

CSRA



Connecting Talent with Opportunity
A proud partner of the American  network

Table of Contents

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent
2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements
3. Description of Strategies and Services
4. Regional Service Delivery
5. Sector Strategy Development
6. Description of the One-Stop Delivery System
7. Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts
8. EEO and Grievance Procedures

LOCAL BOARDS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Local Boards.
2. Local Board Committees
3. Plan Development

SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRAINING

1. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals
2. Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers
3. Description of Rapid Response Services
4. Description of Youth Services
5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives
6. Provision of ITAs
7. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Micro-enterprise Services
8. Coordination with Education Programs
9. Description of Supportive Services
10. Coordination with Social Service Programs

COORDINATION WITH CORE PARTNERS

1. Description of the Workforce System
2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser
3. Coordination with Adult Education
4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation

PERFORMANCE, ETPL AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Description of Performance Measures
2. One-Stop System Performance and Assessment
3. ETPL System
4. Implementation of Technology

STATE INITIATIVES AND VISION

1. State Branding
2. Priority of Service
3. Alignment with State Goals

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1: LWD Board Roster
- Attachment 2: Local Performance
- Attachment 3: EEO/Grievance Policy
- Attachment 4: High Demand Occupation List
- Attachment 5: Procurement Policy
- Attachment 6: Supportive Service Policy
- Attachment 7: ITA Policy
- Attachment 8: Public Comment
- Attachment 9: Signature Page

Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure:

- 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE FISCAL AGENT & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: – Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official. This section should also include a description of the responsibility assigned to each of the following entities, as applicable for the LWDA:**

The CSRA Regional Commission is the officially appointed fiscal agent and program administrator for Workforce Area 12, Region 7. Region 7 includes 13 counties: Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, and Wilkes. Jefferson County Board of Commissions Chairman, Mitchell McGraw is the Chief Local Elected Official, CSRA Regional Commission is the officially appointed fiscal agent and program administrator for Workforce Area 12, responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

The CLEO

- The Workforce Area consists of thirteen counties, each of whom have a single seat on the CLEO's board. This group collectively serves as the Workforce Area's CLEO. Once established The Executive Committee shall operate in accordance with its bylaws which may be amended from time to time.
- The CLEO shall perform all duties delegated to the CLEO by WIOA and by implementing State and Federal rules, regulations and policies, including current and future amendments or replacement legislation.
- The CLEO shall have the unrestricted ability to oversee all WIOA activities and expenditures in the Workforce Area.
- The CLEO has designated CSRA Regional Commission as the fiscal agent for the Workforce Area.

The CLEO shall appoint and has the power to reappoint and remove WDB members. All WDB appointments and nominations shall comply with WIOA Section 107 (c) and (d) requirements and all additional Federal and State rules, regulations and policy requirements

The LWDB

The LWDB shall perform all LWDB duties in accordance with WIOA Section 107 (d) and other applicable State and Federal rules, regulations and policies. Key LWDB duties include but are not limited to the following:

- Collaborate with workforce system stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and high-quality workforce development system;
- Work to achieve strategic and operational goals outlined in the Workforce Area's Plan;
- Maximize and continue to improve the quality, customer satisfaction and effectiveness of workforce development services;
- Partner with the CLEO in strategic planning, oversight, and evaluation of the local workforce development area:
 - Develop the Workforce Area's plan pursuant to 20 CFR § 679.550;
 - Engage with Workforce Area employers to meet employer needs and to foster employer use of the workforce development system;
 - Negotiate local performance measures and promote effective outcomes consistent with Workforce Area goals, objectives, and performance standards;
 - Develop, oversee and modify as needed an annual budget for the Workforce Area, subject to CLEO review and approval;

-
- Negotiate with required partners on the methods for funding the infrastructure costs of WorkSource Centers in accordance with 20 CFR § 678.715;
 - Develop and implement appropriate career pathways; and,
 - Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the workforce development system for employers, workers and job seekers.
- The LWDB shall comply with all State and Federal conflict of interest and open meetings requirements.
 - The LWDB shall be governed by its bylaws, which are subject to CLEO review and approval, and which may be amended from time to time.
 - Recognizes that the CSRA Regional Commission, as the programmatic operator of the workforce program, shall hire, manage, and oversee the day-to-day activities of workforce staff in accordance with Title 20, Chapter V, Part 679.400(e).

