in the nation.

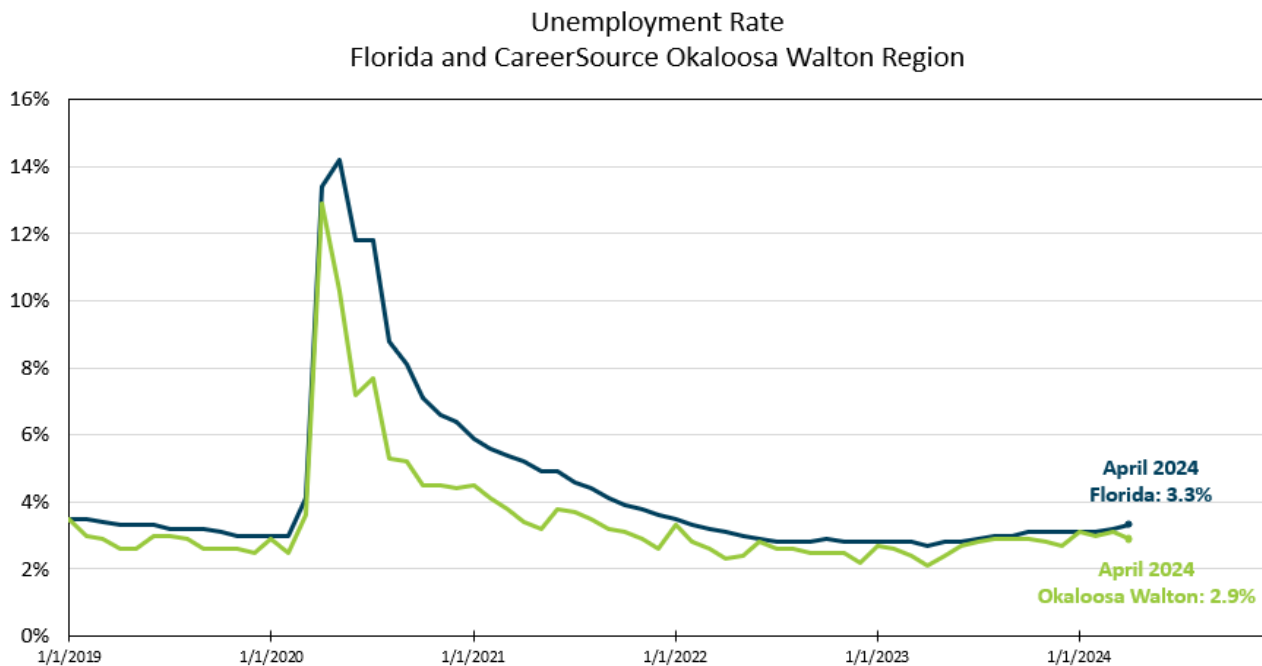
The median household income in the Okaloosa / Walton 2024 is \$74,219 and the median house value is \$305,009.

Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	Okaloosa / Walton 2024	Florida	USA	Okaloosa / Walton 2024	Florida	USA
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	288,639	21,634,529	331,097,593
Male	50.9%	49.2%	49.6%	146,836	10,646,786	164,200,298
Female	49.1%	50.8%	50.4%	141,803	10,987,743	166,897,295
Median Age²	—	—	—	39.0	42.4	38.5
Under 18 Years	21.8%	19.6%	22.1%	62,868	4,235,429	73,213,705
18 to 24 Years	8.1%	8.4%	9.4%	23,339	1,819,253	31,282,896
25 to 34 Years	14.4%	12.7%	13.7%	41,698	2,753,398	45,388,153
35 to 44 Years	12.9%	12.3%	12.9%	37,312	2,669,044	42,810,359
45 to 54 Years	11.4%	12.6%	12.4%	32,976	2,716,771	41,087,357
55 to 64 Years	14.1%	13.5%	12.9%	40,573	2,919,987	42,577,475
65 to 74 Years	10.5%	11.5%	9.7%	30,183	2,485,311	32,260,679
75 Years and Over	6.8%	9.4%	6.8%	19,690	2,035,336	22,476,969
Race: White	77.5%	63.8%	65.9%	223,781	13,807,410	218,123,424
Race: Black or African American	7.9%	15.5%	12.5%	22,807	3,355,708	41,288,572
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	1,175	59,197	2,786,431
Race: Asian	2.8%	2.8%	5.8%	7,998	609,990	19,112,979
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	591	13,200	624,863
Race: Some Other Race	3.4%	4.8%	6.0%	9,805	1,045,557	20,018,544
Race: Two or More Races	7.8%	12.7%	8.8%	22,482	2,743,467	29,142,780
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	9.1%	26.5%	18.7%	26,384	5,738,283	61,755,866
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates)⁴	—	—	—	304,818	22,610,726	334,914,895
Population Annual Average Growth⁴	1.9%	1.5%	0.6%	5,262	305,905	1,885,495
People per Square Mile⁴	—	—	—	154.8	421.4	94.8
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian	60.8%	59.2%	63.3%	134,101	10,555,633	167,857,207

population 16 years and over)						
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	79.9%	82.3%	82.8%	82,408	6,658,319	106,380,520
Armed Forces Labor Force Veterans, Age 18-64	5.3%	0.4%	0.5%	12,249	74,060	1,236,378
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	15.3%	5.1%	4.3%	25,018	647,586	8,636,019
Median Household Income²	78.5%	75.1%	77.1%	19,632	486,152	6,656,238
Per Capita Income	—	—	—	\$74,219	\$67,917	\$75,149
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	—	—	\$41,421	\$38,850	\$41,261
Commute via Public Transportation	—	—	—	26.3	27.9	26.7
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64	0.4%	1.3%	3.8%	550	128,338	5,945,723
No High School Diploma	6.8%	10.0%	10.1%	10,433	1,100,916	17,373,867
High School Graduate	24.9%	26.9%	25.1%	38,063	2,978,879	43,176,248
Some College, No Degree	22.7%	19.0%	19.7%	34,694	2,104,160	33,916,989
Associate's Degree	12.2%	11.0%	9.2%	18,586	1,216,834	15,886,884
Bachelor's Degree	22.4%	21.5%	22.4%	34,175	2,377,784	38,451,123
Postgraduate Degree	10.9%	11.6%	13.4%	16,608	1,280,627	23,058,233
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	158,152	9,915,957	140,943,613
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units)^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$305,009	\$292,200	\$281,900
Homeowner Vacancy	1.8%	1.6%	1.1%	1,491	93,980	931,393
Rental Vacancy	20.8%	7.6%	5.5%	9,070	231,707	2,623,236
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	29.9%	33.1%	35.2%	34,312	2,767,517	44,238,593
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	3.8%	6.0%	8.3%	4,316	497,702	10,474,870
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people)	10.3%	12.9%	12.5%	28,896	2,725,633	40,521,584
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	8.1%	13.0%	11.5%	9,315	1,084,253	14,486,880
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	3,368	264,656	4,476,703
Disconnected Youth³	1.9%	2.6%	2.5%	237	25,933	430,795
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	31.5%	38.3%	34.0%	18,722	1,533,240	23,568,955
Uninsured	12.0%	12.3%	8.7%	32,656	2,620,725	28,315,092
With a Disability, Age 18-64	13.3%	10.0%	10.5%	21,394	1,265,090	20,879,820

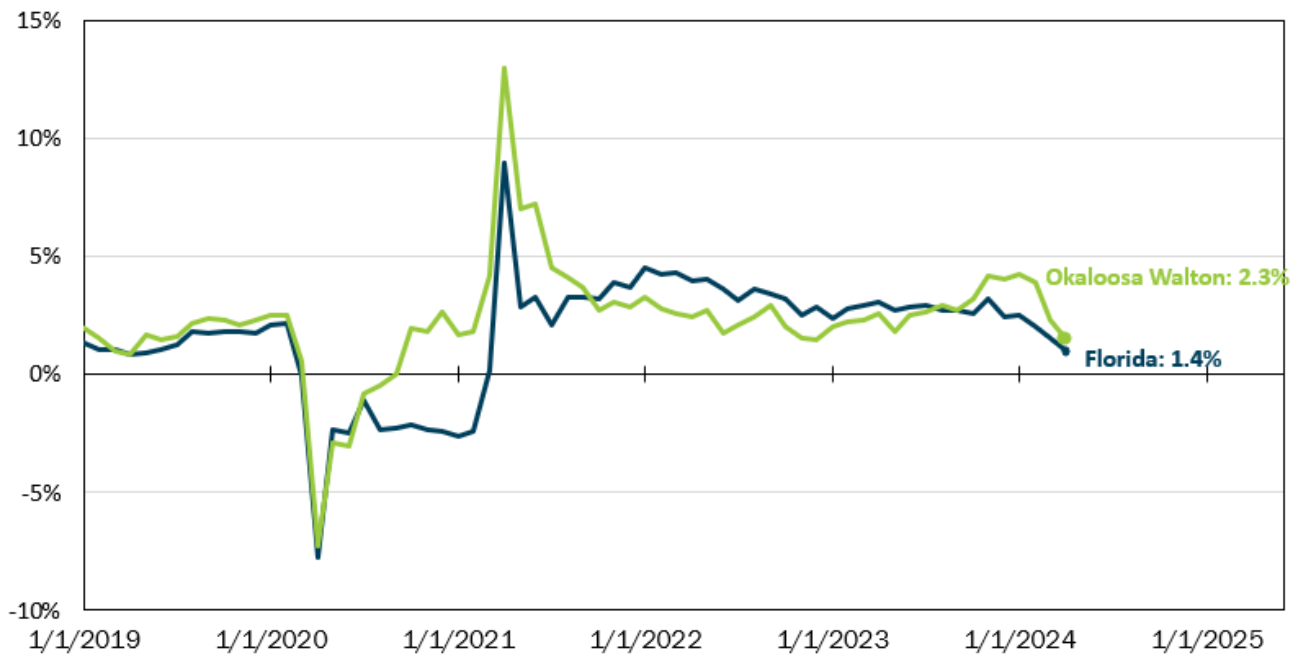
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	52.0%	43.4%	45.5%	11,126	549,199	9,492,098
Foreign Born	7.8%	21.1%	13.7%	22,505	4,574,432	45,281,071
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	3.7%	11.9%	8.2%	10,019	2,436,852	25,704,846

The unemployment rate for the Okaloosa / Walton 2024 was 3.2% as of June 2024. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 4.3%. One year earlier, in June 2023, the unemployment rate in the Okaloosa / Walton 2024 was 2.7%.



As of 2024Q1, total employment for the Okaloosa / Walton 2024 was 137,219 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2024Q1, employment increased 2.0% in the region.

Over-the-Year Labor Force Growth Rate
Florida and CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Region



Cost of Living Index

The Cost-of-Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 5.7% higher in Okaloosa / Walton 2024 than the U.S. average.

Cost of Living Information			
	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Okaloosa / Walton 2024	\$57,806	105.7	\$54,681
Florida	\$64,873	103.1	\$62,935
USA	\$70,857	100.0	\$70,857

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2024Q1

Cost of Living per [COLI](#), data as of 2024Q1, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

Education and Occupational Gaps

Data available as of the 2021-2022 academic year reveals the most common post-secondary educational attainment level for NFWC Planning Region 2 is certificates and two-year awards. They represent 91.54% of all education programs awarded, followed by four-year awards at 8.46%; and post-graduate awards at 0%. The combined high school diploma award is 89.25%.

Below are the top five programs of study:

<u>Programs of Study</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
• Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	46.42%
• Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	6.84%
• Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT)	5.01%
• Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	4.49%
• Welding Technology/Welder	2.93%

Note: See a list of the top 20 programs of study in the chart below.

CIP Code	Title	Certificates and 2yr Awards	4yr Awards	Postgraduate Awards	Total Awards
24.0101	Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	713	0	0	713
51.3801	Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	73	32	0	105
51.0904	Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	77	0	0	77

51.3901	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training	69	0	0	69
48.0508	Welding Technology/Welder	45	0	0	45
52.0299	Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other	0	41	0	41
15.0501	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering Technology/Technician	41	0	0	41
12.0401	Cosmetology/Cosmetologist, General	36	0	0	36
13.1210	Early Childhood Education and Teaching	6	25	0	31
11.1003	Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance	27	0	0	27
51.1009	Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist	26	0	0	26
43.0203	Fire Science/Fire-fighting	24	0	0	24
47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	23	0	0	23
52.0202	Purchasing, Procurement/Acquisitions and Contracts Management	0	21	0	21
46.0302	Electrician	19	0	0	19
15.1202	Computer/Computer Systems Technology/Technician	18	0	0	18
31.0507	Physical Fitness Technician	18	0	0	18
46.0415	Building Construction Technology/Technician	17	0	0	17
51.0714	Medical Insurance Specialist/Medical Biller	17	0	0	17
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	13	0	0	13
51.0911	Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer	13	0	0	13

Below are the top five Award Gaps – Supply Deficits:

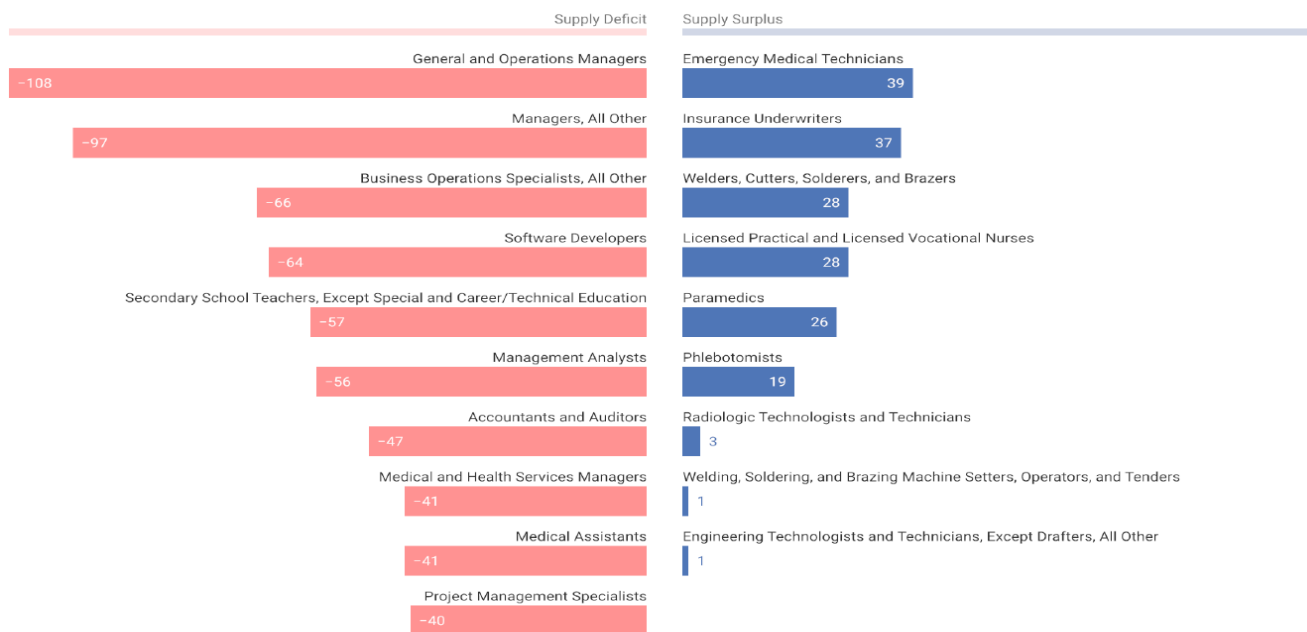
<u>Programs of Study</u>	<u>Supply Deficits</u>
• General and Operations Managers	-108
• Managers, All Other	-97
• Business Operations Specialist, All Other	-66
• Software Developers	-64
• Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	-57
• Combined Supply Deficits	-392

Below are the top five Award Gaps – Supply Surplus:

<u>Programs of Study</u>	<u>Supply Surplus</u>
• Emergency Medical Technicians	39
• Insurance Underwriters	37
• Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	28
• Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	28
• Paramedics	26
• Combined Supply Surplus	158

Note: See the list of the Top Ten Award Gaps in the chart below – Supply Deficits and Supply Surplus.

Award Gaps
Region 2



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2023Q4

Below are the top five Occupation Gaps – Supply Deficits: (Potential Average Annual Occupation Gaps over five years).

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Supply Deficits</u>
• Management Occupations	-74

- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations -66
- Computer and Mathematical Occupations -54
- Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations -45
- Construction and Extraction Occupations -36

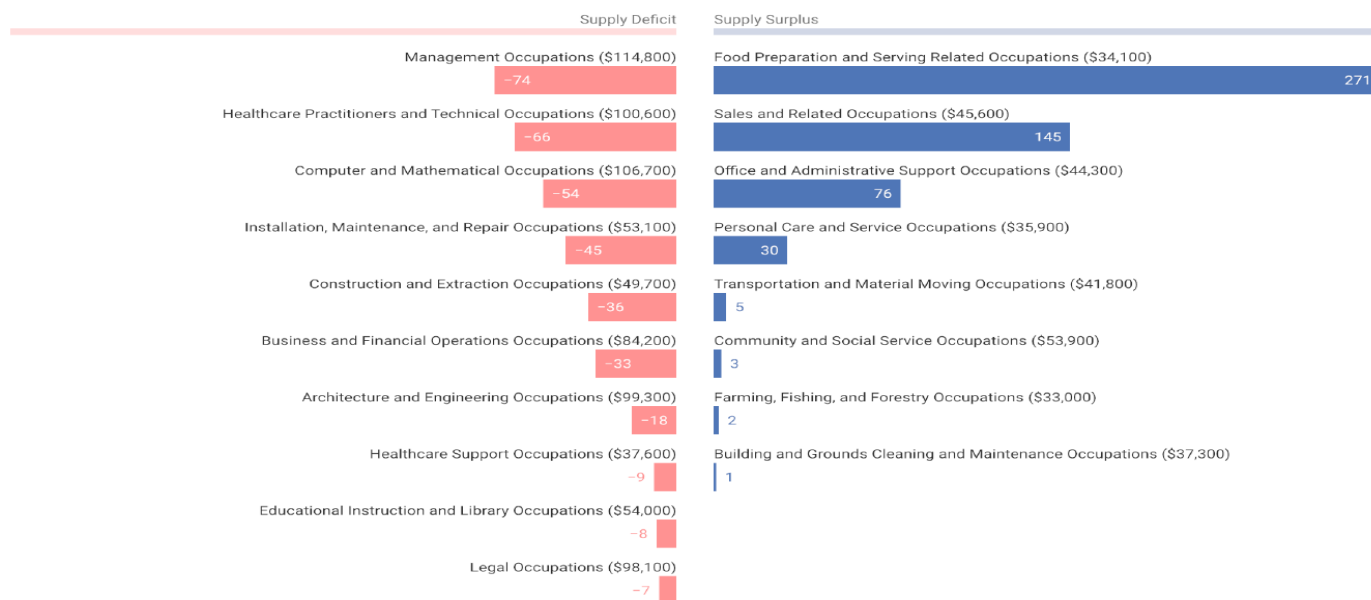
- **Combined Supply Deficits -275**

Below are the top five Occupation Gaps – Supply Surplus:

<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Supply Surplus</u>
• Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	271
• Sales and Related Occupations	145
• Office and Administrative Support Occupations	76
• Personal Care and Service Occupations	30
• Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	5
• Combined Supply Surplus	527

Note: See the top list of Occupation Gaps in the chart below – Supply Deficits and Supply Surplus

Occupation Gaps
Potential Average Annual Occupation Gaps over 5 Years in Region 2



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2023Q4

The chart below is a breakdown of students earning a high school diploma versus enrollments.

<u>Total Enrollments</u>	<u>Awarded</u>	<u>Rate</u>	
Okaloosa County	2731	2390	87.51%
Walton County	637	616	96.70%
Combined	3368	3006	89.25%

(4) An analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training, in the local area. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and the capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers (WIOA § 108(b)(1)(D) and (20 CFR 679.560(a)(4)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) maintains an engaged and informed business and education community. The Education and Industry Consortium meets quarterly and provides a report to the Board of Directors on the business and education needs of the region. The CSOW Board provides guidance and oversight for all training activities associated with both employers and job seekers in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton conducts a thorough analysis of workforce development activities and needs in the region, focusing on several key aspects:

- a. **Education and Training Programs:** CSOW offers a variety of educational and training programs designed to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. These programs include vocational training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and continuing education opportunities.
- b. **Strengths of Workforce Development Activities:**
 - (1) **Comprehensive Services:** CSOW provides a wide range of services, from job placement assistance to career counseling and skills assessments.
 - (2) **Collaboration with Local Businesses:** Strong partnerships with local employers ensure that training programs are aligned with industry needs.
 - (3) **Support for Individuals with Barriers:** Special programs are in place to support veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other groups facing employment challenges.
- c. **Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities:**
 - (1) **Resource Limitations:** Limited funding and resources can sometimes restrict the scope and reach of certain programs.
 - (2) **Awareness and Accessibility:** Not all job seekers are aware of the available resources, and some may face challenges accessing them due to transportation or other barriers.

d. Capacity to Address Education and Skill Needs:

- (1) Targeted Training Programs: By identifying skill gaps in the local workforce, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can develop targeted training programs to bridge these gaps.
- (2) Customized Support: CSOW offers personalized support to help individuals overcome barriers to employment, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

e. Employment Needs of Employers:

- (1) Industry-Relevant Training: Training programs are designed to meet the specific needs of local industries, ensuring that employers have access to a skilled workforce.
- (2) Ongoing Collaboration: Continuous feedback from employers helps CareerSource Okaloosa Walton adapt and improve its programs to better meet the evolving needs of the job market.

One of the challenges CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has identified and addressed is meeting the employment placement and training needs in a region with a significant military presence, which includes active duty, veterans, military spouses, military dependents, and military support personnel in the local community.

Currently, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's staff provides current employment and training information at Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field, as part of the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) for active-duty military transitioning to the civilian community. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's involvement with the TAP program has allowed for data collection and analysis of the military population transitioning to the civilian community.

In addition, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton established an affiliate CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Center at Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field. The affiliate sites are staffed by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Military Family Employment Advocacy team.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton works closely with the local county school districts to identify key industries with a future need for skilled workers. Offering a wide variety of courses at the high and middle school level, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program allows students the possibility of earning industry certification, college credit, and high school credit all at once.

All students can take dual enrollment courses offered at Okaloosa Technical College and Emerald Coast Technical College. Programs offered: HVAC, Applied Cybersecurity, Automotive, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Technology Support Services, Cosmetology, Electricity, Marine Services Technology, Practical Nursing, Solar Technology, and Welding Technology.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has several longstanding partnerships with post-secondary educational institutions such as the University of West Florida, Northwest Florida State College, Okaloosa Technical College, and Emerald Coast Technical College.

C. LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

Local plans describe how LWDBs implement strategies that help Floridians secure good jobs, while providing employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. Local

strategies must prioritize employment, emphasize education and training, and ensure LWDBs are responsive to Florida employers' demand for qualified workforce talent.

- (1) Describe the LWDB's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in WIOA § 116(b)(2)(A) (20 CFR 679.560(a)(5)).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is an active member of the One Okaloosa EDC, Walton County Economic Development Alliance, and Florida's Great Northwest, a regional economic development organization serving Northwest Florida. Along with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, these organizations help shape future workforce development strategies as new businesses arrive or existing businesses expand throughout the Region.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton fully supports regional economic growth and understands the importance of the role that workforce development plays in economic development. As a result, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will remain fully committed and an active member of the economic development organizations in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is fully committed to economic development as demonstrated by its collaboration with these economic development organizations. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to be engaged, as allowable, in attracting new business and supporting the expansion of existing businesses in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

The vision of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton:

"To be the leading catalyst for workforce development, empowering individuals and businesses to achieve their highest potential through innovative and inclusive employment solutions."

The mission of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton:

"To ensure that every citizen has the opportunity and skills necessary to engage in meaningful employment throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties and that every business has access to educated, trained, and prepared employees that meet their needs."

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) plays a crucial role in fostering regional economic growth and promoting economic self-sufficiency. The CSOW strategic vision includes several key elements:

Educated and Skilled Workforce: CSOW aims to prepare a workforce that meets the needs of local employers. This involves providing training and education programs that align with the demands of the regional job market.

Support for Youth and Individuals with Barriers: CSOW focuses on helping youth and individuals facing employment barriers gain access to job opportunities. This includes career pathways in critical industry sectors.

Business Engagement: CSOW work closely with local businesses to understand their workforce needs and ensure that training programs are tailored to meet these requirements.

Economic and Community Development: By partnering with various stakeholders, including educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations, CSOW contributes to the overall economic development of the region.

Performance Goals: FloridaCommerce negotiates the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance measures that set specific performance goals to measure the success of CSOW, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability.

These strategies help create a robust and responsive workforce system that supports both job seekers and employers, ultimately driving regional economic growth and enhancing economic self-sufficiency.

(2) Taking into account the analyses described in (1) through (4) in Section B. Analysis of Need and Available Resources above, describe the local area's strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described above (20 CFR 679.560(a)(6)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is committed to strategically aligning resources with its partner organizations. To streamline adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will when appropriate and depending on staff and funding availability, co-locate adult and dislocated worker career advisors at training institutions such as Northwest Florida State College Niceville Campus, Okaloosa Technical College, and Emerald Coast Technical College. For example, CSOW has out-stationed staff at Emerald Coast Technical College, and Okaloosa Technical College where both provide GED instructions and adult literacy to out-of-school youth, a population that has been difficult to find.

In the Fort Walton Beach Career Center, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and the FloridaCommerce staff work seamlessly providing employment services through Wagner-Peyser, veteran services through the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veteran Employment Representatives, and employer services through the Business Services Team. Additional career center partners include the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, all of which are available onsite or by referral.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Career Center is equipped with an adaptive workstation specifically designed to provide access to job seekers who may utilize a wheelchair or have a hearing or visual impairment, for example. In addition to knowledgeable frontline staff, the Disability Navigator is available to provide additional assistance to individuals with disabilities to assure full access to the complete array of job seeker services.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), which is in the career center, is prepared to serve veterans who have identified a qualifying employment barrier to (QEB).

