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September 21, 2026

Ms. Michele Burns
Mr. Will Miles
CareerSource Okaloosa Walton

**Re: Public Comment on the WIOA Two-Year Plan Modification, January 1, 2027
– December 31, 2028**

Dear Ms. Burns and Mr. Miles:

Thank you for the chance to comment on CareerSource Okaloosa Walton's (CSOW) Two-Year Plan Modification. The Walton County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) reviewed the draft during the public comment period, September 10–25, 2026. First, congratulations. CSOW earned the highest state accountability score of the five boards in our region. We also welcome the new navigator roles for apprenticeship, Hope Florida, and military families. We offer the comments below to help make the final plan as strong and accurate as possible.

1. Walton County Information

WCEDA is working hard to make sure Walton County's economic and workforce information is shown correctly and on its own, not mixed in with Okaloosa County's. The plan's local data section and Labor Market Dashboard only show numbers for the two counties combined. The two counties are very different in size, types of jobs, wages, and how rural they are. Because Okaloosa is larger, the combined numbers mostly reflect Okaloosa and hide what is happening in Walton. To help synchronize our efforts, we ask that the final plan:

- Show each dashboard number separately for Walton County and Okaloosa County, next to the combined total. This includes population, labor force, jobs, unemployment, wages, education, veterans, people with disabilities, and households receiving SNAP.
- Show which industries and jobs are in demand in each county.
- Where possible, report by county how many people were served, trained, and earned credentials, and how many employers were served.

- List the current Walton County service locations and hours. The draft says these still need to be checked.

2. Job Market Changes and Target Industries

The plan shows that local jobs dropped 0.4% over the past year and that unemployment rose from 3.6% to 4.4%. However, it does not say how CSOW will respond. We suggest adding a short section on help for laid-off workers and efforts to prevent layoffs. We also noticed that construction jobs are growing faster than any other job group in the plan's own data, but construction is not one of the plan's priority industries. Transportation jobs are also listed as in demand but are not a priority. We encourage CSOW to match its priority industries to its own data and to focus on higher-paying career paths, since adult earnings are below target.

3. Performance Results Table (Section 8)

Some "On Target" and "At Risk" labels do not match the numbers:

- Adult employment in the fourth quarter after exit was 86.1% against a goal of 92.1%, but it is marked "On Target." Dislocated Worker employment in the second quarter was 83.3% against a goal of 86.8%, but it is described as met. At the same time, Adult earnings reached 96% of the goal and are marked "At Risk."
- The letter grade is a B against a goal of an A, but it is marked "On Target." Later, the plan lists the letter grade as an area of concern.

We suggest the plan explain the rule it uses to decide what counts as "met" (for example, reaching 90% of the goal) and use that rule every time. The biggest gap for adults is credential attainment, at 77.1% against a goal of 91.3%. This should be called out in the improvement plan. The public assistance goal of 50% may be too low since actual results were 93.2%. There are also two small typos: "Wayner-Peyser" should be "Wagner-Peyser," and the Dislocated Worker credential goal shows a dollar sign ("-\$87.8%").

4. Employer and Apprenticeship Scorecards (Sections 9A and 9B)

- The plan lists 5,000 employers served, 3,000 repeat employers, and only 80 new employers. These numbers do not add up and should be checked.
- The 80% market penetration figure seems very high compared to how the state and federal government measure it. The draft itself says this number still needs to be confirmed.
- The goals for on-the-job training and work-based learning are both listed as 47. This looks like it was copied from the apprenticeship goal.
- For one apprenticeship activity (code E58), the goal for next year is 1, even though last year's result was 15.

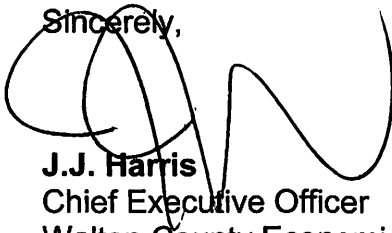
- CSOW currently adds about two new apprentices a year, but the goal is 47 by 2030. Yearly goals would show a clear path to reach them.

5. Documents and Final Package

- The link for the CLEO–LWDB Agreement appears to open the One-Stop Operator agreement instead. Please check that the right document is attached.
- The One-Stop partner agreements expire June 30, 2027, and the Interlocal Agreement expires June 30, 2028. Both dates fall during this plan. It might help to note when they will be renewed.

We appreciate CSOW's ongoing work for the people of Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Please include these comments in the public comment record for the plan. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JJH', written over the printed name and title.

J.J. Harris
Chief Executive Officer
Walton County Economic Development Alliance
jjharris@wonderfulwalton.com