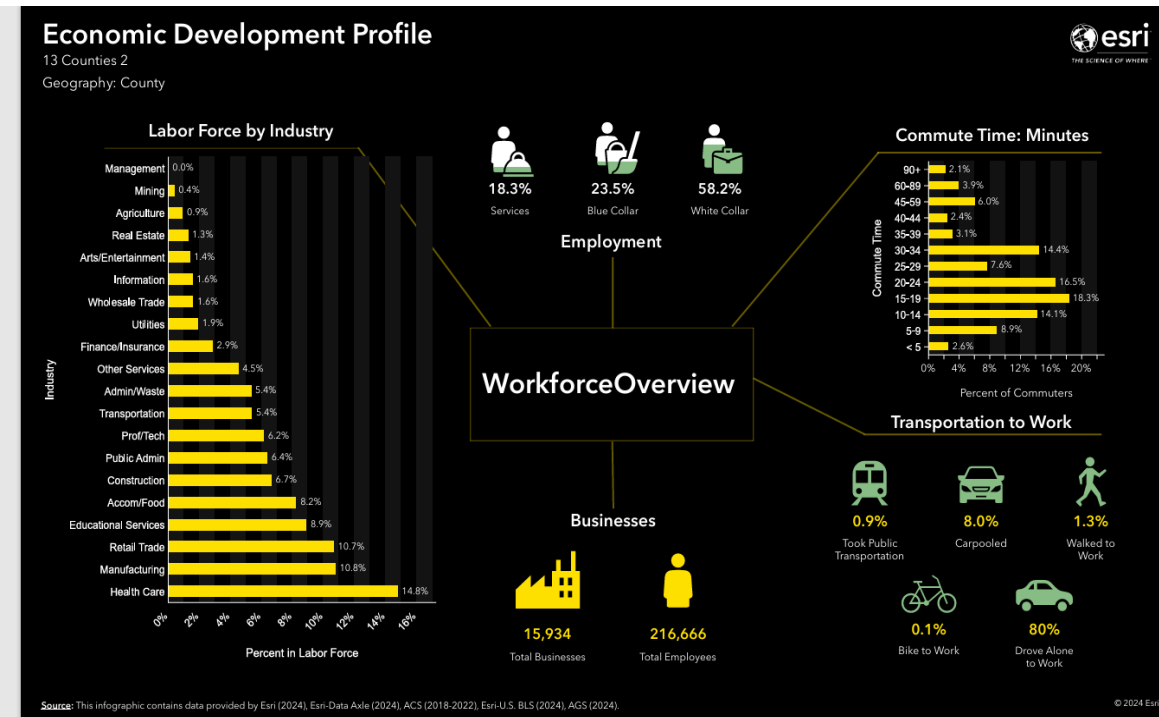
CSRA Regional Commission

- A. The CSRA Regional Commission has been designated as the fiscal agent by the CLEO in accordance with WIOA Section 107 (d) (12).
- B. Fiscal agent duties and responsibilities are set out in the WIOA Final Rules at 20 CFR 679.420. The CSRA RC shall draw down and disburse Workforce Area funds in accordance with the budget adopted by the CLEO.
- C. If any fund expenditure violates the terms and conditions under which Workforce Area funds are received, the CSRA Regional Commission may refuse to make that expenditure and shall report the problem to the WDB and the CLEO who shall work together to promptly take action to identify and fix the problem.
- D. The CSRA Regional Commission is the administrative entity for the Workforce Area. The Commission shall handle all procurement and shall execute all contracts. All contracts shall contain appropriate insurance, bonding, monitoring and auditing, indemnification and hold harmless clauses. The Commission shall also appropriately monitor contracts and shall include the Workforce-related funding in its annual audit.
- E. The Commission shall also deliver WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth services through direct delivery or through contracted services.
- F. The CSRA RC shall be the employer of record for the Workforce Director and for all other Workforce staff. The CSRA Regional Commission shall conduct hiring, managing, and firing of staff in accordance with existing RC personnel policies and procedures.
- G. The CSRA Regional Commission shall ensure that sufficient separation exists (the WIOA mandated “firewall”) between the RC’s service delivery and the WDB and CLEO staffing functions.