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located and the Division of Blind Services is onsite periodically to provide walk-in services or remain available to provide technical assistance as needed. In addition to these onsite providers, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton maintains a community services

referral guide that contains organizations such as Pyramid Fort Walton Beach and the ARC of the Emerald Coast, that serve residents of Okaloosa and Walton County with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

(3) **Describe the LWDB’s strategies to work with core and combined partners to contribute to the following statewide goals:**

a. Increase local labor force participation.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) employs several strategies to collaborate with core and combined partners to increase local labor force participation. Here are some key approaches:

Identifying and Addressing Barriers: CSOW works with partners to identify barriers that prevent individuals from joining the workforce, such as lack of childcare, transportation issues, or skills gaps. Staff then develop targeted programs to address these barriers.

Skill Development and Training: By partnering with educational institutions and training providers, CSOW offers skill development programs that align with local labor market needs. This ensures that job seekers are equipped with the skills that employers are looking for.

Employer Engagement: CSOW collaborates with local businesses to understand their workforce needs and encourage them to adopt worker-friendly practices. This includes flexible working hours, remote work options, and support for employees with family responsibilities.

Support for Specific Populations: CSOW focuses on assisting populations that face unique challenges, such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved veterans and other citizens. Staff provide tailored support services to help these groups enter and remain in the workforce.

Community Partnerships: Engaging with community organizations allows CSOW to leverage additional resources and support systems. This includes working with non-profits, local government agencies, and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive support network for job seekers.

Data-Driven Decision-Making: CSOW uses labor market data to inform its strategies and ensure that the programs are responsive to the current economic landscape. This helps in creating effective interventions that can boost labor force participation.

By implementing these strategies, CSOW aims to create a more inclusive and robust local labor market, ultimately contributing to the statewide goal of increasing labor force participation.

b. Ensure local jobseekers and employees aged 25-70 have a credential of value.

RESPONSE

In Florida, a “credential of value” refers to any degree or non-degree credential that meets specific criteria established by the Florida Credentials Review Committee. This committee was created under

the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act. The criteria for these credentials include demand, wage, and sequencing, ensuring that they prepare Floridians for in-demand occupations.

The Master Credentials List is a comprehensive inventory of these state-approved credentials, guiding workforce education and training programs to align with current and future job market needs. This list includes various types of credentials such as industry certifications, licenses, and associate degrees.

CSOW implements various strategies to help local job seekers and employees aged 25-70 obtain valuable credentials. These strategies include:

Training Programs: Offering vocational training and certification courses tailored to in-demand industries.

Partnerships with Local Employers: Collaborating with businesses to create job placement opportunities and internships.

Career Counseling: Providing personalized career advice and planning services.

Workshops and Seminars: Hosting events that focus on resume building, interview skills, and job search techniques.

Financial Assistance: Offering grants or scholarships for eligible businesses or individuals to pursue further education or training.

These efforts aim to enhance employability and ensure that individuals have the skills and credentials needed to succeed in the job market.

c. Median wages greater than or equal to 75% of the median hourly wage in Florida.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton employs several strategies to help increase median wages to at least 75% of the median hourly wage in Florida. These strategies include:

Targeted Training Programs: Offering training and certification in high-demand, high-wage industries to ensure jobseekers have the skills needed for better-paying jobs.

Employer Partnerships: Collaborating with local employers to create job opportunities that offer competitive wages.

Career Advancement Services: Providing career counseling and development services to help individuals advance in their careers and achieve higher wages.

Financial Assistance: Offering scholarships and financial aid for further education and training, making it easier for individuals to gain the qualifications needed for higher-paying roles.

These efforts aim to enhance the earning potential of local jobseekers and employees, ensuring they can achieve sustainable and rewarding careers.

The **median** hourly wage for all occupations in Florida is approximately \$21.67 with an annual **mean** wage of \$60,210. 75% of the median is approximately \$16.25 per hour. (Reference: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics; File: oesm23st).

d. Increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for each of the following populations:

(1) Individuals 55 years and older

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will implement several strategies to increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for individuals 55 years and older:

Customize Job Training Programs: Develop and offer training programs that focus on skills in demand, such as digital literacy, modern technologies, and industry-specific skills. This can help older individuals stay competitive in the job market.

Flexible Work Arrangements: Encourage local employers to provide flexible work options like part-time roles, remote work, or job-sharing opportunities. These arrangements can make it easier for older individuals to re-enter the workforce.

Age-Friendly Workplaces: Promote the creation of age-friendly workplaces that value the experience and skills of older workers. This can include ergonomic adjustments, mentorship programs, and inclusive policies.

Networking Opportunities: Organize networking events and job fairs specifically for older job seekers. These events can help them connect with potential employers and peers.

Health and Wellness Programs: Referrals to health and wellness programs that address the specific needs of older workers. This can help them maintain their physical and mental well-being, making them more attractive to employers.

Incentives for Employers: Provide allowable incentives for employers who hire and retain older workers. This can be tax breaks or recognition programs for employers.

Career Counseling and Support: Offer career counseling services to help older individuals navigate the job market, update their resumes, and prepare for interviews.

By focusing on these strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can create a supportive environment that helps increase the employment rate for individuals 55 years and older.

(2) Youth

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will implement several strategies to increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for youth:

Youth-Specific Training Programs: Develop training programs tailored to the interests and career goals of youth and young adults. Focus on high-demand skills such as technology, healthcare, and trades.

Internships and Apprenticeships: Partner with local businesses to create internship and apprenticeship opportunities. These programs provide hands-on experience and can often lead to full-time employment.

Career Counseling and Mentorship: Offer career counseling services to help youth identify their strengths and career interests. Pair them with mentors who can provide guidance and support.

Job Fairs and Networking Events: Organize job fairs and networking events specifically for young job seekers. These events can help them connect with potential employers and learn about job opportunities.

Soft Skills Training: Provide training in soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are essential for workplace success and can make youth more attractive to employers.

Educational Support: Offer support for continuing education, such as scholarships, tutoring, and assistance with college applications. Higher education can improve job prospects and earning potential.

Employer Incentives: Provide incentives for employers who hire and retain young workers. This can include tax breaks, subsidies, or recognition programs.

Youth Employment Programs: Develop programs specifically aimed at increasing youth employment, such as summer job programs or part-time work opportunities.

By focusing on these strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can create a supportive environment that helps increase the employment rate for youth

(3) Individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will implement several strategies to increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits:

Targeted Job Training Programs: Develop training programs that focus on high-demand skills and industries. This can include certifications in healthcare, technology, and skilled trades, which often have higher employment rates.

Supportive Services: Provide supportive services such as childcare, transportation assistance, and financial literacy workshops. These services can help individuals overcome barriers to employment.

Work Experience Programs: Create work experience programs that offer temporary employment opportunities. These programs can help individuals gain valuable work experience and build their resumes.

Employer Partnerships: Partner with local employers to create job opportunities specifically for individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits. Encourage employers to participate in programs that provide wage subsidies or tax incentives.

Career Counseling and Case Management: Offer personalized career counseling and case management services. This can help individuals set career goals, develop job search strategies, and receive ongoing support.

Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Organize job fairs and hiring events that connect individuals with potential employers. Focus on industries that are actively hiring and offer good career prospects.

Soft Skills Training: Provide training in essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for workplace success and can enhance employability.

Follow-Up Services: Implement follow-up services to track progress and provide additional support as needed. This can include check-ins, additional training opportunities, and assistance with job retention.

By focusing on these strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can create a supportive environment that helps increase the employment rate for individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits.

(4) Individuals without a high school diploma or speakers of other languages

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will implement several strategies to increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for individuals without a high school diploma or speakers of other languages:

For Individuals Without a High School Diploma:

GED and High School Equivalency Programs: Offer GED preparation classes and testing support to help individuals obtain their high school equivalency diploma.

Vocational Training: Provide vocational training programs that focus on skills in high-demand industries such as healthcare, construction, and technology.

Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training: Partner with local businesses to create apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities that do not require a high school diploma.

Career Counseling and Support: Offer personalized career counseling to help individuals identify career paths that do not require a high school diploma and provide support throughout their job search.

Soft Skills Training: Provide training in essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are crucial for workplace success.

For Speakers of Other Languages:

ESL (English as a Second Language) Programs: Refer to ESL classes to help individuals improve their English language skills, which can enhance their employability.

Bilingual Job Training Programs: Develop job training programs that are offered in both English and the individual's native language to ensure comprehension and skill acquisition.

Cultural Competency Workshops: Provide workshops that help individuals understand workplace culture and expectations in the U.S.

Translation and Interpretation Services: Offer translation and interpretation services to assist individuals during job searches, interviews, and employment.

Networking Opportunities: Organize networking events and job fairs that cater to bilingual and multilingual job seekers, connecting them with employers who value language diversity.

By focusing on these strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can create a supportive environment that helps increase the employment rate for individuals without a high school diploma and speakers of other languages.

(5) Individuals with disabilities

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will implement several strategies to increase the second quarter after-exit employment rate by 10% for individuals with disabilities:

Customized Training Programs: Develop training programs tailored to the specific needs and abilities of individuals with disabilities. Focus on high-demand skills and industries that offer inclusive work environments.

Assistive Technology and Accommodations: Provide access to assistive technology and workplace accommodations. This can include adaptive equipment, software, and modifications to the work environment to ensure accessibility.

Employer Partnerships and Education: Partner with partners and local employers to create job opportunities and educate them about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Offer training on disability awareness and inclusion practices.

Supportive Services: Offer supportive services such as transportation assistance, job coaching, and personal assistance services. These can help individuals overcome barriers to employment and succeed in the workplace.

Career Counseling and Case Management: Provide personalized career counseling and case management services. Help individuals set career goals, develop job search strategies, and receive ongoing support.

Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Organize job fairs and hiring events specifically for individuals with disabilities. Connect them with employers who are committed to inclusive hiring practices.

Soft Skills Training: Offer training in essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for workplace success and can enhance employability.

Follow-Up Services: Implement follow-up services to track progress and provide additional support as needed. This can include regular check-ins, additional training opportunities, and assistance with job retention.

By focusing on these strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton can create a supportive environment that helps increase the employment rate for individuals with disabilities.

e. Increase total newly registered apprentices annually.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) employs several strategies to increase the number of newly registered apprentices annually in Florida. These strategies include:

Apprenticeship Navigators: CSOW utilizes Apprenticeship Navigators who work closely with local businesses, education providers, and associations to promote the value of registered apprenticeships.

Funding and Support: The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors allocates funds to support apprenticeship expansion, including funding for Apprenticeship Navigators at each of the 21 local workforce development boards.

Outreach and Education: Conduct outreach programs to educate employers and potential apprentices about the benefits of apprenticeships and how to get involved.

Partnerships with Employers: Collaborating with local employers to create and expand apprenticeship opportunities in various industries.

These efforts aim to provide more opportunities for individuals to gain valuable skills and credentials through apprenticeships, ultimately enhancing their career prospects.

f. Increase registered apprenticeship programs.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) will employ the same strategies outlined above to increase the number of newly registered apprentices annually in Florida. These strategies include:

Apprenticeship Navigators: CSOW utilizes Apprenticeship Navigators who work closely with local businesses, education providers, and associations to promote the value of registered apprenticeships.

Funding and Support: The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors allocated funds to support apprenticeship expansion, including funding for Apprenticeship Navigators at each of the 21 local workforce development boards.

Outreach and Education: Conduct outreach programs to educate employers and potential apprentices about the benefits of apprenticeships and how to get involved.

Partnerships with Employers: Collaborating with local employers to create and expand apprenticeship opportunities in various industries.

These efforts aim to provide more opportunities for individuals to gain valuable skills and credentials through apprenticeships, ultimately enhancing their career prospects.

g. Increase registered pre-apprenticeship programs.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) will employ several strategies to increase registered pre-apprenticeship programs in Florida:

Comprehensive Training: CSOW provides extensive training to Apprenticeship Navigator, covering key elements of registered apprenticeships. This helps them effectively communicate the value of these programs to businesses, education providers, and associations.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Scholarships: CSOW offers WIOA scholarships and training opportunities to individuals in high-demand occupations. WIOA aims to increase employment, earnings, and job retention, which indirectly supports the growth of pre-apprenticeship programs.

Policy Framework: The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors has approved a new Registered Apprenticeship Policy. This policy provides guidelines for local workforce development boards to support high-quality registered apprenticeships that align with industry needs and promote economic development.

These strategies collectively aim to build a skilled workforce and enhance the availability and quality of pre-apprenticeship programs in the region.

h. Increase the percentage of 12th grade secondary career and technical education enrollment.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) will employ several strategies to increase the percentage of 12th grade secondary career and technical education (CTE) enrollment in Florida:

Partnerships with Schools: CSOW will collaborate with local high schools to integrate CTE programs into their curricula. This includes offering dual enrollment opportunities where students can earn both high school and college credits.

Career Counseling and Guidance: CSOW will provide career counseling services to eligible youth to help them understand the benefits of CTE programs and how they align with their career goals. This includes workshops, career fairs, and one-on-one counseling sessions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid: Through programs like the WIOA, CSOW offers scholarships and financial aid to eligible students pursuing CTE courses. This financial support helps reduce barriers to enrollment.

Employer Engagement: CSOW works closely with local employers to ensure that CTE programs meet industry needs. This includes creating internship and apprenticeship opportunities that provide students with hands-on experience and a direct pathway to employment.

Awareness Campaigns: CSOW will conduct awareness campaigns to promote the value of CTE programs to students, parents, and the community. These campaigns highlight success stories and the potential for high-paying, in-demand careers.

These strategies aim to create a robust pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet the demands of the local economy.

i. Build talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries of focus by assisting individuals to earn credentials that directly support the sector.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) will employ several strategies to Build a talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries of focus by assisting individuals to earn credentials that directly support the sector in Florida.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) employs several strategies to build a talent pipeline for targeted new and emerging industries in Florida. Here are some key approaches:

Training and Education Programs: CSOW offers various training programs and scholarships, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) scholarships, which provide education and training opportunities in high-demand occupations. These programs help individuals gain the necessary skills and credentials to meet industry needs.

Partnerships with Educational Institutions: CSOW collaborates with local educational institutions like Northwest Florida State College and Okaloosa Technical College to offer specialized training programs. These partnerships ensure that the training provided aligns with the requirements of emerging industries.

Industry-Specific Training: CSOW focuses on providing training for specific industries, such as technology, healthcare, and transportation. This targeted approach helps create a workforce that is well-prepared for the demands of these sectors.

Career Development Support: CSOW offers career development services, including job readiness training, resume building, and interview preparation. CSOW connects job seekers with potential employers through job fairs and networking events.

Customized Solutions for Employers: CSOW works closely with employers to understand their unique workforce needs and develop customized training solutions. This ensures that businesses have access to a pool of skilled workers who meet their specific requirements.

These strategies collectively help build a robust talent pipeline that supports the growth and sustainability of emerging industries in Florida.

D. DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES AND PROGRAM SERVICES

The local plan must address how the LWDB coordinates service delivery with core programs of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services, and the Division of Career and Adult Education, as well as required partners including, but not limited to TANF, SNAP Employment and Training (E&T), Senior Community Service Employment

Program, Community Service Block Grant, programs authorized under the state's unemployment insurance laws (referred to as Reemployment Assistance in Florida), programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007, and Housing and Urban Development, where available.

(1) Workforce Development System Description: Describe the local workforce development system, including:

(a) All of the programs that are included in the system; and

RESPONSE

All required WIOA partners are included in CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's workforce delivery system. The career center offers access to Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Services, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Title I/Career and Technical Education (CTE), Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Programs, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Division of Blind Services, Community Action Agency, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The following partners are co-located in the career center and pay a proportionate amount of infrastructure costs based on FTEs:

- a. WIOA Adult
- b. WIOA Dislocated Worker
- c. WIOA Youth
- d. Wagner-Peyser Employment Services/MSFW
- e. Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Programs
- f. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- g. Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA)
- h. Supplemental Nutrition & Assistance Program (SNAP)
- i. Reemployment Assistance Programs
- j. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- k. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

(b) How the LWDB supports the strategy identified in the state plan

under 20 CFR 676.105 and Chapter 445.003, F.S. ([Chapter 445 Section 003 - 2021 Florida Statutes - The Florida Senate \(flsenate.gov\)](#))

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton supports the strategy identified in the state plan under 20 CFR 676.105 and works with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to ensure service alignment, including programs such as:

- a. The adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs are authorized under subtitle B of title I of WIOA and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).
- b. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program is authorized under Title II of WIOA and administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED).
- c. The Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, as amended by WIOA Title III and administered by DOL; and
- d. The Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA and administered by ED.

Through this collaboration, CSOW can offer the following services:

- a. Assist students in developing their career pathways to transition into post-secondary education or certifications.
- b. Provide support services for eligible students.
- c. Advising and job placement assistance for the program graduates.
- d. Refer eligible students to the appropriate services.
- e. Assist with the needs of students with disabilities.
- f. Provide local, regional, and national workforce data.
- g. Provide CareerSource Okaloosa Walton-sponsored workshops and training in industry certifications to eligible students; And,
- h. Assist in the identification of High Skill/High Wage occupations within the community.

All planned services provided by CSOW or Partner program(s) will be provided by the respective Program staff. All career services provided will be consistent with those identified in the Memorandum of Understanding. All the basic career services will be made available for One-Stop customers, including program participants receiving services through the One-Stop delivery system.

To ensure participants receive every opportunity to be successful in their job search efforts, career center staff will offer the below services to participants enrolled in a One-Stop system program through direct

services or referral where appropriate and allowable:

- a. Referral to housing assistance & other supportive services.
- b. Referrals to the CSOW Veterans Team for services.
- c. Career coaching and job search assistance.
- d. Personalized instruction to prepare for specific job interviews.
- e. Occupational training where applicable.
- f. Intervene with potential employers on behalf of specific program participants where appropriate.
- g. Transportation assistance where allowable.
- h. Childcare referrals as needed; And,
- i. Referrals as needed for state licensing/certifications required for employment.

- (c) How the LWDB works with entities carrying out core and combined programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under [The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act \(Perkins V\)](#) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment (WIOA § 108(b)(2) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(1)).

RESPONSE

CSOW plays a crucial role in coordinating with Partners that carry out core and combined programs, as well as other workforce development programs, including those authorized under The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). It's important to note that the specifics of how CSOW works with its Partners can vary based on the unique needs and circumstances of each customer.

CSOW supports the strategy identified in the State Plan and works with its Partners to align services. This alignment is aimed at enhancing the capacity and performance of the workforce development system, aligning and improving the outcomes and effectiveness of federally funded and other workforce programs and investments, and promoting economic growth.

The **CSOW** strategic vision supports regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This includes preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, and setting goals relating to performance accountability measures.

CSOW also works with its Partners to align resources available to the local area to achieve strategic vision and goals. This collaboration is essential for creating a workforce development system that effectively meets the needs of employers and individuals seeking employment or skills development.

(2) Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities:

(a) Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(7) and 20 CFR 679.560(6)).

RESPONSE

WIOA is designed to assist career seekers with advancing their careers through high-quality career services that include career coaching, support services, and training opportunities, as well as matching employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the regional and global economy. Under WIOA and through the regional one-stop center, employment and training activities will target:

- a. Connecting career seekers with skills and credentials necessary for advancing their careers with self-sufficient and sustaining wages.
- b. Providing access and opportunities to all career seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment such as persons with disabilities, low income, or disadvantaged, the homeless, the ex-offender, the basic skills deficient, or the limited English
- c. Enabling businesses and employers to connect with ease and hire qualified, skilled workers and access other supports, including training for their current workforce
- d. Engaging in continuous improvement of the regional one-stop system by identifying the best strategies for various populations
- e. Basic career services are available throughout the region for all seeking services in the CSOW one-stop delivery system and include:
- f. Eligibility determinations for receiving assistance through the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs
- g. Outreach, including identification through the CSOW Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) and/or the state's reemployment assistance claimants likely to exhaust benefits, and connection to suitable career services available through the one-stop delivery system
- h. Assess skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skill gaps), and support service needs
- i. Labor exchange services, including career coaching, career networking, and connecting with employment opportunities
- j. Deliver information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA)
- k. Deliver referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs within the CSOW regional planning area
- l. Deliver workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, job listings in labor market areas; information on skills necessary to advance career; and
- m. information relating to regional occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement

- n. Deliver performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers
- o. Deliver information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the region's one-stop delivery system
- p. Deliver information relating to the availability of support services, and referrals to those services, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Florida's KidsCare Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- q. Provide assistance establishing eligibility with financial aid assistance programs for training programs not provided under WIOA
- r. Deliver assistance with filing claims under reemployment assistance programs

Individualized career services that are appropriate for career seekers to obtain or retain employment are available to career seekers through CSOW career centers or partners. These services include:

- a. Assessments of the skill levels and needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools, in-depth interviewing, and evaluation to identify employment barriers and goals
- b. Development of an individual employment plan for identifying goals, achievement objectives, and services needed for the career seeker to advance his or her career
- c. Group and individual coaching and mentoring
- d. Career planning and modeling
- e. Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for the labor market
- f. Internships and work experiences linked to careers
- g. Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, training, or employment
- h. Financial literacy services

Follow-up services are provided for participants placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment or program exit whichever occurs later. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

CSOW Business Services team identifies and assists with the talent management needs of local employers. These initiatives include service delivery for target sector employers and proactively partnering with employers, Chambers, economic developers, and other organizations to identify current and future skill requirements and gaps

The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) assist in contacting and engaging Federal contractors and employers to coordinate hiring events to create more opportunities for veterans. Veterans assessed through the one-stop system to have a Qualifying Employment Barrier to employment under CareerSource Florida's directive will be referred to the CSOW Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) team. Any veterans determined to not have a qualifying barrier are referred to and served through the CSOW career development team.

(b) Provide a description of local policies and procedures for individualized career and training services in the Adult program to give priority to veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. 20 CFR 679.560(b)(21)

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton policy is to provide priority for intensive and training services to recipients of public assistance, other low-income, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The priority of services categories includes veterans. These statutory changes will help to address concerns that individuals with barriers to employment were often underserved through the one-stop system under WIOA and ensure that resources are more equitably allocated to support those with the greatest needs.

Priority of services means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons (Within the population receiving the services) for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program.

(3) Training Services: Describe how training services outlined in WIOA section 134 are provided, including:

(a) A description of the process and criteria for issuing ITAs, including a description of any ITA limitations established by the LWDB and a description of any exceptions to the use of ITAs;

RESPONSE

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are utilized to procure training services for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers and may be used for youth as appropriate. The ITA is established on behalf of participants. The training services are acquired from an eligible training provider selected by the participant in consultation with the WIOA Career Advisor. The Career Advisor must coordinate funding for ITAs with funding from other Federal, state, local, or private job training programs; or other appropriate sources to assist individuals in obtaining and completing a training program.

Priority considerations are given to programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. Examples of postsecondary credentials include:

- a. Attainment of an industry-recognized certificate or certification.

b. An associate degree; or

c. A bachelor's degree.

The ITA payment may be made using vouchers or other appropriate methods. Payments may be made at the beginning of the training program or on an incremental basis.

An ITA is used to access training services from a provider on the local Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) or the Regional Planning Area ETPL. While in most situations an individual will receive training services through an ITA, in some limited circumstances, CSOW may contract out the training services, which include work-based training opportunities.

CSOW ITAs are currently capped at \$6,000.00 or the cost of the program, whichever is higher, for each participant. The cap amount includes the costs for tuition, books, and fees of the training provider, and other training services prescribed and authorized by the WIOA. The Executive Director (ED) or designee may approve courses costing over the cap amount on a case-by-case basis, depending on the availability of funds. Request for extenuating circumstances must be made in writing in advance.

The ITA cap for a special project or other grant may be increased above the regular ITA amount by the Executive Director. All requests must be in writing and approved in advance.

(b) If contracts for training services are used, how the use of such contracts are coordinated with the use of ITAs.

RESPONSE

Under limited conditions, as provided in 20 CFR 680.320 and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(G), the CSOW Board may authorize the use of contracts to pay for training services, rather than using an ITA. Contracts for training services may be used instead of ITAs **only** when at least one of the following **five** exceptions exist, and the *consumer choice* requirements of 20 CFR 680.340 are fulfilled.

a. The **first** exception occurs when training is conducted using any of the following work-based training activities:

- (1) On-the-job-training (OJT).
- (2) Customized training.
- (3) Incumbent worker training; or
- (4) Transitional jobs.

b. The **second** exception occurs when the CSOW Board determines that there is an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs. This exception may be more appropriate for rural areas. *The determination process must*

include a public comment period for interested providers of at least 30 days and be described in the Local Plan.

- c. The **third** exception occurs when the CSOW Board determines that there is a training services program of **demonstrated effectiveness** offered in the local area or by a community-based organization or another private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment, as described in the paragraph on individuals with barriers below. The criteria for determining demonstrated effectiveness may include:
- (1) Financial stability of the organization.
 - (2) Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services to individuals with barriers to employment through such means as program completion rate; attainment of the skills, certificates, or degrees the program is designed to provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment; and retention in employment; and
 - (3) How the specific program relates to the workforce investment needs identified in the local plan.
- d. The **fourth** exception occurs when the CSOW Board determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education (WIOA sec. 3(28)) or other provider of training services to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.
- e. The **fifth** and final exception occurs when the CSOW Board is considering entering into a Pay-for-Performance contract, and the Board ensures that the contract is consistent with 20 CFR 683.510.

Individuals with barriers to employment means a member of one or more of the following populations (WIOA sec. 3(24)):

- a. Displaced homemakers.
- b. Low-income individuals.
- c. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.
- d. Individuals with disabilities.
- e. Older individuals, i.e., those aged 55 or over.
- f. Ex-offenders.
- g. Homeless individuals.

- h. Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system.
- i. Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers.
- j. Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, defined in WIOA sec. 167(i).
- k. Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF (part A of title IV of the Social Security Act).
- l. Single parents (including single pregnant women).
- m. Long-term unemployed individuals; or
- n. Other groups determined by the Governor to have barriers to employment.

Demonstrated Effectiveness Criteria for Non-ITA Training Providers and Programs.

- a. Under 20 CFR 680.320 (a) (c), the CSOW Board must establish the criteria to determine “**demonstrated effectiveness.**”
- b. To satisfy the requirement for “**demonstrated effectiveness,**” the non-ITA provider’s program must meet the appropriate benchmarks below for the last completed program year for which data has been collected, beginning July 1 of the calendar year and ending June 30 of the following calendar year.
- c. To meet “**demonstrated effectiveness**” for a program, the provider must meet the criteria for at least two of the performance benchmarks below. The percentage for each benchmark should be established in policy:
 - (1) Universal students completing the program.
 - (2) Workforce students completing the program.
 - (3) Universal students awarded an industry-recognized or other post-secondary credential.
 - (4) Workforce students awarded an industry-recognized or other post-secondary credential.
 - (5) Universal students employed after completing the program
 - (6) Workforce students employed after completing the program.

Note: *Benchmarks #1 and #2 are expectations established by Board staff. Benchmarks #3, #4, #5, and #6 are based on the CSOW Federal performance standards. They will be updated as changes occur. There is no Federal performance standard for Benchmarks #1 and #2.*

The standards above may be waived by the Executive Director if requested in writing for participants who meet the priority of services criteria for WIOA funding for training services or who are earning below the region's self-sufficiency wage.

(c) How the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided (WIOA §108(b)(19) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(18)).

RESPONSE

The ITA system allows participants the opportunity to choose the training provider that best meets their needs. The one-stop system must ensure customers are provided with quality indicators and performance information on providers of training services. Customers must also receive effective career services, case management, and career planning. ITAs or non-ITA providers can also support placing participants into registered apprenticeship programs.

WIOA emphasizes consumer choice in training provider selection. In addition to the services listed in the previous paragraphs, to enable the participants to make a responsible decision about where best to receive training, CSOW staff must ensure the following tools are available to help participants make the appropriate choice:

- a. Labor market information (LMI) regarding training programs.
- b. Current Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) and non-ITA providers.
- c. Current Local Targeted Occupations List (LTOL); and
- d. The current Regional Planning Area ETPL.

Training services, whether accessed by ITAs or under contract, must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible training provider per the goals and objectives outlined in the participant's employment plan. Career Advisors may assist the participant with making career choices; however, the ultimate decision rests with the participant. To what extent the participant has the final decision in the selection of training services varies depending on the results of the assessment, interview, and evaluation.

(d) How the LWDB ensures 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 §134(c)(3)(G)(iii)). Include strategic or other policies that align training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to

sector strategies and demand occupations (WIOA §134(d)(1)(A)(ix)(II)(aa)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton ensures that all skills training programs, including Employed Worker Training (EWT) and training funded through Individual Training Accounts, are linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local labor market, or an area in which a participant is willing to relocate, through regional and statewide demand data provided by the Florida Department of Commerce as well as through direct input from economic development organizations and businesses operating in Okaloosa or Walton County.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's management reviews WIOA-sponsored training programs through the development and approval of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and Regional Demand Occupation List (RDOL) or Local Targeted Occupations List (LTOL). The ETPL and RDOL/LTOL for the local area are approved by the Board of Directors.

In partnership with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, educational institutions such as Northwest Florida State College, Okaloosa Technical College, and Emerald Coast Technical College develop and submit training programs for approval and inclusion on the ETPL. As a requirement, these programs must align with the occupations included on the RDOL/LTOL, including the standard occupational code, occupational title, annual growth, number of openings as well as entry and mean level wage data.

For those participants who may be interested in relocation, career advisors routinely share similar regional and statewide level information. To assist participants in making informed training decisions, career advisors may also provide specific program outcome data, including the number of graduates and average wages of WIOA-sponsored graduates in Okaloosa or Walton County.

(e) How the LWDB incorporates/includes work-based training activities in the local area's service delivery model.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton utilizes an industry sector approach, which is consistent with the vision and strategic goals established by the Board of Directors, to effectively provide Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), customized training and work-based training services for both businesses and job seekers in Okaloosa or Walton County. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's program management and executive leadership along with data provided by the Education and Industry Consortium have identified the following industry sectors as areas of concentration: 23 Construction; 62 Healthcare and Social Assistance; 31-33 manufacturing; 54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and 92 Public Administration.

The industry-sector service delivery model provides CareerSource Okaloosa Walton with a more focused approach to aligning job seekers with relevant employment opportunities. In this model, business account managers, who specialize in one or more industry sectors, are key to developing industry-specific recruitment and training solutions that meet the needs of area businesses. These solutions often include customized training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), work-based training, industry-

specific job fairs, or recruitment events for both unemployed and underemployed job seekers who are taking their first or next step on a career pathway.

The model benefits both the unemployed and underemployed job seekers who are taking their first or next step toward a career pathway. With this model, Business Services Account Managers specializing in one or more industry sectors are key to developing industry-specific recruitment and training solutions that meet the needs of area businesses. These solutions often include work-based learning models such as on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, Registered Apprenticeships, and other contracted training for employers using non-ITA providers.

Priority Employers for Incumbent Worker Training

Priority for incumbent worker training should be given to **private sector** employers; however, according to TEGL 19-16, there may be instances where non-profit and local government entities may be the recipients of incumbent worker training funds. For example, IWT may be used in the health care industry where hospitals are operated by a non-profit or local government entities and a nursing up-skilling opportunity is available.

Depending on the availability of funds and the number of private sector employer applications are in the queue, applications from non-profits and local governments entities may be considered.

(4) Youth Workforce Investment Activities: Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities (services) in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and assessment must:

(a) Identify successful models of such youth workforce investment activities (WIOA §108(b)(9) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(8)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton adopted a case management services model where the career advisor works directly with the youth and manages their journey through the youth program. A description of youth services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system is included in the next section. The services coordinated and delivered through the CSOW One-Stop delivery system are linked to one or more of the indicators of performance described in WIOA section 116.

(b) Include the local area's design framework for the local youth program and how the 14 program elements required in 20 CFR 681.460 are made available within that framework (WIOA § 129(c)(1)).

RESPONSE #1

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's youth program aligns with USDOL's goals of preparing workers for good jobs and the attainment of the skills and knowledge that ensure workers succeed in a knowledge-based economy. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton targets at-risk youth with barriers using a model designed as a holistic approach for providing in-depth career exploration of high-demand occupations with potential for vocational training. Youth receive instruction on financial literacy, life skills, and employability/work readiness; additional activities include education and industry tours, mentoring, community service, and work experience. Youth participate in the continuum of services designed to set them on their chosen career pathway. This model can be effectively measured by any or all five of the WIOA performance measures include:

Employment Rate– 2nd After Exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program).

Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Credential Attainment - The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exiting from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant is also employed or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

Measurable Skills Gains - The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, toward such a credential or employment.

Employment Rate–4th Quarter After Exit - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has developed the following framework for the WIOA youth program:

As part of designing the CareerSource youth opportunities and work experiences throughout the year; and to ensure quality enrollments, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board and committees have incorporated the following design framework:

- a. Focusing on Youth Most in Need.
- b. Focusing on Older Youth.
- c. Focusing on Out-of-School Youth.
- d. Focusing on In-School Youth
- e. Focusing on Outreach and Recruitment Strategies.

- f. Improving Eligibility and Intake Processes.
- g. Using Technology to Aid Program Administration and Reporting.

Focusing on Youth Most in Need

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to focus services on eligible youth most in need such as out-of-school youth and in-school youth most at risk of dropping out; youth in and aging out of foster care; youth offenders and those at risk of court involvement; homeless and runaway youth; children of incarcerated parents; and youth with disabilities.

The hardest-to-serve youth, like dropouts and out-of-school youth, require additional time and assistance to attain positive outcomes as measured by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth common and statutory measures. Therefore, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to implement strategies that promote longer-term services for these youth to prepare them for post-secondary education and/or the labor market.

Regular WIOA formula funds require staff to serve youth 16 to 24 years old. Sometimes it is difficult to locate the older youth population, especially those without a high school diploma or GED and who are unemployed or underemployed. Staff will focus on reaching out to this difficult youth population, including eligible veterans and their spouses.

Focusing on Outreach and Recruitment Strategies

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board has cited several strategies to improve outreach and recruitment efforts to the older youth population:

- a. Think beyond “youth” when designing and promoting youth activities given that many veterans and young adults have children and household responsibilities.
- b. Avoid alienating young adults by characterizing the summer component as only a youth program.
- c. Develop new partnerships or reframe old partnerships with organizations that already serve these young adults; and
- d. Implement strategies to differentiate services based on the unique needs of these older participants.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board and committees adopted the ETA recommendations as strategies to improve eligibility processes, such as:

- a. Providing more training to less experienced staff members to prepare them for summer tasks if needed.
- b. Relying more heavily on experienced staff to perform eligibility determination; and

- c. Examining other possible strategies to maximize staff resources such as streamlining intake procedures through prescreening applications and coordinating with schools and social service agencies to determine youth eligibility.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton also uses technology to provide online training and webinars to reinforce information provided to support work readiness training offered to participants. Where possible, staff will utilize creative and efficient approaches to program administration using technology.

CareerSource Youth Program is to provide a quality experience for the youth in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. An experience that will prepare them to acquire the skills and experience needed to transition into the labor market and obtain and maintain employment leading to a self-sufficient wage. To make this journey successful, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board requires staff emphasis on the following areas:

- a. Work Readiness Training and Other Non-Worksite Activities.
- b. Focus on Career Pathways.
- c. Measuring Work Readiness.
- d. Academic and Occupational Linkages.
- e. Supportive Services.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board requires staff to integrate work experiences with related work readiness training, academics, occupational skills training, and/or leadership development as a year-round focus. Work readiness training is one of the most useful aspects of the CareerSource Youth Program. When implementing work readiness training, staff are encouraged to consider the following strategies to maximize the impact of work readiness and related training:

- a. Training Design Components

The CareerSource Youth Program model includes these training design components:

- (1) Group orientations that communicate the overall benefits of a work experience, provide program expectations for work behavior, address any outstanding procedural questions from youth prior to the start of the program, and are interactive and motivational.
- (2) Work readiness training prior to worksite placement that is engaging, focuses on the foundation skills desired by employers, lasts at least one week with the length of time dependent on participants' needs, and ensures youth are adequately prepared for their work experience.
- (3) Onsite group or individual orientation by the employer on the first day of worksite placement to introduce youth to the worksite, and review expectations outlined in the worksite evaluation; and
- (4) Ongoing training integrated throughout the work experience that continues a few hours each week in combination with the work experience. The Region is looking at ways to better incorporate this element.

b. Training Content Areas

Work readiness topics focus on training content areas, such as:

- (1) Foundation skills such as communication skills, teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, conflict resolution, work habits, customer service, responsibility, appearance, integrity, leadership, and time management.
- (2) Job-seeking skills such as portfolio building (resumes, cover letters, references), job applications, entrepreneurship, interviewing, networking, and transition planning into unsubsidized employment opportunities.
- (3) Career planning including career assessments and options for continued education.
- (4) Financial literacy such as budgeting, use of credit, and opening of bank accounts.
- (5) Industry-specific training relevant to the work experience; and
- (6) Basic skills including math, reading, and computer literacy.

Measuring work readiness is not a required activity for a year-round program; however, WIOA provides flexibility in designing work readiness programs. Career Advisors continue to evaluate methods that will be an effective indicator of whether a youth is ready to be placed in a work experience opportunity or unsubsidized employment.

Career Advisors will continue to develop ways to enhance the effectiveness of the work readiness tool; and look for additional tools to improve indicators of measuring work readiness. Some examples of work readiness tools to be researched by Career Advisors include the following:

- a. A worksite evaluation measuring performance in the workplace may be used to assess work readiness for the work readiness indicator. An effective method of assessing work readiness is to require the worksite supervisor to observe and evaluate workplace performance.
- b. This worksite evaluation may be conducted by the employer. Using this tool the employer will be responsible for assessing performance; and Career Advisors will assist the employers in order to make the process as simple and seamless as possible.
- c. This tool focuses on attaining a satisfactory level of workplace proficiency as opposed to a measurable increase or gain. The attainment of proficiency or competency in the foundation and worksite-specific skills necessary to be successful in the workplace should be determined by the employer and should be based on the attainment of work behaviors outlined in the worksite evaluation tool. This tool should clearly state the overall criteria necessary to achieve workplace proficiency. For example, worksite evaluation tools could state that work readiness proficiency can only be attained after a) the supervisor indicates satisfactory performance; and
- d. a minimum numerical score for determining proficiency is achieved.
- e. This tool should measure work readiness skills most desired by employers. This includes universal foundation skills such as work habits/professionalism (i.e., attendance, punctuality,

attitude), teamwork/collaboration, communication skills, and critical thinking/problem-solving. In addition, the tool should allow for flexibility to include industry or job-specific skills as determined by the employer.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board believes it is appropriate that academic learning be directly linked to work experience for each youth. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to link academic learning to work experience opportunities. The Career Advisors and the Business Services Team will continue to build relationships with employers and encourage them to provide work opportunities for youth. Every effort will be made to connect the youth to an occupation related to his or her career choice, including opportunities such as entrepreneurship training. When linking academic and/or occupational learning to a work experience, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board continues to encourage staff to assess the academic and occupational skills needs and interests of youth and determine appropriate training, especially training leading to credential attainment, combined with a work experience placement that supports the enhancement of identified skills.

Under WIOA, the provision of supportive services is one of the 14 elements CareerSource must make available to eligible youth. Supportive services may include transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and other services that are necessary to enable an individual who is unable to obtain services from other programs to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. Career Advisors have extensive experience working with disadvantaged youth and recognize the need for additional support for youth to overcome their employment barriers. Supportive services most often is needed to help youth resolve transportation issues and to acquire appropriate work clothing and tools. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to provide supportive services to populations in need, such as at-risk youth, to support their efforts to connect to and succeed in education, training, and work experience opportunities.

Another primary purpose of the CareerSource Youth Program is to provide youth with meaningful “work experiences” in a structured learning environment that takes place in a classroom setting and a workplace setting; and, to promote the development of good work habits and basic work skills. The Board believes that this goal can be best accomplished by:

- a. Ensuring Quality Worksites.
- b. Job Matching.
- c. Worksite Monitoring.
- d. Ensuring Quality Worksites.
- e. Incorporating Green Work Experiences.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to seek employers that are committed to helping participants receive high-quality experience and training as well as employers that are willing to work closely with the Career Advisors.

CareerSource Business Services staff are asked to recruit employers based on local workforce investment targeted and priority industries; and employers who are flexible in working with youth who have issues that may present barriers to employment. In addition, Career Advisors are asked to consider a combination of public sector, private sector, and non-profit work experiences for youth.

The ETA evaluation of youth programs found that while not necessarily appropriate for all youth, the private sector can be a good source of high-quality jobs for many participants, particularly older youth with previous work experience. Reports have shown that by placing youth in private sector worksites, there is a greater chance for the work experience to lead to unsubsidized employment opportunities.

ETA recommends that the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board place a strong emphasis on the orientation and preparation of worksite supervisors. To this end, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board requires youth staff to formalize worksite agreements for each youth with worksite supervisors prior to youth beginning their work experience. Worksite supervisors will be fully briefed on the program's elements, mission, and goals. Job descriptions created by the employer for participants ensure that expectations on the part of the employer are the focus of the work experience. In addition, having employers participate in an orientation and provide input on the development of the work experience, and serve as onsite mentors is sure to improve the experience of both employers and youth.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Youth Program requires the Career Advisors to make an effort to match worksites with participants' personal and professional interests and goals. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board agrees with this philosophy and believes that a well-thought-out and planned match can maximize the likelihood that a youth has a meaningful work experience. Based on the variety of jobs available, every effort will be made to connect the youth to an occupation related to his or her career choice. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board and Councils have adopted four key considerations for staff when matching youth to worksites:

- a. The youth's interests are expressed through their application, orientation, or meetings with staff.
- b. Direct employer feedback after a formal interview.
- c. The youth's age, experience, and skills; and
- d. Transportation needs or other logistical issues.

Worksite monitoring is an important component of employment or a work experience program to ensure a meaningful work experience for youth as well as to secure a quality worksite. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board requires ongoing monitoring/oversight through in-person visits as essential to ensuring high-quality experiences and heading off problems between worksite supervisors and youth before they become serious.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages the CareerSource Program Manager to dedicate appropriate staff to monitor employers and worksite activities. CareerSource Worksite Monitors will work to maintain ongoing contact with employers to provide support and technical assistance. In addition, Career Advisors work to ensure that worksite agreements are upheld, adequate supervision and quality mentoring are provided to youth, and worksites comply with workplace safety and child labor laws.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board believes that having dedicated staff to monitor and work with youth is valuable in assessing the quality of the work experience and measuring youth progress throughout the work experience. Career Advisors work to ensure youth are receiving mentoring, are safe and productive, and are achieving success in their placement. Proper and ongoing monitoring can ensure that if problems exist or if the worksite is not a good match for the youth or the employer, staff

will have time to effectively address the issue or place the participant in an alternative worksite activity, if appropriate.

This component places focus on the following areas:

- a. Transitioning Older/Out of School Youth beyond Work Experience.
- b. Work Opportunity Tax Credit adds Transition Incentive for at-risk Youth.

For older youth and out-of-school youth who are not returning to school following a subsidized work experience, The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to work to transition youth into unsubsidized employment, education, and training opportunities, or co-enroll them into the WIOA Adult Program. Additionally, the Board staff may test other transitional job models that combine short-term subsidized work experience with support services and career counseling; and explore new and innovative strategies for out-of-school youth. For example, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board will increase paid and unpaid work experience opportunities year-round for out-of-school youth.

Some examples of transition strategies staff may pursue include:

- a. Forming work experience partnerships with business, education, and training institutions, and partner agencies that can continue to assist young adults beyond work experience.
- b. Hiring program staff who are specifically assigned to connect young adults to transitional opportunities based on their individual interests and needs.
- c. Allocating time in work readiness workshops to promote speakers from local business and educational institutions; and
- d. Holding career transition workshops or related work fairs following the conclusion of the work experience.
- e. Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation for transitioning experiences for youth with disabilities; and
- f. Develop On-the-Job Training opportunities for selected, older youth.
- g. Unsubsidized Employment.

Many youths, particularly older/out-of-school youth, aim to directly transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment. Before the youth completes a work experience, utilizing local labor market information, the Career Advisor should identify employers with greater potential to hire youth into unsubsidized employment. The ETA evaluation found that several local areas reported that private-sector employers were more likely to hire youth into unsubsidized positions and that private-sector employers can offer high-quality jobs, particularly for older youth with greater work experience. Therefore, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board continues to encourage staff to expand engagement efforts to private-sector employers, thereby increasing unsubsidized employment opportunities.

For out-of-school youth, work experience can provide a potential path back to education. Through work experiences as well as career mentoring provided by employers, youth are exposed to the skills and education needed to achieve their career goals. This may reinforce the importance of earning

secondary and post-secondary credentials. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to link work experiences with opportunities that expose youth to educational pathways. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board also encourages staff to partner with local colleges to explore the possibility of providing integrated work and training experiences that increase the exposure of youth to higher education including the opportunity to earn college credits. A strategy that may be considered is to use academic training to address basic skill deficiencies or station staff at partner schools to help promote the return of out-of-school youth.

Moving from work experience to occupational skills training can be a natural transition for youth. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to partner with regional occupational training programs, adult education programs, and local colleges to enroll older youth in programs that have successful completion and high placement rates for serving this population of youth. Training areas can include but are not limited to allied health, solar installation, aviation mechanics, customer service, welding and diesel mechanics, information technology, and topics related to science, technology, engineering, and math occupations. Occupational skills training should result in the attainment of employer/industry-recognized credentials that promote career pathways. Training should be related to occupations listed on the Local Target Occupations List (LTOL).

Pre-apprenticeship programs can include summer employment opportunities and work experiences that introduce the skills and knowledge required to be eligible for registered apprenticeships. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board encourages staff to look for opportunities that transition youth from pre-apprenticeship programs into registered apprenticeships. Through partnerships with schools, employers, labor organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors, and state apprenticeship offices, staff should work collaboratively to determine how best to coordinate these efforts.

Older youth who meet the eligibility criteria for the WIOA Adult Program can co-enroll in both the WIOA Youth and Adult programs including both WIOA-funded services. WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 681.430, state that individuals who meet the respective eligibility requirements may participate in adult and youth programs concurrently. If such concurrent enrollment occurs, expenditures must be tracked separately by program.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit adds Transition Incentive for at-risk Youth. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal credit available to private for-profit employers who hire eligible participants from particular target groups into unsubsidized employment. The WOTC is a potential incentive for employers to hire youth into unsubsidized, permanent employment following the completion of a work experience or summer job. CareerSource Staff is encouraged to promote the awareness, benefits, and execution of the WOTC through multiple strategies that may include the use of promotional materials, employer outreach, and administrative assistance to employers with the WOTC application process.

Youth participants will also be provided career 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 Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

RESPONSE #2

Under 20 CFR 681.460, CSOW will make each of the following 14 program elements available to youth participants:

1. Tutoring and Study Skills Training:

- a. Tutoring will occur with assistance from the youth staff or referrals as appropriate.

2. Alternative Secondary School:

- a. Participants may be referred for scheduled alternative educational activities consistent with local school district policies.

3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experience:

- a. Paid work experience in the form of incentives will be provided for youth through the summer and/or year-round training component. The components will concentrate on skills related to specific jobs and the application of those skills.
- b. Summer employment opportunities may be provided through a Summer Training Component. Youth participating in the WIOA Youth Program and meeting program expectations will receive priority for the Summer Employment Opportunities.

4. Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation:

- a. Using an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills.

5. Occupational Skill Training:

- a. Occupational Skills Training primarily refers to older youth and out-of-school youth who may receive vouchers for training leading to a credential in a field of study through an Individual Training Account (ITA).

6. Leadership Development Opportunities:

- a. The program will provide leadership development opportunities as part of the curriculum. Engaging youth in community service projects is a valuable tool for teaching the value of giving back to the community.

7. Supportive Services:

- a. Supportive service needs will be determined during the objective assessment and the development of the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Assessment of needs for services will continue throughout participation in the program. Such assistance may include transportation, childcare, tools and required clothing (uniforms) for employment. Participants in need of supportive services that are available through other agencies will be referred to the appropriate agency for assistance.

8. Adult Mentoring:

- a. Develop a relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee.

9. Follow-Up Services:

- a. Career Advisors will provide follow-up activities for all youth who exit the program at the 30-Day, 60-Day, 90-Day, 6-month, 9-month, and 12-month points.

10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:

- a. Guidance and counseling will be ongoing and integrated with the activity incorporated on the ISS.

11. Financial literacy education:

- a. Financial Literacy will be provided to participants in employment readiness workshops.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training:

- a. Provide the basics of starting and operating a small business. Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business.

13. Services that Provide Labor Market Information:

- a. Offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

14. Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities:

- a. Help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

(c) Describe the LWDB's policy regarding how the local area will determine when an individual meets the definition of basic skills deficient contained in [Administrative Policy 095 – WIOA Youth Program Eligibility](#).

RESPONSE

For purposes of WIOA, Basic Skills Deficient means, an individual:

1. Who is a youth, that has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth (8th) grade level on an accepted standardized test; or

2. Who is a youth or adult, who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society?

WIOA requires, as part of the objective assessment, that all youth are assessed to determine their basic skills and to learn of any basic skills deficiencies. This policy provides guidance whereby the Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) establishes local criteria for defining a youth that is “basic skills deficient.”

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will administer comprehensive assessments to determine if a participant is unable to ‘compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.’ All WIOA Youth participants should take a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or equivalent to determine their academic level. Youth with either test at or below the 8th grade on the TABE will be classified as basic skills deficient.

Alternatively, TEGL 21-16, Assessment Requirements, states that local programs may use other formalized testing instruments designed to measure skills-related gains. Skills-related gains may also be determined through less formal alternative assessment techniques such as **observation**, folder reviews, or interviews.

Alternatively, the career advisor may determine the participant’s appropriate skill level for **enrollment** through objective observation. This method will be explained in more detail later in this section. Objective observation is provided for under criteria #2 of the WIOA definition and requires the youth or adult to take three Florida Ready to Work courseware tests: (1) Work Ready Math; (2) Work Ready Reading; and (3) Work Ready Data. If the individual does not meet the score to be placed in Ready Level 1 – basic work functioning level – then the youth or adult will be classified as basic skills deficient.

The method used will be documented in the case notes.

- (d) Define the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society” and describe how the LWDB defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills sufficiently to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination (20 CFR 681.290).**

RESPONSE

Objective Observation Procedures for Initial Assessments

The term “basic skills deficient” means an individual is to be considered Basic Skills Deficient if he or she is an individual:

1. Who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test. Or,

2. Who is a youth or adult, that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or society.

Method for Determining Basic Skills Deficient During Initial Assessment

The primary method for determining whether an individual is Basic Skills Deficient is through basic education skills assessment using the TABE. However, for criteria #2 above, CSOW staff may, when appropriate, use an alternative method to determine that youth or adults are Basic Skills Deficient, such as:

- Objective observation – means making an unbiased, balanced observation based on facts that can be verified. Objective observations are therefore a valid method that can be used before arriving at a decision.
- Participation in a secondary school's limited English proficiency program. Or
- Evidence of skills deficiency presented in a secondary school Individual Education Plan (IEP) when appropriate for that individual's stated needs and goals.

The CSOW Objective Observation Procedures meets the intent of 20 CFR 681.290(c), which states that in assessing basic skills, local programs must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

In contrast to the initial assessment procedures described above, if measuring EFL gains after program enrollment under the measurable skill gains indicator, CSOW staff must use TABE assessment for both the EFL pre- and post-test to determine an individual's educational functioning level.

The method used will be documented in the case notes.

- (e) Define the term “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to obtain or retain employment” and describe the circumstance(s) or other criteria the LWDB will use to qualify a youth under this eligibility barrier (20 CFR 681.300).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has defined “requires additional assistance” to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment as youth who have been defined as “at risk” and in need of additional services to complete training or an education program or need assistance in obtaining or maintaining employment. Included in this definition are:

Youth at risk of dropping out of school are youth meeting one or more of the following indicators:

Educational Barriers

- Has quit secondary or post-secondary without attaining a recognized credential
- Has repeated at least one secondary grade level
- Youth failing academically and/or at risk of dropping out of school.
- Eligible school dropouts.
- Youth that has earned three or more F's for the previous school year;
- Youth that has more than 21 documented unexcused absences in a school year.
- Youth that has more than four (4) discipline referrals in a school year.
- Youth that scored below a 3.5 on a school Writing Assessment.
- Youth with a Scale Score below a 300 on either the FCAT Reading or Math; and
- Youth that has attended five (5) or more schools during his/her academic history.