Local Workforce Development Board (attachment 1)

2. **DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS**— Provide a description of the strategic planning elements listed below. A complete answer will rely on a variety of data sources and employer input and will describe how the information was gathered and what stakeholders were consulted.
- a. **Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include the listing of occupations in demand within the region and describe how the list was developed citing source data.**

The CSRA economy has historically relied on traditional manufacturing, which remains a critical sector. However, the regional economy is evolving, with growth industries like healthcare, social services, finance, cybersecurity, and information technology emerging as key areas for job creation over the next decade. These emerging industries are poised to play an increasingly prominent role in the area's employment landscape.



WorkSource CSRA uses several industry recognized resources to develop the region’s High Demand Occupation List. Regional business data and economic studies were consulted to supplement the analysis of past workforce patterns and current employment trends. The team reviewed data sets from Economic Indicator Reports (ESRI), Georgia Department of Labor’s Occupational and Industry profiles, Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), US Census Data, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis to gain a comprehensive view of the region and its needs. Ultimately, this analysis highlights the past and present economic and workforce conditions as well as industry clusters and workforce occupations with the most significant potential, along with industries targeted for growth. Through attraction, retention strategies, and supporting local entrepreneurs, the region can grow and develop critical competencies to become highly competitive and innovative in these industries, fostering a dynamic environment that can propel the local economy.

A review of these sources coupled with on-going discussions with industry leaders, led WorkSource CSRA to designate the following fields as the region's high demand occupations.

Region 7 High Demand Occupation List

Business Services

Administrative Assistant/Office Manager
Advertising Sales Agent
Audio and Video Equipment Technician
Bill and Account Collector
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerk
Claims Adjuster, Examiner, and Investigator
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerk
Insurance Sales Agent
Office Manager
Paralegals and Legal Assistant
Project Manager
Property and Real Estate Manager
Secretaries and Administrative Assistant
Tax Preparer
Telecommunications Equipment Installer

Construction

Carpenter
Electrician
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanic
Industrial Machinery Mechanic

Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics

Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technician
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
Business Operations Specialist (All Other)
Flight Attendant
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver
Maintenance and Repair Worker
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerk

Health Sciences

Dental Assistant
Dental Hygienist
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurse Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technician
Medical Assistant
Medical Records and Health Information Technician
Medical Secretary
Healthcare Assistant
Nursing Assistant
Pharmacy Technician
Radiologic Technologist
Respiratory Therapist
Surgical Technologist
Registered Nurse

Hospitality and Tourism

Retail Store Assistant Manager

Information Technology

Computer Network Support Specialist
Computer User Support Specialist
Graphic Designer
Help Desk Specialist
PC Repair and Network Technician
Web Developer

Public Services & Professional Services

Correctional Officers and Jailers
Firefighter
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officer
Preschool Teacher
Teacher – STEM (Others on case-by-case basis)

b. **Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

A comprehensive labor market analysis is conducted to identify current and projected skill gaps, workforce needs, and industry trends. Understanding the labor market ensures that training programs and resources are aligned with the demands of the job market. Furthermore, collaboration and partnership among various stakeholders, such as employers and educational institutions, WorkSource CSRA fosters a unified approach towards addressing workforce challenges. Prioritizing innovative strategies, such as promoting apprenticeships and internships, leveraging technology for training delivery, and enhancing career pathways, is also a key aspect. Incorporating these elements into the strategic planning process is our objective as it will bolster workforce development and foster economic growth.

To successfully attract and retain businesses within a region, it is essential that workforce development establishes a reliable stream of educated, trained, and job-ready individuals. In order for the demand and supply aspects of the economy to align effectively, it is crucial that employers articulate their requirements to stakeholders in both the educational sector and local government. Additionally, prospective employees should have access to suitable training and educational opportunities.

According to focus groups and discussions with the regional HR directors, the most significant skill gaps are in "soft skills" such as attendance, passing drug tests, and teamwork. Hiring managers believe that technical skills can be taught to candidates who already possess the necessary soft skills and work ethic to maintain employment.