Employment Barriers

- Fired from a job within 6 months before application
- Has never held a full-time job for more than 13 consecutive weeks
- Has been unemployed 6 of the last 24 months

Living Arrangements

- Lives in a non-traditional household setting (single parent, unofficial guardian, grandparents)
- Lives in public housing
- Lives in a federally designated high-poverty area
- Youth in foster care or aging out of foster care; and Take Stock-in-Children recipients.
- Is an emancipated minor

Medical / Social / Family Barriers

- Has emotional, medical, physical, cognitive, or psychological impairment which creates a significant impediment to employment
- Children of incarcerated parents
- Youth in a single-parent household;
- Department of Juvenile Justice involved youth (living with their parents);
- Youth in households defined as low-income or economically disadvantaged
- Youth two or more years older than their peer group.
- Experiences personal/family substance abuse
- Is a victim of domestic violence or sexual/child abuse
- Has been alienated due to sexual preference/orientations, gender identity, or transgender
- Is a member of a migrant family or first-generation immigrant family
- Have a family history of teen pregnancy (parent or sibling was a teen parent)

- Experienced personal/family related Mental Health Issues
- Experiencing an Adverse Childhood Event (ACE's) defined as:
 - experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
 - witnessing violence in the home or community
 - having a family member attempt or die by suicide
 - instability due to parental separation/divorce
 - death of a parent/sibling during childhood
- Member of a family with members (parents, siblings) who have not graduated high school
- Youth of a parent who demonstrates a poor work history, either is unemployed or underemployed
- Youth of a parent who demonstrates a poor work history, either is unemployed or underemployed
- Has an absent parent due to military deployment
- Has a parent that is transitioning service member (TSM)

(5) Self-Sufficiency Definition: Under WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A) training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who need training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. Describe the definition of “self-sufficiency” used by your local area for:

(a) Adults (distinguish if there are different definitions for unemployed individuals or employed workers); and

RESPONSE

CSOW has defined self-sufficiency as 250% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level. The chart below depicts the self-sufficiency standards used by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton.

Self-Sufficiency Chart

	Definition	Source	Policy Statement
Welfare Transition (WT) self-sufficiency rate	250% of Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) for the family size	LLSIL	This aligns WT customers self-sufficiency with the other workforce programs.

The unemployed worker's self-sufficiency rate	250% of Lower Living Standard Income Level for the family size	LLSIL	To be considered self-sufficient, individuals should be placed into a position at this wage rate. This is also the WIOA self-sufficiency rate
The underemployed worker's self-sufficiency rate	250% of Lower Living Standard Income Level for the family size	LLSIL	To be eligible for training services as an individual (ITA) through WIOA, an employed worker requesting career and training services must earn less than this amount. Under-employed individuals do not need an employer statement to support training
The employed worker's self-sufficiency rate	250% of Lower Living Standard Income Level for the family size	LLSIL	All Adult employed workers must earn less than this amount to be considered for training. This may be through individual (ITA) request or employer request. Both situations need an employer support statement.
Dislocated Worker / (Employed) self-sufficiency rate	The current wage is less than 80% of the wage at dislocation	Source documentation in the case file	All Dislocated Workers who are working in an "income maintenance" job (a job with a lower rate of pay than the job at dislocation) should not exceed earnings of 80% percent of their dislocation wage to be considered for training. Example: If a person earned \$50,000 at dislocation, and is now making \$35,000, they would be eligible for training services because their current wage is less than 80% of their wage at dislocation.

(b) Dislocated Workers (WIOA § 134(c)(3)(A)(xii)).

RESPONSE

See the Self-Sufficiency Chart above. **CSOW has defined self-sufficiency as 250% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL).**

- (c) If self-sufficiency is defined differently for other programs or populations served in the local area, describe the definition of "self-sufficiency" used for those programs as well. NOTE: if the local area utilizes a self-sufficiency definition that exceeds 250% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) or LLSIL wage rate, the description must include the rationale/methodology used by the local area to determine the local area's self-sufficiency standard.**

RESPONSE

CSOW has defined self-sufficiency as 250% of the LLSIL for all programs and populations.

- (6) Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments: Describe the types of supportive services offered in the local area to include any applicable limits and levels. The supportive services offered by the LWDB in the local area must align with the supportive services outlined in [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 109 – Supportive Services and Needs-Related Payments](#).**

RESPONSE #1

Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable a customer to successfully participate in activities authorized under WIOA. The term supportive service is defined under WIOA to mean services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable a customer to participate in activities authorized under this Act.

Supportive services are for eligible customers, particularly eligible customers with barriers to employment. Section 133(b) defines funds allocated to the local area for dislocated workers under section 133(b)(2)(B), which may be used to provide supportive services to adults and dislocated workers, respectively (A) who are participating in programs with activities authorized in paragraph or (3) of subsection (c); and (B) who are unable to obtain such supportive services through other programs providing such services. Section 134(d)(2)(A) of WIOA requires that adults and dislocated workers must be participants to receive supportive services. Support services are provided based on need and eligibility.

Support services may only be provided to adults, dislocated workers, or youth who are participating in career or training services authorized under WIOA secs. 129(c)(2) or 134(c)(2) -(3) and who are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. Adults and dislocated workers must be provided accurate information about the availability of supportive services in the local area, as well as referrals to such activities. Based on individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services may be awarded to eligible program customers.

Supportive services are intended to enable a customer to participate in workforce-funded programs and activities and to secure and retain employment. Supportive services are provided based on need as determined by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff working with the customer and may include:

- a. Linkages to community services.
- b. Assistance with transportation.
- c. Assistance with childcare and dependent care.
- b. Assistance with housing.

- c. Needs-related payments, as described at §§ 680.930, 680.940, 680.950, 680.960, and 680.970.
- d. Assistance with educational testing.
- e. Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- f. Legal aid services.
- g. Referrals to health care.
- h. Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear.
- i. Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes; and
- j. Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

Needs-related payments (NRP) are a supportive service authorized by WIOA sec. 134(d)(3). Needs-

RESPONSE #2

related payments provide financial assistance to participants to enable them to participate in training. Unlike other supportive services, to qualify for needs-related payments a participant must be enrolled in training or accepted in a training program that will begin within 30 calendar days.

Supportive services such as needs-related payments may only be provided to **adults, dislocated workers or youth** who are participating in training services authorized under WIOA secs. 129(c)(2) or 134(c)(2)-(3) and who are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services.

- a. To receive needs-related payments, **adults and OSY (ages 18-24)** must:
 - (1) Be unemployed.
 - (2) Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, Reemployment Assistance (RA) benefits; and
 - (3) Be enrolled in training services authorized under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3).

For adults and out-of-school youth, the payment level **must not exceed** the poverty level for a family of one or \$400.00 monthly whichever is less. The weekly payment level must be adjusted to reflect changes in total family income. The payment may be paid monthly.

To receive needs-related payments, **dislocated workers** must be unemployed, and:

- a. Have ceased to qualify for RA benefits or Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program; and
- b. Be enrolled in training services authorized under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3) by the end of:
 - (1) The 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility as a dislocated worker, or,
 - (2) If later, by the end of the eighth week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six months; or
- c. Be unemployed, deemed ineligible for RA benefits or TRA under the TAA program, and be enrolled in training services authorized under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3).

For dislocated workers, payments must not exceed the greater of either of the following levels:

- a. The applicable weekly level of the unemployment compensation benefit, for participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying dislocation; or
- b. The poverty level for an equivalent period, for participants who did not qualify for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying layoff. The weekly payment level must be adjusted to reflect changes in total family income, as determined by CSOW policies.

For participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation, the payment level **must not exceed** the weekly level of the participant's unemployment compensation benefit or \$400.00 monthly whichever is less. The payment may be paid monthly.

For participants who did not qualify (or have ceased to qualify) for unemployment compensation, the payment level **must not exceed** the poverty level for a family of one or \$400.00 monthly whichever is less. **The weekly payment level must be adjusted to reflect changes in total family income.** The payment may be paid monthly but must be equivalent to the poverty level for a weekly benefit amount.

Needs-related payments are authorized only while in training and are designed to permit the individual to complete training.

(7) Individuals with Disabilities: Describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups protected under Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38.

RESPONSE

Individuals with disabilities are specifically protected under Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38. CSOW will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to the benefits and opportunities provided by WIOA-funded programs. This includes:

- a. **Non-discrimination:** CSOW programs and activities must not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.
- b. **Reasonable accommodations:** CSOW will make reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in programs and activities.
- c. **Effective communication:** CSOW programs must ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities, including providing auxiliary aids and services when necessary.
- d. **Accessibility:** The CSOW facilities and programs must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

These protections are designed to promote inclusion and equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in the workforce development system. These provisions ensure that all individuals have equal access to the benefits and opportunities provided by WIOA-funded programs. Other policy guidance provided to staff include:

- a. There are many ways that disabilities can affect the ability to perform effectively on the job. Levels of ability are unique to an individual.
- b. Most accommodations are simple. When working with individuals with disabilities, or someone you think may have a disability (Remember that a person does not have to disclose they have a disability), specifically learning disabilities. Staff should use the following strategies to assist the individual(s).
 - (1) Discuss confidentially with the person the best ways to communicate instructions. This may include written, verbal, or visual strategies; or, a combination of several types of communication. For example, a tape recorder may be useful for relaying instructions in some circumstances. The individual may have developed methods for compensating for the limitations caused by their disability. Discuss options with them.
 - (2) Once instructions are given, ask for feedback from the individual to try to determine if the goal to communicate was accomplished.
 - (3) Be patient with the individual. Assign single goals they can accomplish and build on their strengths.
 - (4) Avoid making a lot of changes in the schedule. Try to use a consistent routine.
 - (5) Reduce time pressures when possible.
 - (6) Allow extra time to complete assignments and let the person pace him or herself.
- c. Another option to consider for some customers: If the customer has a major barrier, staff should consider scheduling an in-person one-on-one orientation and/or assessment.

- d. CSOW staff should provide information about all of the CSOW programs to all customers, so an individual customer does not have to disclose the fact that he or she has a disability to learn about these programs.
- e. The **Chief Operating Officer** in coordination with the **Program Managers Coordinators**, and **Disability Program Navigator** should develop a packet of information to be given to customers that describes disability disclosure rights, considerations, and obligations by CareerSource staff, including explaining when staff may ask medical or disability-related questions, how the staff keeps that information confidential, explanations of why an individual may not want to disclose, and why disclosure may be beneficial (e.g., entitlement to reasonable accommodations/modifications or auxiliary aids and services).

During the initial intake process, if it comes to the attention of CSOW staff that an individual may have a functional impairment that could impact his or her ability to benefit from services, the individual should be provided with an opportunity for a more comprehensive assessment conducted by qualified personnel to decide to determine eligibility for other services and/or for identifying appropriate accommodations and modifications.

Where programs allow and appropriate, CSOW staff may use data that was previously collected about a particular customer, rather than asking customers repeatedly for the same information.

- a. The information that must be given to a customer before asking questions that may lead to disclosure of information about disability, and about the process of obtaining customers' informed consent before referring them for diagnostic assessment or further assessment of strengths, skills, and abilities.

(8) Linkage with Unemployment Insurance (referred to as Reemployment Assistance in Florida) programs: Describe strategies and services used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the Reemployment Assistance program (WIOA § 134(c) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iv)).

RESPONSE

The provisions of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Reemployment Services ensure a seamless integration of service offerings available to Reemployment Assistance claimants and other Career Center customers. This approach seeks to maximize resources and enhance the job seekers' ability to return to the labor force at the earliest opportunity.

All CareerSource Okaloosa Walton programs are fully integrated with an entire menu of services offered in the Career Centers. These programs include Wagner-Peyser services (WP), Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Welfare Transition (WT) Program services, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program services, Emergency Unemployment Compensation/Reemployment (EUC) services, Veterans services, Military Family Employment Advocate (MFEA) services, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, and the Senior Employment Program (SEP) services are all co-located in at the comprehensive One-Stop center.

To better strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and Reemployment Assistance, CSOW utilizes several additional strategies and services that are commonly employed:

Integrated Service Delivery: The CSOW Integrated Service Model and the strategies and services used in the One-Stop delivery system strengthen the linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the Reemployment Assistance program. This imodel involves aligning and coordinating services across different programs to provide seamless support to job seekers.

Collaboration and Partnerships: CSOW also collaborates with various partners, including educational institutions, community organizations, and employers, to create a comprehensive support network. This helps in providing a wide range of services such as job training, career counseling, job placement, and support services.

Technology and Data Sharing: CSOW utilizes advanced technology and data-sharing systems that enhance the efficiency of service delivery. For instance, Employ Florida incorporates a UI system that interfaces with job services through better use of technology.

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program specifically targets UI claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits and provides them with personalized reemployment services. It includes one-on-one meetings with career counselors, job search assistance, and workshops.

CSOW uses outreach and communication strategies are that are essential to inform job seekers about available services. This can include marketing campaigns, informational workshops, and community events to raise awareness about the resources available through the one-stop delivery system.

These strategies aim to create a more cohesive and supportive environment for individuals seeking reemployment assistance, ultimately helping them return to work more quickly and efficiently.

- (9) Highest Quality of Services to Veterans and Covered Persons: Describe the LWDB’s strategies and policies for providing veterans and covered persons with the highest quality of service at every phase of services offered. Policies must be implemented to ensure eligible veterans and covered persons are aware of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of programs and services available to them, and applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.**

RESPONSE

To implement priority of services, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton utilizes the broad definition of veteran found in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Under this definition, the term “veteran” means a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2).

“Active service” includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component. This definition does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (i.e., often is referred to as “weekend” or “annual” training); nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard

personnel who are mobilized by the State rather than Federal authorities (usually occur in response to events such as natural disasters).

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board has adopted the definition of “Eligible Spouse” as defined at section 2(a) of the JVA (38 U.S.C. 4215[a]) which means the spouse of any of the following:

- a. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
- b. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been listed for a total of more than 90 days:
 - (1) Missing in action.
 - (2) Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
 - (3) Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.

Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or

Any veteran who died while a disability was in existence. A spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member (i.e., categories b. or c. above) would lose his or her eligibility if the veteran or service member were to lose the status that is the basis for the eligibility (e.g. if a veteran with a total service-connected disability were to receive a revised disability rating at a lower level). Similarly, for a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member, that eligibility would be lost upon divorce from the veteran or service member.

Implementing Priority of Services in the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Centers

The priority of services refers to those veterans and spouses who are eligible for priority of services as “covered persons” and refer to those not eligible for priority of services as “non-covered persons.”

Priority of services means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons (Within the population receiving the services) for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program.

Priority means that veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to precedence over non-covered persons (Within the population receiving the services) for services. This means that a veteran or an eligible spouse receives access to a service before a non-covered person; or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the service instead of or before the non-covered person.

For a service such as classroom training, priority of service applies to the selection procedure.

First, if there is a waiting list to start a training class, priority of services is intended to require a veteran or eligible spouse to go to the top of that list.

Second, priority of services applies up to the point at which an individual is both:

- a. Approved for funding; and,
- b. Accepted or enrolled in the training class

Therefore, once a non-covered person has been both approved for funding and accepted/enrolled in a training class, priority of services is not intended to allow a veteran or eligible spouse who is identified subsequently to “bump” the non-covered person from that training class.

Administering Priority of Services

Qualified job training programs fall into two basic categories:

- a. Universal access programs; or
- b. Programs that require participants to meet specified eligibility criteria.

Universal Access Programs -- For workforce programs that deliver services to the public as a whole without targeting specific groups, veterans and eligible spouses must receive priority services over all other program participants. For example, the primary universal access services are the “core” services delivered through the one-stop system under the Wagner-Peyser and WIOA programs. Veterans and eligible spouses receive the first level of priority in universal access programs.

Programs with Eligibility Criteria -- Eligibility criteria identify basic conditions that every participant in a specific program must meet. It is important to note that a veteran or eligible spouse must first meet all of the statutory eligibility criteria to be considered eligible for:

- a. Enrollment in a qualified program.
- b. Receipt of priority for enrollment in the program; and
- c. Priority for receiving services in the program.

(10) Entities Carrying Out Core Programs: Describe how the LWDB works with entities carrying out core programs to:

- (a) Expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(i).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton emphasizes universal access to employment, training and education services for job seekers, particularly those with barriers to employment, residing in Okaloosa or Walton County. To provide greater access to these available services, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton conducts extensive outreach through community events such as the Okaloosa Walton Homeless Veteran Stand Down and the Veteran Treatment Court. Additional outreach is conducted through scheduled visits to the county jails and several homeless shelters such as Blue Door Ministries. Lastly, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton management staff participate in several committees and organizations such as the Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast and the Transportation Disadvantaged Board.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has an extensive social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. In addition, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton emails a newsletter to over fifteen thousand

people each day. Both the social media sites and the newsletter provide job seekers with information on available jobs, upcoming industry sector job fairs, recruitment events, apprenticeships, and training opportunities.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton conducts weekly career center orientations to introduce job seekers to an array of available programs and services, including the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Military Family Employment Advocacy; and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program. All program staff are thoroughly trained in CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's available programs and refer participants, as appropriate, to receive additional program services through co-enrollment.

(b) Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(ii) and

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton stresses the importance of post-secondary credentials and industry-recognized certificates to job seekers navigating the local labor market. Through the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, participants receive industry-recognized certificates after completing training through Incumbent Worker Training or training through an Individual Training Account. Employed Worker Training participants have earned industry-recognized certificates such as Project Management; OSHA Construction Health and Safety; and Six Sigma. Individual Training Accounts have been utilized to fund skills training resulting in stackable credentials such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Registered Nurse (RN). The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs will continue to promote industry-recognized certificates and credentials based on the Local Targeted Occupation List (LTOL) for Okaloosa and Walton counties.

It is not uncommon for a participant in the Welfare Transition, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program – Employment & Training or the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, and Wagner-Peyser to be co-enrolled receiving WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth Services.

(c) Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a portable and stackable credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification) (WIOA § 108(b)(3) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(2)(iii) to include credentials contained on Florida's Master Credentials List.

RESPONSE

Increasing educational attainment levels is a regional priority. It has been widely acknowledged that our nation is not keeping up with the demand for skills and training our future economy will require. Further, contributing to this "skills gap" is the substantial number of jobs permanently lost as a consequence of changes brought forth by COVID-19. This accumulating need for a better-equipped workforce has invigorated discussions around solutions that will provide students with clear pathways to acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for future employment and job creation.

To increase access, CSOW leverages long-standing partnerships with a wide variety of public and private partners from industry, education, economic development, and health and human services to maximize outcomes among jointly served career seekers and businesses. These partnerships have resulted in effective initiatives that have placed individuals on the pathway to success while simultaneously increasing available candidates with relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Individual Training Accounts have been utilized to fund skills training resulting in stackable credentials such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Registered Nurse (RN). The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs will continue to promote industry-recognized certificates and credentials based on the Local Targeted Occupation List (LTOL) for Okaloosa and Walton counties. The CSOW's multiple points of entry offer access to career pathways and stackable credentials on Florida's Master Credentials List.

(11) Employer Engagement: Describe strategies and services used in the local area to:

(a) Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations; (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3(i)) and

RESPONSE

Businesses are informed of the important role and contributions of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, with a great emphasis on its investment in economic development and the demand-driven needs of employers. To that end, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton continues to develop relationships with businesses through membership and participation with chambers of commerce, Florida's Greater Northwest, the two local economic development organizations, and regional economic development initiatives to ensure the needs of existing businesses are being met and to facilitate recruiting targeted industries for expansion into the workforce region.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides job order entry, referrals, and placement services to employers. CSOW hosts multiple job fairs yearly and offers on-site hiring events to engage employers, specifically the smaller employers. CSOW actively uses social media such as LinkedIn to make connections with new businesses as well.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton receives between 10 to 20 new job orders daily across industries. Account Managers generate a new job order report daily to identify business leads for service and increase awareness of the benefits available at CareerSource Okaloosa Walton. Priority of contact is provided to business sectors of focus. The job order report serves as a tool to identify and engage businesses in workforce activities that will ultimately support their sustainability and expansion strategies.

Another tactic used by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton to increase employer engagement is the Job Order Follow-up process. Account Managers (AMs) connect with businesses in assigned industries to determine the status of employment opportunities identify possible challenges and suggest solutions as follows:

- a. Suggest changes to job description or salary to attract more applicants.
- b. Source candidates using available talent pipeline and Employ Florida database.

- c. Invitations to a hiring event/ job fair.
- d. Suggest pre-screening assessments to identify the right skills/candidate.
- e. Refer to training grants, etc.

The results of the Job Order Follow-up process lead to high levels of customer satisfaction by addressing businesses' challenges ranging from reviewing job descriptions to referrals of candidates and/or referrals to training grants. This results in high levels of business engagement.

Participation in Job Fairs, networking events, and committees may result in business referral leads. The Account Managers are responsible for connecting with businesses in corresponding industries to engage businesses in workforce activities.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton leverages its brick-and-mortar and mobile centers to provide the best customer experience to businesses when visiting or connecting with the One-Stop Career Centers via phone or social media avenues. When in contact with businesses, Industry Account Managers conduct an initial assessment of the business needs and suggest a suitable workforce solution plan to address those needs.

The formation of industry consortiums to pool resources and help to identify common workforce and training issues and possible solutions will be explored through the Education and Industry Consortium. An expected outcome of the industry-specific focus is to build participant commitment and foster stronger relationships among the participants.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to strongly support the Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network, a member of One Okaloosa Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County. This group brings together manufacturing, engineering and technology businesses to collaborate on business opportunities and discuss common business issues.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board has also established a close working partnership with the Building Industry Association (BIA) to help address the stresses and strains of the construction industry while also addressing the new and emerging needs of training for "green jobs" and new requirements in the construction industry.

(b) Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area. (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(ii))

Such strategies and services may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundations' Talent Pipeline Management](#), utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategies described above.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board continues to pursue workforce solutions that position the region for stable economic growth. Keeping in mind that the voice of business is the driving force for designing program services for workforce development, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board will work to ensure the education of local businesses not only for employee recruitment but also for employee retention through the promotion of training for the employed workers using local and state resources for incumbent workers.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, and Paid Work Experience to its employers, including small employers in in-demand industry sectors. CSOW hosts multiple job fairs yearly and offers on-site hiring events to engage employers, specifically the smaller employers. We actively use social media such as LinkedIn to make connections with new businesses as well.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton works to ensure services are in place to support the local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area. To meet this goal, the Board operates an Integrated Services Model in the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton centers.

The Integrated Services Model aligns programs and ensures integrated service delivery throughout the workforce system in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The Integrated Services Model relies on support through communication, coordination, and collaboration across the core programs (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Wagner-Peyser, Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation) to create a single unified and integrated strategy for delivering services to businesses.

- (c) Utilize community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs contained in the quarterly reports submitted to the LWDB by the local area's education and industry consortium. (CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2023.09.19.A.2).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has a fully operational Education and Industry Consortium composed of representatives of educational entities and businesses in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The consortium meets quarterly. CSOW provides the following administrative support for the consortium:

- a. Maintaining a roster of consortium members and posting the current roster on the CSOW website.
- b. Posting scheduled consortium meetings on the CSOW website; and
- c. Posting the quarterly reports from each meeting on the CSOW website.

Consortium meetings' discussions focus on the local labor market needs including:

- a. Industry representatives sharing their specific talent development needs or observations on talent in the local area; and
- b. Education representatives sharing what specific education offerings are available in the local area.

The Education and Industry Consortium provides a quarterly report to the CSOW Board. The report informs the Board on community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs, services, and partnerships in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

The quarterly reports include the following information:

- a. A record of the consortium members in attendance.
- b. A summary analysis of the local labor market based on industry representative needs and education offerings.
- c. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area.
- d. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations and the need to expand or leverage existing and/or new resources.

The CSOW Board considers information contained in the report to determine effective ways to grow, retain, and attract talent to Okaloosa and Walton counties.

The Education and Industry Consortium report is published on the CSOW website at <https://careersourceokaloosawalton.com/about-us/board-of-directors-staff/>

(12) Enhancing Apprenticeships: Describe how the LWDB enhances the use of registered apprenticeships to support the local economy and comply with CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2019.02.13.A.1 – Registered Apprenticeship Strategic Policy. Describe how the LWDB and apprenticeship navigators work with industry representatives, education partners, and local businesses to develop registered apprenticeships, in collaboration with apprenticeship training representatives from the Florida Department of Education and other partners.

Describe strategies and operations that promote and support statewide apprenticeship goals that include, but are not limited to:

(a) Increasing the total number of new apprentices and pre-apprentices per year.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will work with stakeholders to develop an environment that allows the region to increase the number of employers and participants currently being served in apprenticeship programs. Potential employers and education providers will be identified to target for the expansion. The goal will be to increase employer participation by up to two employers or programs per year.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will work with potential sponsors, intermediaries, and employers to promote strategies and the feasibility of expanding apprenticeships in the region.

Specifically, the project will include:

- ✓ Convening partnerships to determine if high-quality, effective programs in the local area are feasible.
- ✓ Can the region build a talent pipeline through pre-apprenticeship and a youth apprenticeship program?
- ✓ If determined feasible, establish a comprehensive plan with stakeholders to integrate pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships in the region.

(b) Increasing the total number of registered apprenticeship programs and program occupations.

RESPONSE

With an ever-changing workforce, apprenticeship programs may play a key role in addressing the labor shortage found in the Manufacturing; Construction; Accommodation and Food Services; and the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry sectors. Registered Apprenticeship programs serve as an integral part of the workforce solutions offered to businesses seeking employees with the necessary skill sets to fill essential positions.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has a dedicated Business Services Team that assists in identifying talent needs and offering solutions to businesses in targeted industries, such as Manufacturing and Construction. Business Service Representatives often suggest Registered Apprenticeship programs as a strategy to meet the employer's need for skilled workers. In addition, employers typically receive information on training grants and funding availability to aid with their investment in staff training. Employers may receive WIOA funding for the Related Training Instruction and/or the On-the-Job Training portion of the Registered Apprenticeship.

In addition to the training, education, and supportive services provided to individuals through WIOA funding, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to assist regional apprenticeship programs with employer or industry-specific recruitment events, apprenticeship job fairs, and through the referral of job seekers to apprenticeship opportunities offered through local providers and employers.

(c) Increasing the total number of registered pre-apprenticeship programs.

RESPONSE

Coordination with eligible training providers, area employers, and post-secondary institutions to align with workforce initiatives will strengthen efforts to provide apprenticeships in in-demand industry occupations. Currently, registered apprenticeship programs that have been developed but are not currently enrolling students include Building Maintenance Repair, Carpentry, CNC Machining, Computer Support Specialist, Culinary Arts, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC), Network & Computer Systems Administrator, and Plumbing.

These apprenticeship programs are designed to directly support several industry sectors by

developing the necessary skills for high-paying, skilled trade occupations. The registered apprenticeships are competency-based which focuses on the apprentice's ability to demonstrate competencies in an observable and measurable way. This model provides a mechanism to determine whether the apprentice is gaining the competencies needed to successfully perform the job. Similar to WIOA ITA Scholarships, these apprenticeships provide an opportunity for job seekers to increase skills and earnings by obtaining and retaining employment leading to the local definition of self-sufficiency.

(d) Expanding registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships into healthcare, advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, information technology, and other emerging industries.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will assist in the recruitment process by providing universal services through the One-Stop delivery system. **Community Outreach and Recruitment** will include community partners serving the employed, underemployed, and unemployed job seekers.

CSOW, through the One-Stop system, will provide outreach and recruitment, and program eligibility determination, enrollment, and supportive services for eligible WIOA participants. The apprenticeship program should generate interest in the community as a result of the advertising and promotion of the apprenticeship programs through the One-Stop system.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton added an Apprenticeship Navigator position that will enhance the outreach and recruitment efforts. The Navigator's duties include:

- a. Working with industry, educational, and other stakeholders to identify and develop pre-apprenticeships, newly registered apprenticeships, and the expansion of existing registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) that meet industry needs.
- d. Assisting RAP employers and apprentices with WIOA and other eligible support funding by working with other workforce staff as needed to develop viable RAP support services.
- e. Assessing and prioritizing program needs while setting specific goals and objectives for resource development and operation requirements.
- f. Helping identify and participate in process improvements, industry engagement activities, outreach/communications mechanisms, and new training programs to achieve or exceed metrics within the proposed grant application performance and deliverables.
- g. Convening targeted sector business representatives and community stakeholders; and
- h. Facilitating meetings and industry/community/state functions to promote services, exchange ideas, and accomplish objectives to expand apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

(e) Supporting apprentices with WIOA services to support on-the-job learning, related instruction, and supportive services.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is committed to promoting Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway for job seekers; as well as a job-driven strategy for employers. WIOA funding will be utilized to support eligible participants of apprenticeship programs through Individual Training Accounts; Job Training subsidies to employers; and supportive services to include training materials such as books and tools.

Registered Apprenticeships are specifically marketed through social media, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Daily Newsletter, as well as through targeted outreach events throughout the region. All outreach efforts are designed to drive job seeker traffic to the career center, where a team of career advisors provides career assessments, labor market information, training, and apprenticeship opportunities.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton career advisors have consistently viewed Registered Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning as important training components for job seekers who prefer an alternative to transitional post-secondary education and training. As a result, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to promote and utilize Registered Apprenticeships as a career pathway for job seekers as well as a cost-effective placement and retention strategy for employers.

E. DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

(1) General System Description: Describe the one-stop delivery system in your local area, including the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners (WIOA §108(b)(6)).

(a) Describe how required WIOA partners contribute to the LWDB's planning and implementation efforts. If any core or required partner is not involved, explain the reason.

RESPONSE

The local One-Stop delivery system incorporates all local workforce programs and services that operate in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. All required WIOA partners participate in the delivery of services. Five of the six core programs are co-located in the career centers. All six of the core partners pay a proportionate share of infrastructure costs.

- a. WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs administered by Department of Labor (DOL).
- b. Title II – Adult Education and Literacy programs administered by the Department of Education (DoED).

- c. Title III – WP employment services administered by DOL; and
- d. Title IV – Rehabilitation Act of 1973 programs administered by DoED.

The CORE WIOA programs are outlined below:

<u>SIX CORE WIOA PROGRAMS</u>		
<i>Title</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
WIOA Title I	Youth Employment and Training	The WIOA Youth program services include the attainment of a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and individualized delivery of 14 types of career readiness opportunities.
	Adult Employment and Training	The WIOA Adult Program services include Career Services, Training Services, and job placement assistance. Priority is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, veterans, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
	Dislocated Worker Employment and Training	The WIOA Dislocated Worker Program services target individuals who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing, or some other significant change in market conditions. In most cases, eligible workers are unlikely to return to their occupations, and they must be eligible for (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation.
WIOA Title II	Adult Education and Literacy Act Program	The Adult Education and Literacy services include adult education; workplace literacy and family literacy; English language acquisition activities; integrated English literacy and civics education, workplace preparation activities, and integrated education and training. Title II also includes Career and technical education programs at the post-secondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Note: This core program is not currently co-located in the career center but does pay a proportionate share of infrastructure costs.
WIOA Title III	Wagner- Peyser Act Program	Wagner-Peyser, often referred to as basic labor exchange services, provides access to employment services for all job seekers including job search preparation and placement assistance services. Employers may receive general or specialized recruitment services through self-service or staff assisted job orders.
WIOA Title IV	Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located in the full-service Career Center. Vocational Rehabilitation programs provide training services to help eligible individuals with disabilities become employed. The priority is competitive, fulltime employment. Depending on the individual's disability and functional limitations, however, other outcomes such as part-time employment, self-employment, or

		supported employment are also appropriate. Services focus both on helping high school students plan as they prepare for transition to work, as well as delivery of a range of individualized adult services.
--	--	--

In addition to the core programs above, the following required partner programs provide access to their services through the one-stop system:

- a. Career and Technical Education (Perkins).
- b. Community Services Block Grant.
- c. Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program.
- d. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives.
- e. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).
- f. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- g. Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA).

Outlined below is a description of the roles and resource contributions of these partners:

<u>PARTNER PROGRAMS</u>		
<i>Programs</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contributions/Roles/Resources</i>
Career and Technical Education (Perkins)	<p>The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is the main federal funding source for career and technical education (CTE) programs. The Perkins Act is the primary federal funding source for high school, college and university CTE programs that are critical for preparing youth and adults, including immigrants, for jobs in local and regional economies. It is responsible for helping all students acquire challenging academic, technical, and employability skills to succeed in postsecondary education and in-demand careers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and planning representation • Adult Education – basic skills training, GED training, and testing • Post-Secondary-Occupational Skills Training through ITAs • Job placement assistance • Promotes CareerSource Okaloosa Walton programs and services in their Career and Technical Education Centers by providing collateral materials flyers etc. <p>Involves CareerSource Okaloosa Walton management staff in their advisory committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to infrastructure costs
Community Services Block Grant	<p>Tri-County Community Council, Inc. administers the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to include services such as self-sufficiency, transportation, education, supportive services, youth development, emergency assistance, food pantry, and teen gifts. Eligible participants must meet the CSBG poverty guideline requirements of 125% of the Poverty Income Guidelines.</p> <p>Tri-County Community Council, Inc., a private non-profit corporation founded in June 1965, is a Community Action Agency (CAA) which develop and implement comprehensive programs to serve the poor and eliminate poverty in Holmes, Walton, and Washington Counties.</p> <p>Its vision is to unite both the public and private sectors for the purpose of improving the quality of life for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and planning representation • Training services provided through community block grants and limited supportive services • Post-Secondary-occupational Skills Training through ITAs • Job placement assistance • Promotes CareerSource Okaloosa Walton programs and services in their Career and Technical Education Centers by providing collateral materials flyers etc. • Contribute to infrastructure costs

	<p>individuals, families, and communities by enhancing and seeking new opportunities for success with the goal of eliminating poverty. Its Mission is to identify and provide needed services to the citizens in our communities.</p>	
<p>Florida Division of Blind Services</p>	<p>DBS has agreed to provide services on-site at the full-service center or Mobile Career Center monthly. Florida Division of Blind Services helps blind and visually impaired Floridians achieve their goals and live productive and independent lives. Their services cover all ages from babies to senior citizens. They also offer Employer Services, the Braille and Talking Books Library, and the Business Enterprise Program. They encourage customers to explore their website and then contact the nearest DBS office to find out more about eligibility requirements and how they can help them achieve their goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and coordination of services • Job placement assistance • Promotes CareerSource Okaloosa Walton programs and services in their Career and Technical Education Centers by providing collateral materials/flyers etc. • Contribute to infrastructure costs
<p>Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Programs</p>	<p>Local Veterans' Employment Representatives - (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers; and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a state under the applicable state employment service delivery systems.</p> <p>Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) - DOL has directed that DVOP staff <u>must limit their activities</u> to providing career services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated members of the CSOW Business Services Team • Advocate for veteran employment opportunities • Contribute to infrastructure costs • Provides case management services to veterans and eligible spouses with SBEs • Provides Individualized Career Services to veterans • Contribute to infrastructure costs

<p>Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)</p>	<p>SCSEP is a community service and work-based training program for older workers. The Program is authorized by the Older Americans Act and provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income persons 55 or older who are unemployed and have poor employment prospects. Participants have access to both SCSEP services and other employment assistance through the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton One-Stop Delivery System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and coordination of services • Co-location of staff onsite at the One Stop Career Centers • Job placement assistance • Promotes CareerSource Okaloosa Walton programs and services in their Career and Technical Education Centers by providing collateral materials/flyers etc. • Contribute to infrastructure costs
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Welfare Transition Program</p>	<p>The TANF block grant was designed to provide states flexibility in designing and implementing ongoing cash assistance programs, self-sufficiency programs and pregnancy prevention programs. According to federal legislation, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton must use TANF funds to serve one of the four purposes of TANF. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton must spend TANF funds in an effort to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. 2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage. 3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and 4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. <p>Depending on the availability of funds, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board authorizes the use of TANF funds to operate special projects for eligible youth and adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary role is to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. • Support other TANF special projects • Contribute to infrastructure costs

Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA)	The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA) of 2015 restores the worker group eligibility and benefits established by the Trade Adjustment Assistance Extension Act of 2011 (TAAEA). CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will provide services for all eligible workers covered by a certification who are eligible for employment and case management services, including Basic Career Services and Individualized Career Services either through the TAA Program or through and in coordination with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary role is to provide services for all eligible TAA workers covered by a certification who are eligible for employment and case management services, including Basic Career Services and Individualized Career Services
Unemployment (Wagner- Peyser) Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reemployment Assistance (RA) Program • Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance with unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants • Provide assistance by phone or via other technology within a reasonable time, if needed • Contribute to infrastructure costs

(b) Identify any optional/additional partners included in the local one-stop delivery system and how their inclusion in the local system achieves state and local strategies, operations and performance outcomes.

RESPONSE

Additional One-Stop Partners include:

Rapid Response

The primary purpose of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Rapid Response Program is to enable affected workers to return to work as quickly as possible following an announcement or notification of:

- a. A permanent closure or mass layoff.
- b. A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster.
- c. The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition. Or

- d. To prevent layoffs altogether.

The cornerstone of the CSOW Rapid Response Program— to respond as quickly as possible to a Rapid Response event and deliver services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible or deploy Layoff Aversion services, when appropriate.

The framework for the CSOW Rapid Response Program includes the following elements:

- a. Informational and direct reemployment services for workers, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims.
 - (2) Information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.
 - (3) Information on the impacts of layoff on health coverage or other benefits.
 - (4) Information on and referrals to career services.
 - (5) Reemployment-focused workshops and services; and
 - (6) Training.
- b. Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment.
- c. Convening, brokering, and facilitating the connections, networks and partners to ensure the ability to provide assistance to dislocated workers and their families such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice; and
- d. Strategic planning, data gathering, and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

Social Security Administration - Ticket-to-Work self-sufficiency program.

Employment Network and Ticket-to-Work Program (Social Security Administration (SSA)).

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is an approved Employment Network (EN) and approved to operate the Social Security Administration (SSA) Ticket to Work Program. The Ticket to Work Program is a supportive, active, and resource-rich path to employment for SSI and SSDI recipients. The Region offers the full menu of re-employment-related services to SSI and/or SSDI beneficiaries who want to join or return to the workforce.

Individuals who enroll in the Ticket to Work Program must:

- a. Be 18 to 64 years old.
- b. Be Receiving SSI and/or SSDI Based on a Disability.
- c. Have a true desire and ability to return to work.
- d. Be motivated and capable of working on goals with Ticket to Work staff members.
- e. TTW provides a safety net to help SSI/SSDI recipients maintain benefits and work.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E & T)

Florida's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is designed to provide SNAP recipients who are able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) with the education, training, support services, and skills needed to become self-sufficient through employment.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's SNAP E & T Program will serve all ABAWDs ages 18 – 49 in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton SNAP Program will focus on assisting ABAWDs in meeting their work participation requirements, in order to ensure continued program access for compliant individuals. For ABAWDs to meet work participation compliance, they must meet the following work requirements:

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has Six Guiding Principles for the SNAP Employment and Training Program:

- a. Focus on work attachment.
- b. Balances the short-term goal of moving participants into immediate employment and the long-term goal of moving households to self-sufficiency.
- c. Respond and adapt to the local economy.
- d. Maximize collaboration and expertise of local partners.
- e. Use measurable results to ensure program funds are used for efficient and effective components.
- f. Use communication skills that expand cooperation and respect for customers.

Disability Program Navigator (DPN)

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has designated a Regional Disability Program Navigator (DPN) who oversees services addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Each Career Center has a designated staff member as a resource for matters concerning disabilities. The focus of the DPN is to address the needs of individuals with disabilities seeking training and employment opportunities through the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton One-Stop System. The DPN provides expertise and serve as a resource person to the workforce investment system for individuals with disabilities, including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability and blindness beneficiaries. The Disability Program Navigator also has expertise regarding the One-Stop partner programs and services.

Military Family Employment Advocacy (MFEA) Program

The Military Family Employment Advocacy Program was established due to the recognition of the challenges that military families face such as frequent relocations, recurring deployments, and lengthy periods of separation. Florida legislature recognized these occurrences impact a military spouse's ability to gain job skills and maintain a career. The purpose of the MFEA program is to develop and provide outreach services, engage job-seeking military dependents in CareerSource Okaloosa Walton services, and help educate the workforce community about the unique employment barriers faced by military family members.

(2) Customer Access: Describe actions taken by the LWDB to fully implement <https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Availability-of-Services-to-Floridians-Strategic-Policy.pdf> and promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and job seekers.

(a) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe how the LWDB incorporates feedback received during consultations with local Independent Living Centers on compliance with Section 188 of WIOA (WIOA §108(b)(6)(C)).

RESPONSE

In 2007, the Department of Labor (DOL) with input from the Social Security Administration (SSA) entered into cooperative agreements with the state level workforce system in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to implement the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton volunteered to participate in this initiative. Because of the added value the DPN brought to the workforce system during the initiative, when it ended in 2010, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board of Directors agreed to sustain the DPN initiative and make it a permanent part of the One-Stop Delivery System in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

A primary purpose of the DPN in the one-stop system is the formation of relationships across multiple programs that impact individuals with disabilities such as, coordinating on policy, service delivery, blending and braiding of funds, and other activities that improve access and opportunities for careers, and successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The DPN is now a critical component of the one-stop system.

The DPN program is also an integral part of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Nondiscrimination Program. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Equal Opportunity Officer (EOO) and DPN are the regional experts and points of contact on all matters relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act and universal access to programs and services. The EOO reports to the CSOW Executive Director and the DPN reports to the Chief Operating Officer.

The DPN has the responsibility of ensuring CSOW staff, the One-Stop operator, and One-Stop partners complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding 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.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton DPN Initiative is designed to:

- a. Guide One-Stop staff in helping people with disabilities access and navigate the complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain/retain employment.
- b. Develop partnerships to achieve integrated services, systemic change, and expand the capacity to serve customers with disabilities.
- c. Increase employment and self-sufficiency for Social Security beneficiaries and others with disabilities.
- d. Facilitate seamless and comprehensive services for persons with disabilities in the Career Centers. Serve as resources on SSA's work incentives and employment support programs and the provision of services through Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects (WIPA), Protection and Advocacy systems (P&As); and employment-related demonstration projects.
- e. Facilitate access to programs and services. Serve as a resource to the workforce development community to ensure the availability of comprehensive knowledge of Federal, State, local and private programs that impact the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce.
- f. Facilitate linkage to the employer community. Develop linkages and collaborate on an ongoing basis with employers to facilitate job placements for persons with disabilities [facilitate access to employment opportunities].
- g. Conduct outreach to agencies/organizations that serve people with disabilities.
- h. Facilitate the transition of in-school or out-of-school youth with disabilities to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency.

DPN as a Workforce Systems Change Agent:

- a. Improved access to One-Stop services through readily available assistive technology.
- b. Assist in development and implementation of a reasonable accommodation policy and procedure.
- c. Assist in building relationships with a specific collaborator, including negotiation of co-location and/or MOU.
- d. Advocate for increased access and use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) by job seekers with disabilities.

- e. Training on serving customers with disabilities as part of One-Stop new-hire orientation.

DPN as a Workforce Problem Solver:

- a. Identifying appropriate community resources for job seekers with disabilities to remove barriers to employment (i.e., training, transportation, housing, assistive technology needs, etc.).
- b. Working together with the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Specialist to show customers how to use work incentives to reach employment goals.
- c. Finding the answers to questions that One-Stop staff have regarding the ADA or other disability-related topics.
- d. Providing consultation with employers on providing reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities.

DPN as a Workforce Relationship Builder:

- a. Coordinating One-Stop orientations, tours, and Open Houses targeting the disability community.
- b. Regularly participating in community events, resource fairs and business roundtables as a One-Stop representative.
- c. Consulting with mandated and non-mandated partners regularly about accessibility, accommodations and other disability-related topics.
- d. Organizing or joining an interagency collaboration which focuses on accessibility, sharing of resources and/or improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

DPN as a Workforce Resource:

- a. Being available to answer questions staff have on serving job seekers with disabilities.
- b. Offering guidelines to One-Stop staff on interacting with people with a wide range of disabilities.
- c. Presenting orientations on WIOA and One-Stop services to a wide variety of community service providers.
- d. Coordinating workshops in One-Stops on disclosure, reasonable accommodations, work incentives and job seekers' rights and responsibilities under the ADA.

- e. Offering information to the business community on hiring/retaining individuals with disabilities.

DPN as a Workforce Facilitator:

- a. Bringing together multiple partners who are working with one individual to foster a collaborative effort.
- b. Coordinating staff training on a variety of disability-related topics.
- c. Improving communication between the One-Stop and partners by educating both about their systems.
- d. Bridging the gaps between the business and human service communities by organizing forums for discussion.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has established a partnership with the local/regional Center for Independent Living (CIL) and will incorporate in One-Stop procedures any appropriate feedback received during consultations regarding compliance with Section 188 of WIOA. The CIL agreed to provide onsite services at the comprehensive One-Stop Center periodically or the Mobile Career Center, as scheduled.

The One-Stop Center will solicit feedback from the one-stop partners such as CIL, Florida Division of Blind Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Any feedback received will be used to improve the One-Stop operations.

(b) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system use principles of universal design in their operation.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses the principles of universal design in its operations. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's vision for WIOA and the One-Stop Delivery System includes an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to emphasize three hallmarks of excellence included in the universal design: 1) The needs of business drive workforce solutions; 2) Excellent customer service and focus on continuous improvement, and 3) A one-stop system that supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

The employer and job seeker services are designed and implemented in accordance with the guidance and direction of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board, and the Career and Youth Committee. As CareerSource Okaloosa Walton continues to emphasize a universal delivery of services, it will also continue to focus on providing outstanding customer service to the workforce system's primary customer groups including businesses, job seekers, and the general public who fund the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's services through payment of taxes.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton understands that the One-Stop system is the gateway to employment opportunities and education for many job seekers, which includes individuals with disabilities. To ensure CareerSource Okaloosa Walton produces an excellent product for the business community,

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will provide its job-seeking customers with evidence-based education and training tools that lead to success.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton relies heavily on its Integrated Business Services Team (BST), which consists of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Business Services Team, Disability Program Navigator, Local Veterans Employment Representatives, and the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Rapid Response Team to work together to promote the Workforce Development System as a valuable asset in the community.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board understands that outstanding customer service is important for the employer community, and equally as important for the job seeker customers. To provide outstanding service to One-Stop customers, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff will provide effective and quality integrated job seeker and employer services to One-Stop customers. The goal of this service delivery is to achieve customer satisfaction for all customer groups. Therefore, it is essential that the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff meet or exceed customer expectations; and, the employer's hiring needs, while meeting the training and employment needs of job seekers, including those with disabilities.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton integrated services are facilitated through the Employ Florida (EF) management information system. EF is the lynchpin in the management of the labor exchange and development of our workforce. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff will take the lead in promoting EF and its integrated case management services to job seekers and the employer community. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff has been trained on how to administer EF and will continue to receive EF enhancement training to ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction.

(c) Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and other means (WIOA §108(b)(6)(B) and 20 CFR 560 (b)(5)(ii)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides a full-service comprehensive center and affiliate sites with universal access in Okaloosa and Walton counties. To better serve all customers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board procured a Mobile One-Stop Unit to use as a Mobile Career Center. This ensures that various services, including special events for employers, can be taken directly to the various customer groups.

The Mobile Career Center has printing, copying, and fax capability; including 13 computers to accommodate various classes, seminars, and training sessions that can be delivered to employees, program participants, job seekers, and employer customers. The Mobile Career Center travels to remote locations within the region to bring services to customers that may not otherwise be able to access services at the career centers. The Mobile Career Center is also available to assist other regions that may have a need during disasters or mass layoffs.

Employers can use the Mobile Career Center for on-site recruitment efforts, job fairs, testing, and training. Often the employer customer has employees who need additional soft skills and/or hard skills training to retain employment, be more productive, and be eligible for promotion and pay increases; but time away from work means loss of production.

Job Seeking customers can search for work, create and print resumes, access local and statewide job listings, and receive referrals to and information about the programs offered by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton.

The Mobile Career Center is also available for disaster assistance if needed. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff are available to travel to other regions or remote locations to assist Florida's Emergency Management Team, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and disaster-affected individuals and employers.

The Mobile Career Center is handicapped compliant and provides a means for continued employment solutions to our local business community and its workforce, including individuals with disabilities.

The career centers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties and the Mobile Career Center are in full compliance with the applicable requirements related to architectural accessibility, as set forth at 29 CFR 32.26 through 32.28.

In addition to the virtual services that are available to CareerSource Okaloosa Walton employers and job seekers, Employ Florida (EF) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The EF website at www.employflorida.com provides access to employment opportunities, resume-building resources, etc.

The Florida Abilities Work portal is available at <https://abilitieswork.employflorida.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>. The micro-portal is housed on the EF website. The portal was specifically designed to provide resources to persons with disabilities and to assist employers who are interested in hiring.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will develop virtual workshops that universal customers will have easy access to at the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton website: www.careersourceokaloosawalton.com. There will be a variety of workshops offered on a 24/7 basis when the project is completed.

Veterans Outreach

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff is actively engaged in providing transitional assistance to eligible active-duty military members with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB) as they transition to civilian life. The flexibility to conduct this assistance at various locations, including career centers and the Mobile Career Center, ensures accessibility for those in need.

Additionally, the commitment to adjusting services to meet the unique needs of special military populations demonstrates a proactive approach. By prioritizing services for all veterans, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton contributes significantly to supporting our veterans' successful integration into the civilian workforce. Eligible members can access these services through these means:

- a. **Visit Career Centers:** Military members can visit the local career centers operated by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton. These centers offer personalized assistance, workshops, and resources to help with job placement, resume building, and career development.
- b. **Referral Basis:** Services can be conducted on a referral basis. If a military member is transitioning to civilian life and has Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE), they can be referred to the DVOP staff for specialized assistance.
- c. **Priority of Services:** All veterans receive priority of services. This ensures that military members, regardless of their specific circumstances, receive the support they need during their transition.

The Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) play a crucial role in connecting with Federal contractors and employers to organize hiring events specifically for veterans. Their efforts create valuable opportunities within the workforce.

When assessing veterans through the one-stop system, those identified as having Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB) (as per the Florida Commerce directive) are referred to the **CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)** team. This specialized team provides targeted support to address those barriers and facilitate successful employment outcomes.

For veterans who do not have significant barriers, the CSOW Career Advisors step in to provide comprehensive services. This approach ensures that all veterans receive tailored assistance based on their unique needs and circumstances.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) actively engage with employers during hiring events to create opportunities for veterans. Here's how they do it:

a. **Outreach and Relationship Building:**

- (1) LVERs establish connections with local employers, including federal contractors. They attend job fairs, networking events, and industry-specific gatherings.
- (2) By building relationships, LVERs learn about job openings, company needs, and hiring preferences.

b. **Promotion of Veteran Talent:**

- (1) LVERs advocate for veterans by highlighting their skills, work ethic, and unique qualifications. They emphasize the value veterans bring to the workforce.
- (2) During hiring events, LVERs showcase veteran candidates and encourage employers to consider them.

c. **Customized Job Matching:**

- (1) LVERs match veterans' skills and preferences with available job opportunities. They collaborate with employers to identify suitable positions.
- (2) If a veteran has specific qualifications (such as security clearance), LVERs ensure employers are aware.

d. **Facilitating Interviews and Hiring:**

- (1) LVERs coordinate interviews between employers and veteran candidates. They provide logistical support and follow up afterward.
- (2) When a veteran is hired, LVERs celebrate the success and continue supporting both parties.

In summary, LVERs bridge the gap between veterans and employers, promoting veteran employment and fostering mutually beneficial partnership

Military Family Employment Advocacy Outreach

The Military Family Employment Advocacy (MFEA) Program was established to solve the challenges that military families face daily, including frequent relocations, recurring deployments, and lengthy periods of separation. These hardships heighten the anxiety experienced by military families and add to the uncertainties associated with deployments. Florida legislature recognizes these occurrences impact a military spouse's ability to gain job skills and maintain a career. Oftentimes, this hampers the military spouse from contributing to the financial well-being of the family and/or experiencing personal satisfaction with military life. This negatively affects the military's mission, and it impacts retention.

The purpose of the MFEA program is to develop and provide outreach services to engage job-seeking military dependents in Okaloosa and Walton counties and help educate the workforce community about the unique employment barriers faced by military family members. It also provides the MFEAs with an opportunity to highlight the unique talents military families, particularly military spouses, can bring to the workforce. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton operates affiliate CareerSource Okaloosa Walton sites at Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field, and 7th Special Forces Group.

(3) Integration of Services: Describe how one-stop career centers implemented and transitioned to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners (WIOA §108(b)(21)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses an Integrated Service Delivery Model for delivering services to CareerSource Okaloosa Walton customers facilitated primarily through a technology-based Employ Florida customer management system. All One-Stop programs and partner services are fully integrated through Employ Florida with an entire menu of services offered through the One-Stop System. The CSOW website has been updated and includes an array of options for the community to access and engage in a one-stop delivery system.

Automated Tracking, Linking and Archiving Solution (ATLAS)

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has deployed an integrated, technology-based intake and case management information system known as ATLAS.

ATLAS Overview

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton utilizes an Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) known as ATLAS. ATLAS supports programs and manages all of the Career Center traffic and participant records.

ATLAS is a web-based software system developed for the Workforce Development Industry. ATLAS operates in a manner that's similar to having an extra staff member onboard. It performs nine different functions and contains seven unique system features.

ATLAS offers self-service technology for participants and customers. This allows customers to complete routine sign-in tasks with a high degree of independence while still maintaining a high level of service. The ATLAS system platform allows CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff to provide an

increased level of service to all customers visiting the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton centers.

ATLAS is a centralized document storage system that stores, tracks and retrieves the traditional “hardcopy” case file information on program participants. The information on each participant can also be securely shared allowing partners and auditors access to information. ATLAS also allows staff members access to customer case files and related information in real-time.

ATLAS System Features

- a. Storage - Secure centralized web-based document storage and retrieval system that accepts activity and document data from several ATLAS modules, including Self Sign, Staff-Scan, E-course, Self-Scan, Orientations, etc. It stores detailed records of customer activity and document data and has the capacity to generate customized reports.
- b. Staff-Scan - Streamlines document filing and acts as CareerSource Okaloosa Walton’s document management system. Staff-Scan allows staff members to review and file customer eligibility, activity compliance, and other customer documentation via a web-based interface (EDMS). Staff members will scan documents via copier/scanners and can even load customer-related e-mails into the EDMS customer file.
- c. Customer Self-Sign In - The Self-Sign application allows staff members to track and assist customers in the most efficient way possible. Utilizing kiosk hardware and touch-screen technology, all customers choose from the menu selections/buttons and appropriate staff members are then notified of customers’ arrival.
- d. Customer Alerts – Can alert specific staff members when specific activity events occur i.e. appointment arrivals or customer requests. Alerts can be configured to notify multiple staff members, supervisors or management staff members of specific customer logins, activity or doc
- e. Customer Self-Scan Documents - Customers will scan documentation without staff member assistance using the Self-Service kiosks in the lobbies. That documentation is then immediately made available for review by staff members and the customers’ cases will be updated in EF/OSST and then the document is stored in the customer’s EDMS files.
- f. E-Course - Allows for custom lessons to be created and administered from within ATLAS. These courses/modules can incorporate different types of lesson media (Video, Audio, PowerPoint, DOC, EXCEL, PDF, etc.) Once the curriculum is developed, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will be able to track lesson performance, issue completion certifications, and E-file the results for customers and staff members.
- g. Customer Program Orientation - Provides the ability to conduct initial and ongoing orientation for long-term or temporary workforce programs i.e. TANF/WTP & WIOA etc. Once developed, the ATLAS Orientation module allows customers to progress through a self-guided, customizable orientation from their home, local CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Center or anywhere there is a computer with internet access.

Integration of Service Delivery through the One-Stop Delivery System for Business Customers

Business partnerships are essential in training Florida's workforce to meet the current and future needs of diverse business sectors, particularly in those industry clusters that hold the most promise for high-wage jobs and diversifying Florida's economy. The workforce system has made progress in partnering with business and industry and our current employer penetration/usage metrics indicate tremendous opportunity exists to develop a systematic, mutually beneficial approach to developing business partnerships. Both business and workforce have a vested interest in partnering and the onus is on the workforce system to effectively communicate and market the value of the partnership.

Certain career services must be made available to local businesses, specifically labor exchange activities and certain types of labor market information. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to establish and develop relationships and networks with large and small employers and their intermediaries.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will offer customized business services to employers, employer associations, or other organizations. The full range of customizable services available through the Workforce Development System will be considered are tailored for specific employers. In situations where CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is not a provider of the service, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff will assist the employer in finding an appropriate service provider. The following is a list of services that may be customized to meet the needs of employers:

- a. Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers.
- b. Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other employer organizations, on employment-related issues.
- c. Customized recruitment events and related services for employers including targeted job fairs.
- d. Human resource consultation services, including but not limited to assistance with:
 - (1) Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters; and
 - (2) Other appropriate customized services.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will also deliver other business services and strategies with partners that meet the workforce investment needs of the region's employers. All such services will be delivered with consideration given to partner programs' statutory requirements and consistent with Federal cost principles. These business services may be provided through effective business intermediaries working in conjunction with CareerSource Okaloosa Walton or through the use of economic development organizations, philanthropic, and other public and private resources in a manner determined appropriate by CareerSource Okaloosa Walton; and in some cases, in cooperation with the State. Allowable activities, consistent with each partner's authorized activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Developing and implementing industry sector strategies (including strategies involving industry partnerships, regional skills alliances, industry skill panels, and sectorial skills partnerships);
 - a. Customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of a registered apprenticeship program;

- b. Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area employers, which may include career pathways, skills upgrading, skill standard development and certification for recognized post-secondary credentials or other employer use, and other effective initiatives for meeting the workforce investment needs of area employers and workers.
- c. Assistance to area employers in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, which may include strategies such as early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, use of feasibility studies to assess the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors.
- d. The marketing of business services to appropriate area employers, including small and mid-sized employers; and
- e. Assisting employers with accessing local, State, and Federal tax credits.

Integration of Service Delivery through the One-Stop Delivery System for Universal Customers

All One-Stop programs and services are fully integrated for the job-seeking customers with an entire menu of services offered through the Career Centers. To highlight the value of the Workforce Development System, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will offer a full array of career services to CareerSource Okaloosa Walton customers. The three basic types of career services are:

- a. Basic Career Services.
- b. Individualized Career Services; and
- c. Follow-up Services.

Basic Career Service

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board will ensure that Basic Career Services are made available and, at a minimum, will include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities, partner programs, and Federal cost principles.

- a. Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- b. Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the One-Stop Delivery System.
- c. Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and need for supportive services.
- d. Labor exchange services, including:

- (1) Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including
 - (c) Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and
 - (d) Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and
 - (2) Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the One-Stop Delivery System.
- e. Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the One-Stop Delivery System and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
 - f. Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
 - (1) Job vacancy listings in labor market areas.
 - (2) Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
 - (3) Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.
 - g. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.
 - h. Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System.
 - i. Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under SNAP; assistance through the earned income tax credit; and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program.
 - j. Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the Career Center must provide meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation.
 - (1) Meaningful assistance means:

- (a) Providing assistance on-site using staff who are well-trained in unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants; or
 - (b) Providing assistance by phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.
- (2) The costs associated in providing this assistance may be paid for by the State's unemployment insurance program, or the WIOA adult or dislocated worker programs, or some combination thereof. Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA

k. Individualized Career Services

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board must ensure that Individualized Career Services are made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include the following services, as consistent with program requirements and Federal cost principles:

- (1) Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
 - (d) Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - (e) In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- (2) Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers (As described in § 680.180);
- (3) Group counseling.
- (4) Individual counseling.
- (5) Career planning.
- (6) Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- (7) Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers (as described in § 680.170);
- (8) Workforce preparation activities.

- (9) Financial literacy services (As described in sec. 129(b)(2)(D) of WIOA and § 681.500).
- (10) Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- (11) English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Follow-up Services

Follow-up Services must be provided, as appropriate, including, counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in adult or dislocated worker workforce investment activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

(4) Sub-grants and Contracts: Describe the competitive process used by the LWDB to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities (WIOA §108(b)(16)).

RESPONSE

Competitive Process for Awards of Service Providers

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board believes in and practices open and full competition to procure the best services possible at a reasonable price. The process includes advertisements in the local newspapers, the CSOW website, workforce regions within Florida, and the vendor list for services. Written notification of Intent to Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) is sent to each addressee on the Vendor's list with instructions on how to request a copy of the solicitation. To continually improve the solicitation process and to ensure open and fair competition, the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board has a policy of conducting periodic surveys of vendors who request copies of the solicitation and then do not submit proposals or bids. This is done to determine if the process discouraged competition or if other factors were the primary reasons for the decision not to submit a proposal or bid.

The final selection of Service Providers is made by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board following a recommendation from an appointed Ad-Hoc Selection Committee named by the Board Chair. The Board staff is charged with the responsibility of certifying the integrity of the solicitation process by ensuring that all requirements of the RFP are met with each proposal submitted; that the proposal was received by the published deadline; and that the proposal was responsive to the RFP. After the proposals have been received and deemed responsive by the Board staff, the proposals are provided to the named members of the Ad-Hoc Selection Committee for review, evaluation, and rating. The Ad-Hoc Committee then meets in an open and advertised public meeting to complete the evaluation and rating process. If the Proposal is for Youth Services, one or more members of the Youth & Career Committee must be included on the Ad-Hoc Committee. The Ad-Hoc Committee will report its results and make a recommendation to the full CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board for selection of the Service Provider/s. The Competitive Solicitation process includes a provision for any proposing agency to protest the decision of the Ad-Hoc Selection Committee or the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board. The final decision is made by the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board.

All potential respondents are **strongly encouraged** to attend the Bidders' Conference since this will be the best opportunity for having technical and other concerns addressed. A copy of the proposal review/rating sheet will be distributed at the Bidders' Conference.

The Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal must identify the proposer, any subcontractor(s), and the activities/services that each subcontractor will deliver. A Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal does not commit a proposer to submit a proposal; however, a **Letter of Intent must be submitted to propose**.

The Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal may be faxed to the phone number or e-mailed to the address provided in the instructions. The Letter of Intent may also be hand delivered, electronically submitted, or mailed to the address indicated in the instructions. PROPOSALS must be hand delivered or mailed to the address indicated in the instructions. The prospective proposer is solely responsible for assuring that anything mailed to CareerSource Okaloosa Walton arrives safely and on time at the address indicated in the instructions.

(5) Service Provider Continuous Improvement: Describe how the LWDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers (WIOA §108(b)(6)(A) and 20 CFR 679.560(5)(i)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board must ensure that the State's Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), including the providers, programs and outcomes, and its partner programs are disseminated publicly through the local one-stop system. The ETPL is a tool to assist CareerSource Okaloosa Walton customers in evaluating training programs and provider options.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board may encourage Training Providers to apply for designation as an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) through its website, social media, and periodic solicitation in publications. In response to a request for an application, the Board provides the application packet that includes the Region's Targeted Occupational List that also designates those occupations deemed to be High Skills/High Wages. Following the receipt of a completed application, Board staff will review the application and make a recommendation to the Board to approve/disapprove the application. This decision is made based on:

- a. The training program is linked to an occupation on the Regional Demand Occupations List.
- b. Prior performance of the Training Provider.
- c. Eligibility to provide contracted services in the state of Florida.
- d. Certification as a Training Provider by the Department of Education or Commission for Independent Education (CIE) as appropriate; and
- e. Agreement to provide performance data FETPIP or CIE.

The Eligible Training Provider List and copies of the Local Targeted Occupational Lists are provided to all One-Stop Center staff within the workforce region. Additionally, these lists including program

outcomes are posted on the website and maintained in each Resource Room of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton centers.

Individual Training Accounts can only be issued for training identified as meeting the needs of a targeted occupation for the Region; and the provider is listed on the Eligible Training Providers List.

The Workforce Board will continue to evaluate the performance of existing training providers and may solicit applications for approval as an Eligible Training Provider through its website, social media, publications, and direct solicitations.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Eligible Training Providers will be required to report information on employment and earnings outcomes for all individuals in a program of study. Failure to submit such reports on a timely and accurate basis will undermine the ability of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board to take such outcomes into account. The Board must ensure the key principles of the ETPL and WIOA are achieved:

- a. Performance accountability.
- b. To meet the needs of local employers and participants, and
- c. To ensure informed customer choice.

F. COORDINATION OF SERVICES

- (1) Coordination of Programs/Partners: Describe how services are coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop career centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SNAP E&T, and Adult Education and Literacy activities. Specify how the local area coordinates with these programs to prevent duplication of activities and improve services to customers. 20 CFR 679.560.**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has long-standing relationships with community partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, SNAP, Adult Education, and Literacy services. These relationships foster an environment that encourages an exchange of ongoing communications and shared activities such as job fairs and special events highlighting the One-Stop system. The relationships also facilitate the sharing of information.

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton career center staff utilize a common intake form to ensure coordination of services at the point of entry. The common intake is the foundation of the initial assessment and ensures One-Stop customers are referred for the appropriate services. This includes a referral to the appropriate programs/partners; and a determination of whether individualized career services are appropriate. In addition to the common intake, customers are asked to sign a "Release of Information" so that information can be exchanged between One-Stop Career Center staff and partner agencies, to allow for coordination of efforts and prevent duplication of services.

- (2) Coordination with Economic Development Activities: Describe the strategies and services that are used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development (20 CFR 679.560(b)(3)(iii)).**

Include an examination of how the LWDB will coordinate local workforce investment activities with local economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the LWDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services (WIOA §108(b)(5) and 20 CFR 679.550(b)(4)).

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board serves as oversight for industry, economic development, and education to identify skills needed to fill demand occupations as well as identifying critical and emerging jobs necessary for business retention, expansion, and economic development for the region.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's (CSOW) Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer are active on the local and regional economic development agency's boards and committees. CSOW's supportive and active involvement ensures that One-Stop staff, services, and participants are a solution to economic development challenges. The CSOW Executive Director is also a member of the One Okaloosa EDC; Walton County Economic Development Alliance; and Florida's Great Northwest.

The CSOW Executive Director meets with the economic development partners periodically to facilitate interactions between local businesses or new businesses looking to locate within the two county areas.

CSOW continues to support entrepreneurial development efforts throughout the region. And supports entrepreneurial training provided through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton supports the concept of regional planning through its participation in Florida's Great Northwest and Northwest Florida Workforce Collective (NFWC), the new regional planning group that CSOW is a member of. The other members of NFWC are CareerSource Escarosa (Region 1), CareerSource Gulf Coast (Region 4), and CareerSource Chipola (Region 3). Florida's Great Northwest represents 12 Counties in the Florida Panhandle.

- (3) Coordination with Rapid Response: Describe how the LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities (WIOA §108(b)(8) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(7). The description must include how the LWDB implements the requirements in [CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy 2021.06.09.A.2. – Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion System](#) and [CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy 114 – Rapid Response Program Administration](#).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's successful implementation of Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion starts with its coordination and integrated approach to the delivery of local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities. ***The local program is known as the "Layoff Avoidance Program (LAP)" and incorporates provisions for both Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion.***

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's vision for the LAP:

To deliver timely, convenient, accurate, and consistent information to the employer customer and leverage resources for a seamless service delivery system.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's goal for the LAP:

To enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment quickly.

What is CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Layoff Avoidance Program (LAP)?

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton **Layoff Avoidance Program's** design and purpose are aligned with CareerSource Florida Strategic Policy - Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion System and CareerSource Florida Administrative Policy - Rapid Response Program Administration.

Design

To that end, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's **Layoff Avoidance Program** is a service delivery system that enables dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible. The program is made up of strategies, policies, processes, and networks that ensure every worker affected by a layoff is given the best opportunity to return to work as soon as possible, and employers can access skilled workers, and other solutions they may need.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's **Layoff Avoidance Program** is designed to be proactive, data-driven, engaged with businesses, and focused on preventing layoffs or minimizing their negative impacts.

Purpose

Therefore, the primary purpose of the LAP is to enable affected workers to return to work as quickly as possible following a layoff, or to prevent their layoff altogether.

Another purpose of the LAP is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, and responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Layoff Avoidance services and activities shall be provided to all employers who experience a mass layoff or closure, regardless of how CSOW is notified or becomes aware of, the event. The CSOW LAP will assist businesses of all sizes.

Value-Added Services

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Layoff Avoidance Program includes the following **value-added services**:

- e. Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment.
- f. Convening, brokering, and facilitating connections, networks, and partners to ensure the ability to assist dislocated workers and their families such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice.
- g. Strategic planning, data gathering, and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.
- h. A menu of Layoff Aversion activities and the provision of additional assistance to employers experiencing dislocation events and activities.

(4) Industry Partnerships: Describe how the LWDB identifies and collaborates with existing key industry partners in the local area. Describe how the LWDB coordinates and invests in partnership infrastructure where key industry partnerships are not yet developed (WIOA §108(b)(4)A)). The local area must describe how the following elements are incorporated into its local strategy and operational sector strategy policy. Describe how:

(a) Selected industries or sectors are driven by high-quality data (cite data source used).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) participates and collaborates with different industry-focused consortiums and committees. The purpose of this initiative is to identify current and future critical talent needs of local businesses and agree on a mechanism to address those needs. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board maintains membership and involvement in organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, One Okaloosa EDC in Okaloosa County and Economic Development Alliance (EDA) in Walton County, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) - Emerald Coast Chapter, Northwest Florida Manufacturing Committee (NWFMC), Building Industry Association (BIA), HSU Foundation, TeCMEN, Tri-County Community Partnership Initiative (TCPI), Education and Industry Consortium, and other employer organizations. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Business Services team collaborates with existing industry-specific consortiums and committees and engages with emerging industry-focused alliances.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff attend monthly or quarterly meetings established by the committees and consortiums of which they are members. The results of meeting discussions serve as guidance to create sector strategies to address workforce challenges directly impacting the community and businesses in key industries.

As part of our partnership strategies, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton will continue to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones. CSOW will provide priority of service delivery to businesses of the sector partners. Below is an example of the business services offered:

- a. Assist in the recruitment of potential new and expanding businesses with the guidance, direction, and coordination of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board and the economic development organizations.
- b. Provide mass recruitment services for new and expanding businesses by offering on-site services, use of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Center facilities, assessment services, extended or designated hours or other customized services to meet the needs of the businesses.
- c. Provide high-value services for employers with specific talent needs including candidate search, pre-employment assessments, and provisions for on-site interviewing at one or more of the CSOW centers.
- d. Continue to promote the “Florida Ready to Work” credentialing for appropriate and potential employees and other assessments.
- e. Participate in community job and career fairs targeting the following audience: Veterans, senior workers, youth graduating from high school, dislocated workers affected by a Reduction In Force (RIF) decision, specific industry needs, mass hiring for new and expanding businesses, or other initiatives identified by the CSOW Board.

WIOA establishes the development and implementation of industry sector partnerships as a required activity at both the state and local levels. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(B) provides that states must use a portion of state set-aside funds to assist local areas by providing information on and support for the effective development, convening, and implementation of industry or sector partnerships. Section 134(c)(1)(A)(v) requires that Title I-B funds allocated to local areas must be used to develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board collaborates with CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce to obtain additional funds to assist with developing industry partnerships.

To meet the statutory requirements under WIOA section 134(c)(1)(A), the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board will go beyond simply providing career services or training to employers within a specific sector and invest in partnership infrastructure where allowable and they are not yet developed. The Board will emphasize the value of engaging multiple partners connected with a target sector including business, labor, higher education, and other stakeholders to support the development and sustainability of local and regional industries. The Board recognizes the value of addressing the workforce needs of both workers and businesses in target sectors as necessary to speed up the pace of economic activity.

(b) Sector strategies are founded on a shared, regional vision.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) serves as a convener for industry and sectors. The Board also provides oversight for **sector strategies**, economic development, and education to identify skills needed for demand occupations.

The CSOW sector strategies rely on a collaborative, regional vision to address common challenges and leverage shared opportunities. By aligning goals and resources across the region, these strategies can drive more effective and sustainable economic development.

The CSOW Board ensures CareerSource Okaloosa Walton sector strategies align with both counties and regional economic development initiatives overseen by Florida's Great Northwest, as well as the educational institutions within the region.

Sector strategies increase CSOW's ability to focus on talent pipelines that meet the needs of companies in a geographical area with similar worker skills needs.

(c) The local area ensures that the sector strategies are driven by industry.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) Board ensures the CSOW policies and sector strategies are aligned with and driven by industry organizations through surveys and feedback received from profit and nonprofit businesses on the Board, industry, and economic development agencies. CSOW also uses data gathered from positions advertised in the Florida Labor Exchange system, and participation in industry events. The data collected from the various constituents is instrumental in the development of the region's sector strategy.

(d) The local area ensures that sector strategies lead to strategic alignment of service delivery systems.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's sector strategies have led to strategic alignment of the service delivery systems. The service delivery system operates around sector strategies capitalizing on the key sectors selected to support the regional economic conditions. As part of the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton strategy, the Service Delivery Model was created to:

- a. Better prepare and connect job seekers and workers with employment opportunities, and
- b. Build talent pipelines addressing the training and employment needs of businesses in key industries. The Model was founded on the grounds of Lean Manufacturing concepts under which three major sub-processes were identified:

- (1) Worker Readiness.

- (2) Placement; and
- (3) Business Account Management focusing on specific elements recognized as key success factors.

To support the Service Delivery Model, a Talent Pipeline mechanism provides visibility of the skills identified during the initial intake process by the Worker Readiness team. The Worker Readiness team consists of one or more members from the different programs including WIOA Adult/DW, WIOA Youth, WT, SNAP, RESEA, Veterans, and Military Spouses. The Placement and Business Services team uses the skill information provided by the Worker Readiness team to advocate and connect job seekers with businesses in target industries to close the skill gap.

**(e) The local area transforms services delivered to job seekers/workers and employers through sector strategies:
and**

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) sector strategies have transformed how services are delivered to job seekers, workers, and employers in the region. By focusing on specific industries or sectors, these strategies can:

Tailor Training Programs: Develop training programs that meet the specific needs of local industries, ensuring that job seekers gain relevant skills.

Enhance Employer Engagement: Foster stronger relationships between employers and workforce development agencies, leading to better job placements and career pathways.

Improve Resource Allocation: Align resources more effectively to address the unique challenges and opportunities within a sector.

Boost Economic Growth: Drive economic development by supporting key industries that are vital to the region's economy.

The Business Services team uses a unique Account Management approach to better assess businesses' talent needs and determine the best solutions to address those needs in key industry sectors. The Business Services Account Managers have been identified to serve as subject matter experts to assess and address workforce challenges of target industries. The Model incorporates four steps:

- a. Identify and Assess talent needs.
- b. Recommend solutions.
- c. Execute the plan by providing the needed services; and
- d. Follow-up to adjust the plan if needed.

The Model allows the Business Services Team to carry out the four-step process when assisting businesses in key industries resulting in increased job placements, consistency of service delivery, high levels of customer satisfaction, and strong business relationships.

(f) The local area measures, improves and sustains sector strategies.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton quarterly programmatic reviews and reports help to ensure strategic processes, practices, policies, and procedures that support the delivery of services resulting in a higher number of individuals trained and placed with businesses in industries of focus.

WIOA Performance Indicators and the Letter Grade reports help with tracking performance and suggest where improvements are needed. Information gathered through industry surveys and business partners serves as guidance to measure industry engagement

The CSOW Board sustains sector strategies by staying relevant and maintaining the link between economic development organizations, workforce development, and education.

(5) Coordination with Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Educations: Describe how the LWDB coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services (WIOA §108(b)(10) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(9)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) works very closely with education and economic development partners. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Business Services Team are involved in industry sector advisory committees and the Education and Industry Consortium. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Executive Director meets with the economic development partners to facilitate interactions that occur between local businesses and/or new businesses looking to locate within our two county areas.

CSOW also partners with secondary and postsecondary education entities such as Okaloosa County Schools District, Walton County Schools District, Okaloosa Technical College, Emerald Coast Technical College, Northwest Florida State College, the University of West Florida and others to coordinate education programs with workforce investment activities to align strategies, enhance curricular, and avoid duplication of services where possible.

In continuing response to the business community to secure a "skilled workforce", CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities by:

- a. Including representatives from eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA.

- b. Involving representatives from institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities, including community colleges.
- c. Promoting participation in Integrated Education & Training (IET) to enhance services and avoid duplication.
- d. Ensuring continuous improvement of eligible providers and strengthening linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.
- e. Facilitating access to the one-stop delivery system through technology and other means.
- f. Providing accessible facilities, programs, and services for individuals with disabilities.
- g. Coordinating with partners to improve services for specific populations, such as non-custodial parents, individuals with disabilities, and English language learners.

These efforts enhance collaboration, streamline services, and promote effective strategies across education and workforce development.

(6) Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services: Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation assistance, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area (WIOA §108(b)(11) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(10)).

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is a member of the Okaloosa County Local Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (LCB) and the Walton County Local Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (LCB). The LCB comes under the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), Emerald Coast Regional Council which is the Designated Planning Agency for Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is required by federal and state legislation to establish a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The TPO also works to increase safety, security, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity for people and goods. The TPO is made up of local government staff and other stakeholders.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides support services in the form of debit cards and bus tickets to our Welfare Transition program participants. In addition, bus tickets may be provided to our veteran populations on occasion to assist with job interviews and/or job search activities. Bus tickets may also be provided to our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has excellent relationships with Goodwill Easter Seals, United Way and Catholic Charities; Caring and Sharing, and Tri-County Community Council (A community service block grant recipient) and understands services offered through those community-based organizations. They provide comprehensive support services and transportation assistance for CSOW customers. Referrals

are made between organizations for various services depending upon the specific needs of the participants.

The Executive Director of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton is also on the Board of Directors for the Early Learning Coalition. This interaction assists in ensuring services such as subsidized childcare for Welfare Transition participants and the working poor, are not duplicated.

- (7) Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services: Describe plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C 49 et seq.) services and other services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system (WIOA §108(b)(12) and 20 CFR 679.560(b)(11)).**

RESPONSE

The Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) Wagner-Peyser Act programs and Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs are both required One-Stop partners, located on-site at CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's One-Stop Career Center.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses a single-entry point at the career center. State Merit staff are co-located to ensure a seamless delivery of services and program integration. Merit staff enter data and update Employ Florida registration information ensuring data validity. Merit staff also notify Veteran and Eligible Persons of Priority of Service and refer appropriate customers to the Veteran's Unit after intake if the Veteran signifies Qualifying Employment Barriers are present. After completion of registration and/or validation, customers are referred to appropriate programs and resources to complete the One-Stop interaction.

FloridaCommerce staff are available for one-on-one career counseling and resume coaching to offer the customer an improvement in their employment outlook. Employment Security Representatives are on-site to perform Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program services to assist all claimants receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits in decreasing their time to gainful employment. FloridaCommerce staff are integrated into the One-Stop center along with WIOA and TANF/WT staff.

In addition, the State of Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and National Caucus on Black Aged have office space at the Fort Walton Beach CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Center to provide employment assistance to disabled and older job seekers. All partners are integrated into operations and function as part of one workforce.

- (8) Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy: Describe how the LWDB coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the LWDB carries out the review of local applications submitted under Title II WIOA § 108(b)(10), consistent with WIOA sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA § 232 (20 CFR 679.560(b)(12)).**

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has existing relationships with providers of Adult Education and Literacy programs and uses that relationship to advocate of co-enrollment of eligible students.

WIOA places great emphasis on planning and implementation across partner programs to ensure alignment in service delivery. Therefore, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton staff will meet periodically with WIOA Title II Program staff to discuss the purpose of co-enrollment as a route to better develop an understanding of which programs are necessary for a participant's success and advancement toward their career and educational goals. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton working with WIOA Title II providers, will effectively utilize co-enrollment as a strategy to further leverage resources for maximum benefit to a participant.

Customers are administered assessment instruments to determine their suitability and readiness for various career pathway activities. Literacy barriers are identified during common intake by career center staff and identified customers are assisted in addressing/overcoming barriers to employment or training. Customers are administered the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine their suitability for post-secondary education or job training. Those customers who do not achieve the scores needed to enter training are referred to Adult Education/Literacy programs in the local area to assist the customer in achieving the required skill levels necessary to enter post-secondary training programs.

Review of Local Application

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (CSOW) participates in the Funding Opportunity -Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) process.

Local applications submitted under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are reviewed by CSOW to ensure they align with specific sections of the WIOA. Local applications typically include several key components:

- a. **Needs Assessment:** This section identifies the educational and workforce needs of the local area, including data on literacy levels, employment rates, and other relevant statistics.
- b. **Program Design:** Details on how the proposed programs will address the identified needs, including curriculum, instructional methods, and support services.
- c. **Performance Goals:** Specific, measurable goals for program outcomes, such as the number of participants who will achieve literacy gains or obtain employment.
- d. **Budget:** A detailed budget outlining the costs associated with the proposed programs, including staffing, materials, and other expenses.
- e. **Partnerships:** Information on partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and other organizations that will support the program.
- f. **Evaluation Plan:** A plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the programs, including methods for collecting and analyzing data on program outcomes.

These applications are designed to ensure that local programs are aligned with the broader goals of WIOA, which include improving access to education and training, increasing employment opportunities, and fostering regional collaboration. The review process ensures that local applications support the

integration of service delivery strategies and align with the broader goals of economic and workforce development.

- (9) Reduction of Welfare Dependency: Describe how the local board coordinates workforce investment activities to reduce welfare dependency, particularly how services are delivered to TANF/Welfare Transition and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) participants, to help individuals become self-sufficient. This description must include strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support the co-enrollment of Welfare Transition and SNAP E&T participants into other workforce development programs. 20 CFR 675.100(h) and 20 CFR 680.620.**

RESPONSE

The Board's Career and Youth Committee has responsibility for the oversight of all adult and youth programming provided through the One-Stop Delivery System. In that regard, the Committee focuses on strategies for targeted groups such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Welfare Transition Program (WTP). The goal is to provide these populations with education, job skills training, and Worker Readiness skills needed to attain and retain employment that will lead to increased wages and a reduction in welfare dependency.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseloads have fallen significantly since the program was enacted in 1996. While the demographic characteristics of adults receiving benefits have been similar over time, the caseload has shifted, with the percentage of "child-only" cases rising slightly, while the percentage of single-parent and two-parent cases has fallen. Factors such as the local economy and the earned income tax credit (EITC) played a key role in the caseload decline, State and local policy has also had a substantial impact on caseload reduction. Specific TANF policies such as financial incentives, support services, sanctions, and time limits help explain changes in caseload exits and entries and overall caseload size.

7 CFR 273.7 (c) (5), states that each component of the State Agency's E&T program must be delivered through its statewide workforce development system unless the component is not available through a local workforce system. To comply with this requirement all SNAP Program activities are administered by the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) through the statewide workforce development system operated by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) through the One-Stop Deliver System.

Similarly, to TANF, factors such as the local economy and the earned income tax credit (EITC) played a key role in the SNAP caseload decline, State and local policy has also played a significant role in the impact of caseload reduction.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program is designed to provide SNAP recipients who are able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) with the education, training, support services; and skills needed to become self-sufficient through employment.

The Board has placed great emphasis on establishing and maintaining an environment that ensures continuous improvement in a seamless delivery of services through the One-Stop system. The Board also places great emphasis on developing and using strategies that will achieve CareerSource Florida's goal of reducing welfare dependency. To that end, the Board has adopted the following welfare to work pro-growth strategies to improve the lives of the SNAP and Welfare Transition customers, and lead to a reduction in caseloads.

- a. SNAP and Welfare Transition Career Advisors provide ongoing assessment of customer's progress toward self-sufficiency that include assessment of barriers affecting progress toward self-sufficiency. Changes in activities and hours of participation are made in accordance with the need for attaining a successful transition from welfare programs to self-sufficiency.
- b. SNAP and Welfare Transition customers who do not have a high school diploma (or equivalent) and whose English-speaking skills need improvement are referred for the appropriate services. By obtaining the required education and skills for today's workplace, welfare dependence will decrease, and opportunities will increase for high-skill and high-wage careers.
- c. Reduce the number of individuals with dependent children who need to rely on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families by providing effective programs and services designed to achieve employment and a self-sustaining family wage.
- d. Integrate SNAP and Welfare Transitional services into the full menu of CareerSource services provided through the CSOW One-Stop System to maximize the numbers and percentages of successful transitions from welfare to self-sufficiency.
- e. Provide educational opportunities for SNAP and Welfare Transition "potential employees" needing vocational training and remediation of basic skills in order to be hired.
- f. Subject to the availability of funding, support services will be provided as needed to allow Welfare Transition participation in allowable work activities. The participants are briefed that support services are not an entitlement and may be provided only as funding permits. All support services provided to participants will be documented in the management information system and other data management systems as directed by the CSOW Board.
- g. Support services are intended to assist the Welfare Transition participant in participating in required allowable activities that are designed to lead to employment and self-sufficiency. Supportive services may include but are not limited to such items as transportation assistance, automotive repairs in some limited instances, driver's license fees, work-related clothing and/or tools, books, emergency housing assistance, emergency childcare, short-term individual or family counseling necessary for successful participation in assigned activities; and not covered by Medicaid or other funding sources. Medical second-opinions for deferred customers, and other allowable costs essential for participation in allowable and countable activities are also included.
- h. SNAP participants are not authorized program-funded support services and are referred to community partners as needed for support services.

G. PERFORMANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

The local workforce plan must include:

- (1) The local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and CLEO(s) with WIOA section 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the LWDB for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area. (WIOA §108(b)(17) and 20 CFR 679.560(16)(b))

RESPONSE

The final of the local levels of performance negotiated for Program Year 2024 and 2025 have not been provided to the Regions by FloridaCommerce.

- (2) Actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board pursuant to section 101(d)(6) of WIOA.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Board of Directors ensures that processes are in place that will enable the organization to exceed the highest standards set by CareerSource Florida's Board of Directors. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's Board of Directors believes the continuous process improvement model, championed by staff, should form the foundation of the local services model. The Board also believes that having the right policies and procedures in place creates a culture that will enable the organization to continue to grow and exceed performance standards.

Managing for Performance – A Successful Performance Model

<Training + Compliance + Monitoring + Corrective Actions = Performance Improvement.>

When it comes to managing performance, the Executive Director in concert with the Quality Assurance, Technical Assistance, Oversight, and Performance (QATA-OP) team, has taken on a greater role regarding performance. The Executive Director continues to emphasize individual accountability as well as the importance of training, compliance, monitoring, corrective actions, and performance improvement. **To that end, Program Managers and program staff are encouraged to take proactive approaches toward improving performance and ensuring the integrity of the CareerSource Quality Assurance Program.**

Managing for performance requires adopting a “best practice” model that has at its core five key elements. These elements are the core components of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's internal control program, and **the reason the organization has reached and sustained a high level of**

performance:

- a. **Training.** Training is the first leg of a successful internal control program. Perhaps it is the most important of the five components. The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's intensive Initial Training Program (ITP) for frontline staff takes place during the nine-month period following the staff member's date of hire. The ITP incorporates all of the items necessary for a staff member to function in a position with little or no supervision.
- b. **Compliance.** The second component requires staff to have a thorough understanding of program requirements. Staff must ensure participants are engaged in allowable activities. Some programs require participants to complete activities in a particular sequence. In this case, staff must understand these requirements and ensure compliance.
 - (1) **Eligibility.** Eligibility is closely aligned with compliance. Determining eligibility correctly for a program is a key step to eliminating disallowed costs. This step must ensure all program participants meet eligibility requirements for the program before enrollments takes place and expenditures are authorized.
- c. **Monitoring.** The Quality Assurance Manager in coordination with the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer ensures quarterly monitoring is conducted for ALL programs within 60 days following the end of each quarter (i.e. February 28/29, May 31, August 31, and November 30). CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses a "peer" monitoring approach. To ensure the highest integrity of the monitoring process, Program Managers must ensure that all monitoring conducted by program staff is done independently of other program staff.
- d. **Corrective Action.** A Monitoring Action Plan (MAP) will be developed for any Programmatic Findings or Non-Compliance Issues discovered during monitoring or other reviews that may take place outside of the monitoring cycle. To ensure guidance is understood and displayed in daily performance on the job, the MAP will remain in effect until the Finding or Non-Compliance Issue is corrected.
 - (1) Because a Finding or Non-Compliance Issue is a serious violation of standards, the MAP and training must take place as soon as the staff member is available for training. Generally, a staff member will be considered available for training unless in Paid Time Off status.
 - (2) Post-monitoring reviews are required for all programs after the quarterly monitoring is completed.
- e. **Performance.** This leg of the Quality Assurance Program is an evaluation of performance outcomes. A primary goal of CSOW is to have high performance in all program areas. However, ***it is important for staff not to let the desire for high performance override the requirements for compliance or eligibility.*** If compliance and eligibility are out of balance, then performance may be negatively affected. Compliance and eligibility should always drive performance.

All CareerSource Okaloosa Walton front-line staff members receive a minimum of 15 hours of continuing training annually to ensure Career Center credentialing is compliant with WIOA and that the staff members' skills remain current and relevant.

(3) How the LWDB considered feedback from one-stop career center customers when evaluating the effectiveness of its one-stop career centers.

RESPONSE

The CareerSource Okaloosa Walton uses a continuous process improvement model that depends on feedback from a variety of sources, such as staff, businesses, job seekers, One-Stop partners, community organizations, and other stakeholders. Continuous feedback followed by the appropriate corrective actions is what keeps the organization performing at a high level.

Customer satisfaction surveys will continue to be promoted and available on Employ Florida, at the CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's comprehensive Career Center, affiliate sites, and specialized sites to provide all customers with the opportunity to provide feedback to the system. CareerSource Okaloosa Walton has developed an additional feedback form for required One-Stop partners and other stakeholders to provide feedback for system improvements that may affect the memorandum of understanding.

Board staff will analyze the surveys and ensure appropriate action is taken when necessary. Board staff will provide the results of the analysis to the Board of Directors. The results will also be reviewed with Program Managers and career center staff to ensure any necessary actions are understood and carried out.

(4) Actions the LWDB took to implement and assess the use and effectiveness of the following WIOA waiver(s) in effect for Florida, if applicable.

d. Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA § 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that State and local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth. The response should include programmatic outcomes including the increase of:

(1) Youth that attained a measurable skill gain.

- PY 2021-2022: 2
- PY 2022-2023: 11
- PY 2023-2024: 16

(2) Youth that attended post-secondary education.

- PY 2021-2022: 1
- PY 2022-2023: 4
- PY 2023-2024: 5

(3) Youth that participated in occupational skills training.

- PY 2021-2022: 1
- PY 2022-2023: 4
- PY 2023-2024: 6

(4) ISY who participated in work experience opportunities; and

- PY 2021-2022: 0
- PY 2022-2023: 7
- PY 2023-2024: 6

(5) Youth that earned an industry-recognized credential.

- PY 2021-2022: 1
- PY 2022-2023: 3
- PY 2023-2024: 7

(1) Youth that attained a measurable skill gain:

RESPONSE

For youth attaining measurable skill gains under WIOA waivers, CSOW implemented and assessed various strategies to ensure effectiveness. Here are some key actions:

CSOW Offers a variety of programs that lead to measurable skill gains, such as high school equivalency, postsecondary education, and occupational skills training.

CSOW Provided additional support like tutoring, mentoring, and career counseling to help youth achieve their educational and training goals.

CSOW ensured that an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) was developed that outlined specific milestones and goals for each youth participant.

(2) Youth that attended post-secondary education:

RESPONSE

CSOW took several actions to implement and assess the use and effectiveness of the WIOA waivers, including those for youth attending post-secondary education.

CSOW partnered with the local colleges and universities on the ETPL to ensure that youth enrolled in post-secondary education receive the necessary support and resources.

CSOW WIOA staff ensured training programs were tailored to meet the needs of youth in post-secondary education, ensuring alignment with labor market demands.

CSOW included the provision of support services such as career counseling, mentoring, and financial aid assistance to help youth succeed in their educational and career goals.

(3) Youth that participated in occupational skills training:

RESPONSE

For youth participating in occupational skills training under WIOA waivers, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) in Florida have implemented and assessed various strategies to ensure effectiveness. Here are some key actions:

CSOW partnered with employers collaborating with local businesses and industry leaders to develop training opportunities that meet current labor market needs.

CSOW offers Customized Training Programs and training in high-demand occupations, ensuring that youth gain relevant skills that enhance their employability.

CSOW offered support services and provided additional support such as transportation, childcare, and career counseling to help youth complete their training programs.

(4) ISY who participated in work experience opportunities: and

RESPONSE

For In-School Youth (ISY) participating in work experience opportunities under WIOA waivers, CSOW implemented and assessed various strategies to ensure effectiveness.

CSOW partners with Employers collaborating with local businesses, non-profits, and public sector organizations to provide diverse work experience opportunities.

CSOW ensures the ISS design work experiences are planned and structured, ensuring they provide meaningful learning and skill development.

CSOW offers support services offering additional support such as transportation, mentoring, and career counseling to help youth succeed in their work experiences.

(5) Youth that earned an industry-recognized credential.

RESPONSE

For youth earning industry-recognized credentials under WIOA waivers, CSOW took several actions to implement and assess the effectiveness of these programs.

CSOW forged partnerships with educational institutions collaborating with local colleges, and training providers to offer programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials.

CSOW ensured alignment with industry needs ensuring that the credentials offered are in high-demand fields, such as healthcare and information technology etc.

CSOW offered support services providing additional support such as tutoring, mentoring, and financial assistance to help youth complete their credential programs.

(6) Measuring effectiveness.**RESPONSE**

CSOW measures Effectiveness by tracking key performance metrics through Employ Florida such as the number of youth achieving measurable skill gains, the types of gains achieved, and the time taken to achieve these gains; enrollment rates, completion rates, and employment outcomes for youth participating in post-secondary education programs; and job placement rates for youth in occupational skills training programs; and employment outcomes for youth who earn industry-recognized credentials.

(b) Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY). The response should include programmatic outcomes including:

- (1) Improved response of the LWDB and youth providers' to the workforce needs of ISY;
 - See responses below.
- (2) Increased number of youth that utilized an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized post-secondary credential;
 - PY 2021-2022: 0
 - PY 2022-2023: 0
 - PY 2023-2024: 1
- (3) Increased access to and engagement of ISY in need of post-secondary education, training, and support to succeed in the labor market; and
 - PY 2021-2022: 0
 - PY 2022-2023: 0
 - PY 2023-2024: 1
- (4) Increased number of prepared youth candidates who are ready to fill high growth industry demand in the State and local area.
 - See responses below.

(1) Improved response of the LWDB and youth providers' to the workforce needs of ISY;

RESPONSE

The implementation of the waiver of 20 CFR 681.550, which allows WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY), has led to several programmatic outcomes, particularly focusing on the improved response of youth providers to the workforce needs of ISY:

Increased Enrollment: The waiver has enabled more ISY to enroll in training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, providing them with valuable skills and qualifications.

CSOW has been able to offer a wider range of training programs tailored to the interests and career goals of ISY, ensuring alignment with local labor market demands¹.

CSOW staff have developed individualized training plans that cater to the specific needs and aspirations of ISY, ensuring that the training is relevant and effective.

CSOW's strengthened collaborations with local employers have ensured that the training programs are aligned with current and future workforce needs, providing ISY with skills that are in demand.

CSOW offers comprehensive support. ISY receive additional support services such as career counseling, mentoring, and financial assistance, which have been crucial in helping them complete their training programs successfully.

CSOW offers a holistic approach. The integration of support services with training programs help address various barriers to education and employment, such as equity, making it easier for ISY to focus on their training and career goals.

Positive Outcomes:

Higher Completion Rates: The waiver will increase the number of ISY completing their training programs and earning industry-recognized credentials¹.

Improved Employment Prospects: ISY who participate in ITA-funded training programs will have better employment outcomes, with many securing jobs in their chosen fields.

These outcomes demonstrate that the waiver does significantly improved the ability of CSOW to meet the workforce needs of ISY, ultimately contributing to a more skilled and competitive workforce in Florida.

(2) Increased number of youth that utilized an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized post-secondary credential;

RESPONSE

The waiver of 20 CFR 681.550, allowing WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY), will lead to a significant increase in the number of youth utilizing ITAs to pursue industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

Increased Enrollment: More ISY have been able to enroll in programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, thanks to the flexibility provided by ITAs.

CSOW will be able to offer a wider range of credential programs, including those in high-demand fields such as healthcare and information technology.

CSOW will ensure staff develop individualized training plans that cater to the specific needs and career goals of ISY, ensuring that the training is relevant and effective.

CSOW partners with employers to strengthen collaborations and ensure that the credential programs are aligned with current and future workforce needs, providing ISY with skills that are in demand.

CSOW offers comprehensive Support for ISY. ISY has received additional support services such as career counseling, mentoring, and financial assistance, which have been crucial in helping them complete their credential programs successfully.

CSOW offers a holistic approach. The integration of support services with credential programs has addressed various barriers to education and employment, making it easier for ISY to focus on their training and career goals.

(3) Increased access to and engagement of ISY in need of post-secondary education, training and support to succeed in the labor market; and

RESPONSE

The waiver of 20 CFR 681.550, allowing WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY), will significantly increase access to and engagement of ISY in post-secondary education, training, and support services.

The waiver has enabled ISY to access a wider range of post-secondary education and training programs, including those leading to industry-recognized credentials.

CSOW has implemented targeted outreach efforts to identify and engage ISY who need additional support to succeed in the labor market.

ISY has received personalized support services such as career counseling, mentoring, and financial assistance, which have been crucial in keeping them engaged in their education and training programs.

The integration of hands-on, interactive learning opportunities has made training programs more engaging and relevant to the career goals of ISY.

Improved Outcomes:

Higher Enrollment and Completion Rates: There will be an increase in the number of ISY enrolling in and completing post-secondary education and training programs.

Better Employment Prospects: ISY who participate in ITA-funded programs have shown improved employment outcomes, with many securing jobs in their chosen fields.

CSOW offers a holistic approach. The integration of support services with credential programs has addressed various barriers to education and employment, making it easier for ISY to focus on their training and career goals.

CSOW strengthens partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and community organizations have created a supportive environment for ISY to thrive.

(4) Increased number of prepared youth candidates who are ready to fill high growth industry demand in the State and local area.

RESPONSE

The waiver of 20 CFR 681.550, allowing WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY), has led to a significant increase in the number of prepared youth candidates ready to fill high-growth industry demands in the local community and in Florida.

More ISY will earn industry-recognized credentials in high-demand fields such as healthcare and information technology.

CSOW offers **relevant skill development**. Training programs have been tailored to meet the specific needs of high-growth industries, ensuring that youth gain the skills required by employers.

CSOW will ensure individualized training plans are developed for ISY, focusing on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in high-growth industries.

Many training opportunities include practical, hands-on experience, which helps youth apply their skills in real-world settings and become job ready.

CSOW partners with employers **to** strengthen collaborations with local employers and ensure that training programs are aligned with industry needs, providing a pipeline of skilled candidates ready to fill job openings.

Employer Feedback: Regular feedback from employers has been used to continuously improve training programs and ensure that they meet the evolving demands of high-growth industries.

(5) Measuring effectiveness.

RESPONSE

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton measures effectiveness based on these outcomes:

Higher Job Placement Rates: ISY who have participated in ITA-funded training programs show better employment outcomes, with many securing jobs in high-growth industries.

Career Advancement: The skills and credentials earned through these programs will enabled youth to not only secure employment but also advance in their careers.

These outcomes demonstrate that the waiver has significantly increased the number of prepared youth candidates ready to meet the demands of high-growth industries in Florida, contributing to a more skilled and competitive workforce.

REGIONAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The regional plan is attached below to the Four-Year Plan.

END OF LOCAL PLAN

Regional Plan Addendum

LWDBs in an identified planning region will have to work together to formulate a regional plan as an addendum to each of their local plans. Once identified, planning regions will remain in effect if federal and state requirements for planning regions continue to be met. With each submission of the regional plan to the state, the respective LWDBs and chief local elected official(s) will certify that the requirements to be identified as a planning region continue to be met. The regional plan must include:

(1) Names of the LWDBs that comprise the planning area. ([Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements](#))

The Local Workforce Development Areas that comprise the Northwest Florida Workforce Collective (WIOA Regional Planning Area) include:

- Region 1- CareerSource Escarosa (Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties),
- Region 2-CareerSource Okaloosa Walton (Okaloosa and Walton Counties),
- Region 3- CareerSource Chipola (Washington, Holmes, Liberty, Jackson, and Calhoun Counties), and
- Region 4-CareerSource Gulf Coast (Bay, Gulf, Franklin Counties).
-

(2) Description of how the planning region shares a single labor market, shares a common economic development area, and possesses federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA, subtitle B. ([Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements](#))

The area that comprises the Northwest Florida Workforce Collective (or RPA) share industries from aerospace to logistics to advanced manufacturing. The western communities have more concentrated industries in financial services, information technology, and advanced manufacturing, such as chemicals, medical technology, and turbine manufacturing. Eastern communities in the Florida Panhandle have a higher concentration in logistics, textile manufacturing, forest products manufacturing, and ship and boat building. The LWDBs that make up the twelve-county planning region share a regional economic development area supported by Florida's Great Northwest, a regional economic development organization, and work closely with county economic development organizations as well as Opportunity Florida, a multi-county economic development organization that serves rural counties throughout Northwest Florida. Please see the list below:

NORTHWEST FLORIDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Bay Economic Development Alliance
- Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce
- One Okaloosa EDC
- Franklin County
- FloridaWest (Escambia County)
- Gulf County Economic Development Coalition
- Holmes County Development Commission
- Jackson County Economic Development Committee
- Liberty County Chamber of Commerce
- Opportunity Florida
- Santa Rosa Economic Development Office
- Walton County EDA
- Washington County EDC

The Northwest Florida Workforce Collective is made up of local workforce development boards, each of which possesses federal and non-federal resources and works closely with several education and training institutions that provide training for WIOA-sponsored participants.

Additionally, each local board within the planning region ensures that all funding used for training purposes complies with WIOA, subtitle B. Training providers utilized by the RPA currently are listed below:

NFWC Training Providers

Escarosa	Applied Technology Academy
Escarosa	CDL of AL
Escarosa	Coastal Alabama Community College
Escarosa	Fortis Institute
Escarosa	George Stone Technical College
Escarosa	Innovak of Florida, Inc. dba My IT Future Institute
Escarosa	Locklin Technical College
Escarosa	Pensacola State College
Escarosa	Reid State Technical College
Escarosa	Security Services Training Institute
Escarosa	Sky Warrior
Escarosa	Truck Driver Institute
Escarosa	University of West Florida
Okaloosa Walton	Applied Technology Academy
Okaloosa Walton	Emerald Coast Technical College
Okaloosa Walton	FleetForce Truck Driving School at NW Florida State College
Okaloosa Walton	Fortis Institute (Fortis-Pensacola)
Okaloosa Walton	My IT Future Institute
Okaloosa Walton	Northwest Florida State College
Okaloosa Walton	Okaloosa Technical College
Okaloosa Walton	Truck Driver Institute (TDI – Milton FL)
Okaloosa Walton	Tampa Truck Driving School (TTDS – Tampa FL)
Okaloosa Walton	University of West Florida
Okaloosa Walton	LT3 Academy Apprenticeships
Okaloosa Walton	FleetForce Truck Driver Training Apprenticeship
Okaloosa Walton	Reliance Test & Technology Apprenticeship
Chipola	Chipola College
Chipola	Fleet Force
Chipola	Florida Panhandle Technical College
Chipola	Gulf Coast State College
Chipola	Lively Technical Center
Chipola	Wallace College
Gulf Coast	Gulf Coast State College
Gulf Coast	Tom P. Haney Technical College
Gulf Coast	Florida Panhandle Technical College
Gulf Coast	Tallahassee State College
Gulf Coast	SkillStorm
Gulf Coast	FleetForce Truck Driving School at NWFL State College

For further labor market information please click on the link for [NFWC Data Book](#).

(3) Analysis of regional and local population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, labor force conditions, and geographic boundaries.
[\(Administrative Policy 123: Regional Planning Area Identification and Requirements\)](#)

Data was compiled and analyzed by Ernst and Young and provided to early implementer regional planning areas. Please visit the link to the [NFWC Data Book](#).

(4) Description of the established regional service strategies using cooperative service delivery agreements that include but are not limited to:

As a newly formed RPA, staff for the NFWC have been working to assess and align processes, standards, and service strategies. At this date we have inventoried the income eligibility for WIOA adults, ITA caps, Key Industry Sectors, Supportive Services Offerings, Technology Tools, WIOA Youth Incentives and Additional Barriers Definitions, Self Sufficiency Definitions, and Underemployment Definitions for Dislocated Workers. While we have worked diligently to inventory and begin to analyze regional data, we have not yet established strategies for how to combine and streamline our processes.

(a) Consistent eligibility standards and enrollment processes.

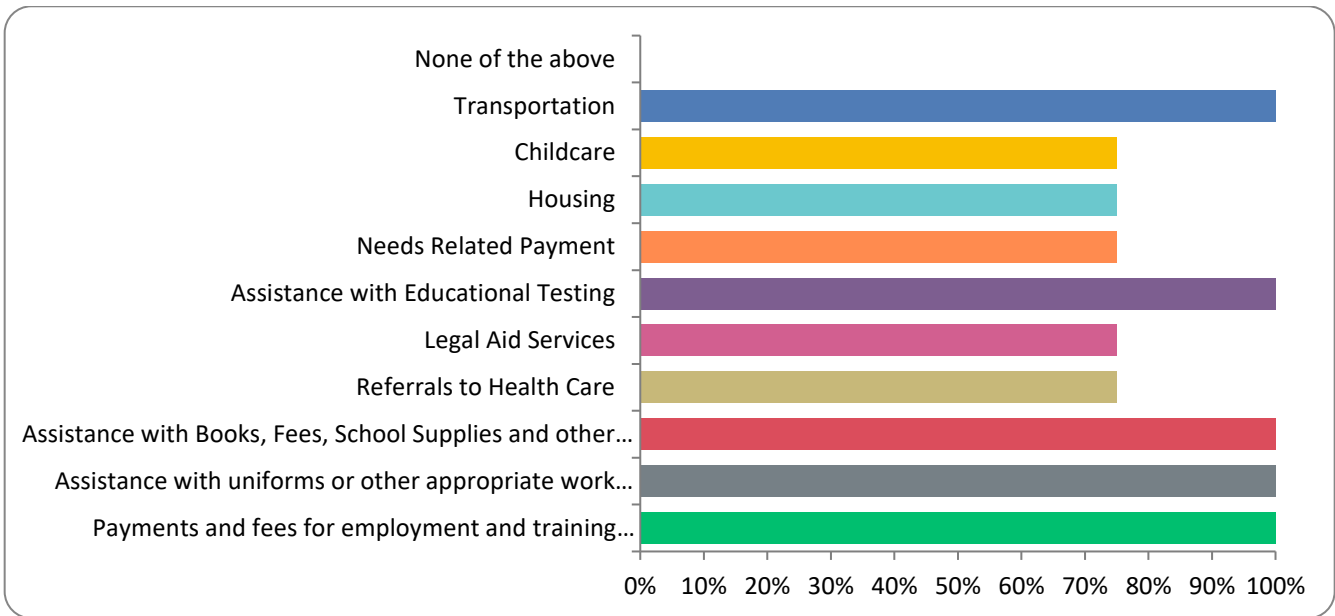
While our eligibility standards vary at this time, the variances are allowed by WIOA law and are determined by each LWDB based on factors such as funding, the local economy, and employment data; it is the goal of the NFWC to adopt the same eligibility standards as possible whenever feasible. Our enrollment processes currently are aligned and follow the same flow. It is important to note that our processes are driven by a goal to assist as many individuals with WIOA and other workforce services as funding will allow (in terms of training programs). Please click on the [link for customer flow/enrollment](#).

(b) Common training and coordination of supportive service offerings, as appropriate.

The NFWC utilizes common training providers and supports the use of training providers across the regional planning area when appropriate (outside of local workforce board boundaries). NFWC boards utilize the ETPL applications of each board for local approval of the ETPL. In terms of supportive services, we have inventoried the following supportive services by LWDB as a starting point to align these services more closely. Our next step is to establish consistency wherever possible. Additionally, the NFWC has already begun sharing staff training with the RPA. Developing training, providing training, and developing policies and procedural instructions are all time-consuming and staff-heavy. We plan to coordinate as much of this work as possible for efficient use of our limited staff time. We believe that RPA-wide training will promote more sharing of best practices and provide not only better-trained staff but also better customer outcomes.

All four regions offer the following supportive services: transportation; assistance with educational testing; Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, and payments and fees for employment and training related application, tests, and certifications.

Three of the four regions also offer the following supportive services: Childcare, Housing assistance, Needs Related Payments, Legal Aid Services, and Referrals to Healthcare. Please note that CareerSource Chipola does not offer these supportive services.



As a newly formed RPA, we are working to align our supportive services offerings more closely, by information sharing regarding the utilization of common community resources such as United Way partner agencies, churches, homeless organizations, shelters, substance disorder rehabilitation facilities, transportation disadvantaged agencies, and other partners. In the rural counties of our RPA, supportive services, and the availability of services through other partners. The availability of both transportation and childcare is challenging across the entire RPA, more so in workforce regions 2-4.

(c) Common technology tools and sharing of data within tools outside of Employ Florida.

Across the planning area, LWDBs use a variety of data tools and technology platforms to support both staff and customers. As an RPA we have completed an inventory of the current technology tools/platforms that each LWDB utilizes to prioritize programs where consolidating to one contract as an RPA might have value. We are also aware that the state is working toward this effort and last December passed the Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services policy. The NFWC will continue to review subscriptions and vendor contracts to look for efficiencies, while CareerSource Florida also analyzes this information to do the same on a statewide level. Data sharing is already common in our RPA, as we share reporting formats, performance data, and tools where possible.

Technology and Service Platforms by LWDB

	CareerSource Escarosa	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	CareerSource Chipola	CareerSource Gulf Coast
Document Storage	EF, OneDrive, SharePoint	Atlas	Atlas	EF, One Drive, Sharepoint
Forms	Microsoft Forms, Formstack, NITRO Sign	Atlas, Right Signature	Docu-sign Atlas Adobe	Adobe Professional

LMI	EF, Plans for Lightcast	Jobs EQ via Opportunity Florida and EF	Jobs EQ via Opportunity Florida and EF	FloridaJobs.org, Opportunity Florida, FGNW
Accounting	MIP	MIP and Gazelle for client services	MIP	MIP
Marketing	Constant Contact, Canva free version	Canva, Constant Contact and free Social Media platforms	Canva	Canva, Survey Monkey, Mail Chimp, Adobe Creative Suite
IT Software	Trend Micro Antivirus	Microsoft 365, Adobe, and Barracuda	Citrix, Office 365, Barracuda, CarbonBlack (protection, KnowBe4, Docusi	MS Office 365, Deep Freeze, Barracuda Firewall, Absolute Resiliency, Symantec Antivirus, Freshdesk
Programmatic Tools	Work Number, Salesforce	Pathful Explorer, Traitify, Fast Forward, IBM Talent Management System, Skills First Optimal Resume, Career Edge(Youth), Virtual Job Shadowing	Employ Florida, OSST, FL COMM tools, Aspiring Minds	Acuity Scheduling, IXL Learning, Talevation, Udemy, WorkNumber, Pathful Explorer, Zoom, Indeed Resume Subscription, Unite Us

(5) Description of sector strategies for existing and emerging in-demand sectors or occupations. (20 CFR 679.560(a)(1)(ii))

The planning region will support the convening of regional employers through our close Economic Development partners.

(a) How will the planning region convene or support the convening of regional employers, foundations, institutions, and other stakeholders to create or maintain sector partnerships?

The NFWC will support Florida’s Great Northwest’s strategic initiative Northwest Florida FORWARD 2.0 which will include business and industry, education, economic development and chamber organizations, infrastructure officials, and government and elected officials. These regional stakeholders will come together to:

- Revisit the strategies and tactics from FORWARD 1.0 in 2017; create a new, clear plan for a path to greater success for each of the five areas of focus:
- Complete a SWOT for the region’s current economic landscape using similar regional and local (including similar MSA sizes and rural counties) comparisons to conduct a gap analysis and to identify opportunities for increased competitiveness.
- Conduct a SWOT based on a review of relevant cluster initiatives already in progress locally and at the state level and an understanding of state, national, and global trends.
- Gather new data related to Northwest Florida’s target industry sectors and identify gaps in areas such as talent, site size/acreage, building square footage needs, logistics, etc. needed in those sectors.

- FGNW will serve in the role of regional convener for the plan, not full implementor.
- Assist in a workshop to pull regional players together in the five focus areas to gain buy-in and chart the path forward.

(b) Identify and describe the established and active sector partnerships in the planning region.

Current sector partnerships are not well defined but operate informally with support from local and regional economic development and chamber organizations. Connections made between like industries have been, in large part, made by local and regional economic development organizations or education-related advisory councils. There have been past attempts to build industry sector partnerships around apprenticeship/training programs within each LWDA, but those have not been sustainable. It is anticipated that the Florida Forward 2.0 will help revive and create stronger industry sector partnerships.

(6) Description of the collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the state).

Labor market and industry data were compiled and provided by Ernst and Young as well as Florida’s Great Northwest. The NFWC is comprised of three Core-Based Metro statistical areas which are Panama City, Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, and Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin across a twelve-county geography. The RPA boasts a labor force of approximately 530,000 individuals, with an average unemployment rate of 3.5 percent (June 2024 LAUS data). Commuting patterns indicate a fluid workforce that commutes between the twelve counties of the RPA and beyond. Targeted Sector industries that LWDA 1 and 2 share are engineering, information technology, and logistics. LWDA 1 has more financial services than LWDA 2, which is predominantly due to the Navy Federal’s operations campus in Pensacola. Secondly, LWDAs 3 and 4 have more ship and boat building than LWDA 2 from manufacturers such as Eastern Shipbuilding, in Panama City, and Xtreme Boats, in Bonifay. Florida’s targeted sectors shared by LWDAs 2 and 4 are logistics, ship and boat manufacturing, and professional services. The Florida target sector industries that LWDAs 2 and 3 share are scientific research, professional services, financial services, and logistics. Region 3’s target industry sector industries have more manufacturing and logistics, while LWDA 4 has more professional services and chemical manufacturing. For example, LWDA 1 has more metropolitan statistical areas that have a higher concentration of corporate headquarters, such as LandrumHR and AppRiver, than traditional rural communities.

For more information regarding labor market data, please click on the link for [Employment and Unemployment Data/Map](#) and/or the [NFWC Data Book](#).

(7) Description of the planning region’s coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate.

Currently, the four LWDB’s do not coordinate or pool administrative resources. In the past, there have been shared positions within the RPA, but through attrition, those arrangements were not sustainable. While cost pooling is not currently being coordinated, it is something that regional partners are interested in for efficiency where possible in the future. There is still much to work out for these situations to come to fruition, including indirect cost rates and how those factors into operations and combined grant submission efforts and even for “group” procurement of needed services/goods. The NFWC believes that coordinating administrative cost arrangements is important for the future of the RPA and continues to work toward this goal.

(8) Description of the planning region’s coordination of transportation and other

supportive services, as appropriate.

All LWDAs in the RPA provide financial for transportation as a supportive service if there is no other agency that can assist, although public transportation options are extremely limited within the RPA area. There are no common transportation vendors throughout the RPA, and all LWDAs in the RPA provide gas cards, reimburse for mileage, or by public transportation passes in order to ensure that customers have a way to get to critical workforce-related appointments, training, or their work-based training site. Some regions have also invested in electric scooters or bicycles as a source of transportation for customers.

(a) What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?

The only RPA wide transportation service is the transportation disadvantaged program.

(b) What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

The NFWC has already begun to compare and inventory policies and procedures in order to coordinate a variety of functions including the provision of supportive services. Our goal is to offer the same types of services that are procedurally aligned, funds permitting. Our supportive service policies are already similar, and staff are working to align them even further.

(9) Description of the planning region's coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers.

All the counties within the Northwest Florida Workforce Collective are also represented by the regional economic development organization Florida's Great Northwest (FGNW). In addition, all four local areas within the NFWC are members of FGNW. One representative from LWDBs also serves as a member of the FGNW executive committee per the organization's by-laws. Eight of the twelve counties represented in the NFWC are part of Florida's first Governor designated Rural Area of Opportunity. These eight counties are also represented by the rural development organization Opportunity Florida. Three of the four local areas are members of Opportunity Florida and participate in the organization. Opportunity Florida and FGNW work together, and share resources, leads, and strategic initiatives. Both FGNW and Opportunity Florida have public and private membership and welcome active participation from the local boards. The NFWC and the two economic development organizations have strong connections. The Executive Director for FGNW is housed in the same office space as CareerSource Gulf Coast. CareerSource Chipola serves as the management staff for Opportunity Florida.

(10) Description of the planning region's establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with FloridaCommerce on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.

The four local areas within the NFWC all have an extensive history of positive performance. Upon release of the Statistical Adjustment by FloridaCommerce, each of the local areas have agreed to have selected management-level staff work together to evaluate regional performance levels and develop a counterproposal, if deemed necessary, to performance levels proposed by FloridaCommerce. Any proposal from the Consortium will take into consideration changes in both local and regional economies that may impact future performance.

(11) Description of the planning region’s strategy to prepare an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) to meet the needs of the employers.

The Northwest Florida Workforce Collective (NFWC) will employ an objective and coherent strategy to prepare an educated and skilled workforce to meet the needs of employers located in its planning regions.

NFWC recognizes that the major need of regional businesses is to more readily find available qualified, educated, and skilled individuals who are equipped with the worker readiness skills necessary to meet their business needs. NFWC with the help of the partner Florida’s Great Northwest (FGNW) is adopting eight guideposts to support the goal of a vibrant talent pipeline that includes all types of workers.

Education, nor any other single organization can address the talent pipeline as a single entity. On the contrary, to move the needle in a positive direction to solving the education and skills gaps concerns, NFWC considers in its strategy some of the peripheral elements that may negatively impact a jobseeker, worker, and a youth or young adults’ ability to attain the education or training they need. When planning for education or training to fill workforce vacancies, NFWC will include the guideposts as a reference when making decisions on the allocation of limited resources.

Peripheral elements considered in the guideposts include transportation, housing, childcare, etc. These elements can directly impact an individual’s ability to attain their education or training goal and must be considered. Job seekers continue to be challenged by a lack of affordable housing, transportation, and childcare. Despite notable improvements over time, access to affordable and responsive transportation remains an obstacle for many who are transitioning into or reentering the workforce. NFWC will continue to advocate for and expand its partnership with applicable local community entities to move forward with solutions to these barriers to employment. The development of the guideposts takes all of these issues into consideration as part of developing and sustaining a talent pipeline.

GUIDEPOST 1: Early Work Experience

Early exposure to the world of work through summer and year-round employment, internships, and service opportunities is a key predictor of consistent employment in adulthood. Programs that provide these opportunities can help prepare youth and young adults for the workforce. Benefits include long-lasting career benefits, development of soft skills, exploration of career interests, improved financial literacy, and personal growth. The importance of early work experience in shaping a youth’s career trajectory and personal development should not be discounted.

GUIDEPOST 2: Education and Training

Access to educational and career pathways and jobs that allow youth and young adults to earn an income while they learn and build careers is crucial. Education and training are essential tools for closing occupational gaps. They provide individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their roles, foster loyalty and retention, and contribute to economic growth and equality.

GUIDEPOST 3: Address Systemic Barriers

It’s important to address systemic barriers that hinder an individual’s employment, such as lack of access to transportation, affordable childcare and gender inequality. Advocating for policies to

providing support for job seekers/workers entering non-traditional occupations via training can be beneficial. Addressing systemic barriers is crucial for creating a stronger talent pipeline and involves a multi-faceted approach that includes policy changes, data-driven decision-making, and targeted support for marginalized groups.

GUIDEPOST 4: Support for Disconnected Youth

Disconnection from school and work increases after high school. Therefore, targeted support for disconnected youth, including those not in school and without a post-secondary degree, can help improve their job prospects. These initiatives are designed to help disconnected youth overcome barriers and acquire the skills necessary to secure and maintain employment, thereby positively contributing to the labor market.

GUIDEPOST 5: Local Labor Market Trends

Understanding local labor market trends in the RPA is key. For instance, working closely with economic development partners to recognize emerging and growing industry sectors and the work-based, on-the-job, and training-based opportunities is key to providing awareness of these growing industries across the RPA.

GUIDEPOST 6: Workforce Development:

Workforce development is a key component of any successful strategy. Workforce development programs increase job satisfaction, operational efficiency, and innovative thinking. These programs also reduce turnover rates, improve productivity, and proactively solve problems as they arise. Workforce, education, and economic development partners should help the industry understand these types of programs and the results they yield. These programs may include job development or understanding accommodations for those with differing abilities.

GUIDEPOST 7: Collaboration with Local Employers

Collaborating with local employers to develop a business-focused talent pipeline is critical in order to ensure that the needs of businesses are understood. Aligning education and training programs according to employer needs is key to ensuring that education/training completers emerge ready to work.

GUIDEPOST 8: Support Services

Support services play a crucial role in workforce development providing comprehensive support services, such as career counseling, job placement assistance, transportation, and post-placement support, can help youth, young adults, the disabled and other job seekers overcome barriers to employment and succeed in the workforce. Support services in the workforce can lead to a more productive, diverse, and stable workforce, benefiting both the employees and the organization.

(12) Description of the local strategies, policies, and improvements to enhance consistency and coordination within the planning region and help streamline experiences for job seekers, workers, and businesses, allowing a more agile workforce system to better adapt to changing marketplace and consumer expectations.

The NFWC will meet at least four times a year to review local strategies, policies and identify improvements that will enhance consistency and coordination within the planning region to help streamline experiences for job seekers, workers, and businesses, allowing a more agile workforce system to better adapt to changing marketplace and consumer expectations. All meetings will focus on information sharing, reduction of duplication of services, and the cultivation of additional resources needed to facilitate a seamless service delivery system rather than an array of separate programs with separate processes. Additionally, board staff from the

LWDBs that make up the planning area have already begun meeting to implement a number of strategies and plan to bring teams together such as business services staff and JVSG staff to share best practices and for the development of new strategies such as a regional employer engagement plan.

The following initiatives and programs assist the NFWC in its ongoing plan for continuous improvement to provide workforce services in the best manner possible for those served throughout the NFWC region.

- A. Florida's Great Northwest—A regional economic development organization led by professional staff and visionary leaders focusing on enhancing the region's competitive position through industry diversification and job growth. All LWDBs of the NFWC planning region are members and rotate serving on the executive committee of the Board of Directors for Florida's Great Northwest.
- B. Education and Industry Consortium Strategic Policy—Requires each LWDB to create consortiums to ensure education and industry partners are discussing talent needs and education offerings as well as sharing information with the local workforce development board of directors.
- C. Business Services—Program established in the daily operations of each LWDB led by business and economic development professionals. Each LWDB has dedicated professionals to help businesses recruit, hire, train, and/or retrain individuals to meet their workforce needs.
- D. WIOA Core Partner's Meetings—Each LWDB meets with partners and agency representatives of the one-stop workforce system as a resource and referral guide for coordinating services. Collaboration with other agencies that provide support or other resources in the local area will continue to be ongoing. In alliance with representatives from the one-stop workforce system, these agencies will be invited to take an active part in our quarterly meetings to enhance awareness of all partners and local agencies of local resources that may serve as referral tools to meet customer needs.

Each local area has strong alliances with its WIOA partners, and those partnerships help guide discussions regarding services needed for jobseekers and other customers accessing services at the LWDB. Each WIOA core partner has a role in ensuring that the local area's workforce continues to meet the needs of the jobseekers and employers. One goal of WIOA is that the workforce system should continue to find ways to bridge the gap between education and employment. The NFWC periodically reviews each local area's outreach activities in employer/business services, work-based learning and customized training offerings to further increase collaboration across the regional area.

Key stakeholders in economic development connect employers, educators, and workforce representatives frequently. The NFWC will continue to rely on our shared regional economic development group, Florida's Great Northwest, and utilize labor market and educational data in coordination with local data to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions. Further, the working regional collaborative group, NFWC, will facilitate unprecedented interagency cooperation and coordination in designing the agility needed to promote the best future for the NFWC's regional area and workforce development system.

(13) Description of the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce, and economic development, including:

(a) Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its planning region.

LWDAs are uniquely positioned to support and implement targeted industry sectors with our partners in education and economic development. The NFWC has a vast array of state, regional, and local partners to assist the RPA in determining which sectors are the most viable and to review and provide input into sector-based initiatives, and the best mix of services including recruitment, hiring, training, work-based training and the use of registered apprenticeships. Our partners in regional and local economic development programs also provide opportunities to work with prospective employers who are seeking to locate in the region as well as existing employers who may be expanding or struggling.

(b) Expanding career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and aligning and integrating programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.

The deep and long-serving connections between the local area members of the Northwest Florida Workforce Collective (the Collective) and two regional private sector-driven economic development organizations combined with strong local ties to private sector employers place the NFWC in an excellent position to forecast employer needs well into the future. Appropriate management-level staff will share efforts within the NFWC and then share lessons learned with their local staff and board of directors.

When appropriate, representatives from members of the NFWC will work together in seeking funding to expand opportunities for work-based training aligned with industry needs. A key focus of regional training initiatives will be to develop opportunities providing those trained with industry-recognized credentials that provide the individual with additional employment options with their current employer, or within targeted industry sectors.

(c) Expanding career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to educational attainment and economic advancement.

The NFWC member regions have a long-standing history of serving populations facing multiple barriers to both educational attainment and economic advancement. Geographically, the NFWC is made up of roughly two thirds of RPA consisting of rural communities. There are limited services and many extraordinary barriers to employment; the two largest barriers being transportation and childcare. Furthermore, rural communities have fewer service agencies overall. Often LWDBs are the one-stop shop for all services with the exception of the health department. Our offices are located in the majority of the counties we serve, and if not with full-time office hours with staff that are on site at least one or two days per week. Our locations are often located in the heart of or near underserved communities and we partner with the few local organizations which can support those in need in order to help them become job or training ready. In our larger metro areas, we have comprehensive centers and staff equipped to assist those with an interest in training on site at the training location, at our office and/or virtually. As an RPA our Chief Operating Officers are meeting to review and share best practices on many workforce topics such as this one. While we believe we have fully expanded services and opportunities to populations with multiple barriers, we will continue to explore better ways to serve our most vulnerable populations.

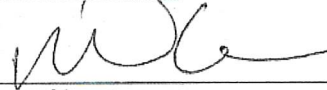
CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local and Regional Planning Area Services Plan
January 1, 2025-December 31, 2028

This plan represents the efforts of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and contains a separate addendum for The Northwest Florida Workforce Collective, which is the twelve county WIOA regional planning area for Northwest Florida.

By signing below, we approve the local plan and will operate in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

Local Workforce Board Chair:

Michelle Crocker



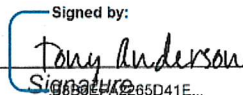
Signature

9.4.2024

Date

Chief Local Elected Official Walton County:

Anthony "Tony" Anderson

Signed by:


Signature

9/30/2024

Date

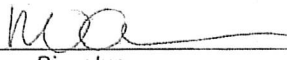
**CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local and Regional Planning Area Services Plan
January 1, 2025-December 31, 2028**

This plan represents the efforts of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton Board to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and contains a separate addendum for The Northwest Florida Workforce Collective, which is the twelve county WIOA regional planning area for Northwest Florida.

By signing below, we approve the local plan and will operate in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

Local Workforce Board Chair:

Michelle Crocker



Signature

9.4.2024

Date

Chief Local Elected Official Okaloosa County:

Paul Mixon,
Chair, Okaloosa County Commission



Signature

9/17/2024

Date



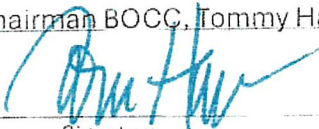
CareerSource Gulf Coast Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local and Regional Planning Area Services Plan
January 1 2025-December 31, 2028

This plan represents the efforts of CareerSource Gulf Coast Board to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Bay, Gulf and Franklin Counties, and contains a separate addendum for The Northwest Florida Workforce Collective, which is the twelve county WIOA regional planning area for Northwest Florida.

By signing below, we approve the local plan and will operate in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

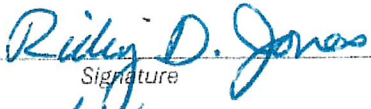
Chief Local Elected Official Bay County:

Chairman BOCC, Tommy Hamm


Signature
9/17/24
Date

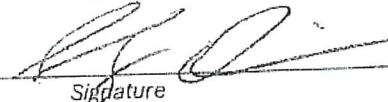
Chief Local Elected Official Franklin County:

Chairman BOCC, Ricky Jones


Signature
10/1/24
Date

Chief Local Elected Official Gulf County:

Chairman BOCC, Sandy Quinn


Signature
SEPT. 24, 2024
Date

Local Workforce Board Chair:

Elinor Mount Simmons


Signature
10.02.24
Date

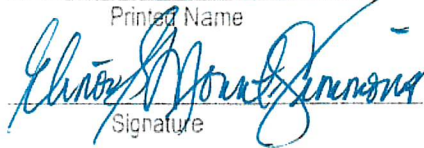
BY OUR SIGNATURES BELOW, WE APPROVE THE ATTACHED ADDENDUM (REGIONAL PLANNING AREA PLAN), AND AGREE THAT THE FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR A PLANNING REGION CONTINUE TO BE MET, AND THIS APPROVAL SHALL ONLY BE EFFECTIVE IF SIGNED BY ALL CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL BOARD CHAIRS REPRESENTING THE TWELVE COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING AREA -THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA WORKFORCE COLLECTIVE.

SIGNED BY:

Local Workforce Board Chair:

Elinor Mount-Simmons

Printed Name



Signature

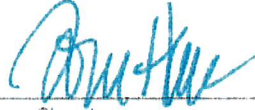
10.02.24

Date

Chief Local Elected Official:

Tommy Hamm, Chairman

Printed Name



Signature

Bay County
Board of County
Commissioners

9/17/24

Date

Chief Local Elected Official:

Ricky Jones, Chairman

Printed Name



Signature

Franklin County
Board of County
Commissioners

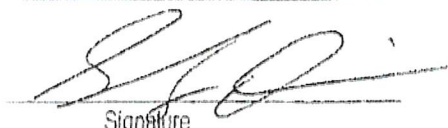
10/1/24

Date

Chief Local Elected Official:

Sandy Quinn, Chairman

Printed Name



Signature

Gulf County
Board of County
Commissioners

SEPT. 24, 2024

Date



Lloyd Reshard
Board Chair

Marcus L. McBride, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Workforce Escarosa, Inc. dba CareerSource Escarosa's 4-Year/Regional Plan has been reviewed and approved as attested by placement of our signatures and authorization below:

**Designated Chief Local Elected Official
Region I**
Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners

CareerSource Escarosa

Signature

Board Chair: Lloyd Reshard

Sam Parker

Printed Name

9/12/24

Date

CareerSource Escarosa

Chief Executive Officer: Marcus L. McBride, PhD

ATTEST:

Donald C. Spencer, Clerk of Court

6913 N 9th Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32504
p: 850 473.0939 | f: 850 473 0935
careersourceescarosa.com