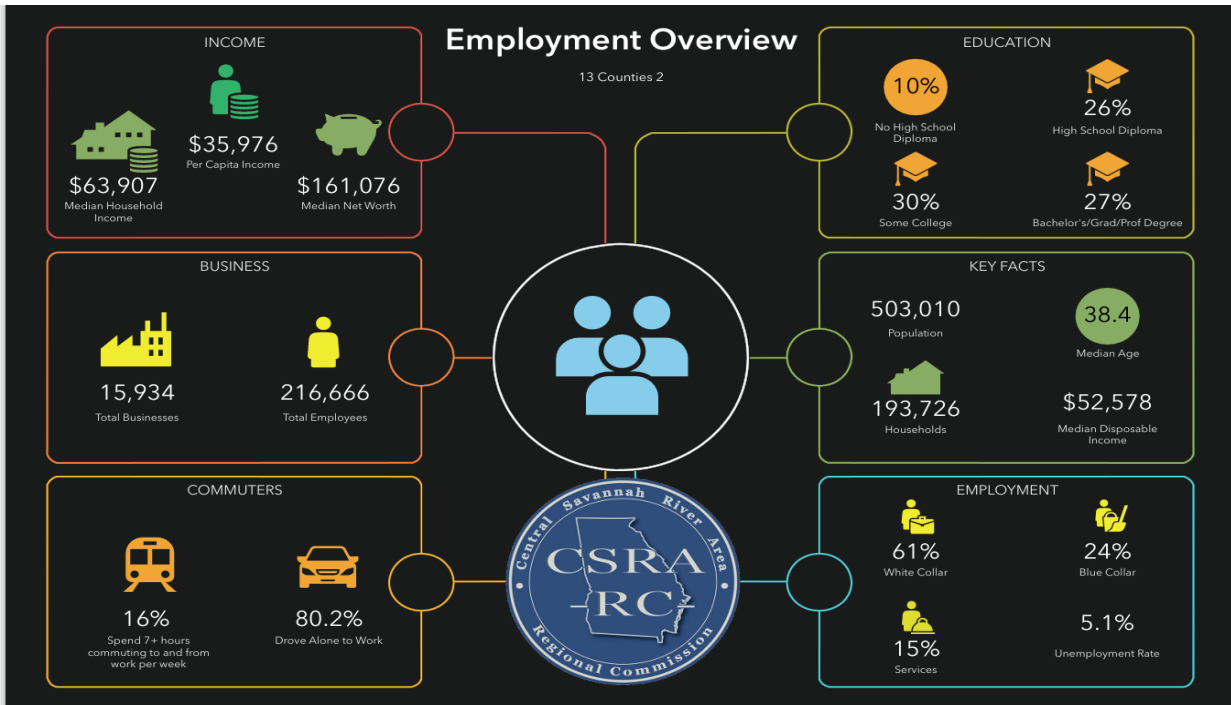
c. **Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment, unemployment data, information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. List all data sources used to gather this information.**

Regional collaborative groups meet regularly to keep each other abreast of program updates, changes and current activities. The RC staff are actively involved in economic collaborations such as the Augusta Regional Development Alliance and the CSRA Unified Development Authority. They are also involved in the local Society for Human Resource Management, the quarterly City/County Administrators.

The Workforce Development Board did an analysis of key industries that are workforce drivers in Region 7. Based on the analysis, the following will be the key industry sectors for the next two years:

- Advance Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Cybersecurity
- Education Services
- Logistics

Region 7 Employment Overview: ERSI Data



Overview: In 2024, ESRI data shows that Region 7 is home to 15,934 businesses with 216,666 employees. Region 7 has added 6,418 new businesses and 77,768 employees since 2020. Overall, employment has grown steadily over the past few years. The largest industries in 2024 are Healthcare, Manufacturing, Retail, Education Services and Construction. Combined, these industries represent over one-third of all employment in the region. While these occupational groups employ the most people, Retail generally offers lower annual wages than the region’s overall average.

Projected employment trends in the CSRA by industry are summarized in the following table from the *Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*.

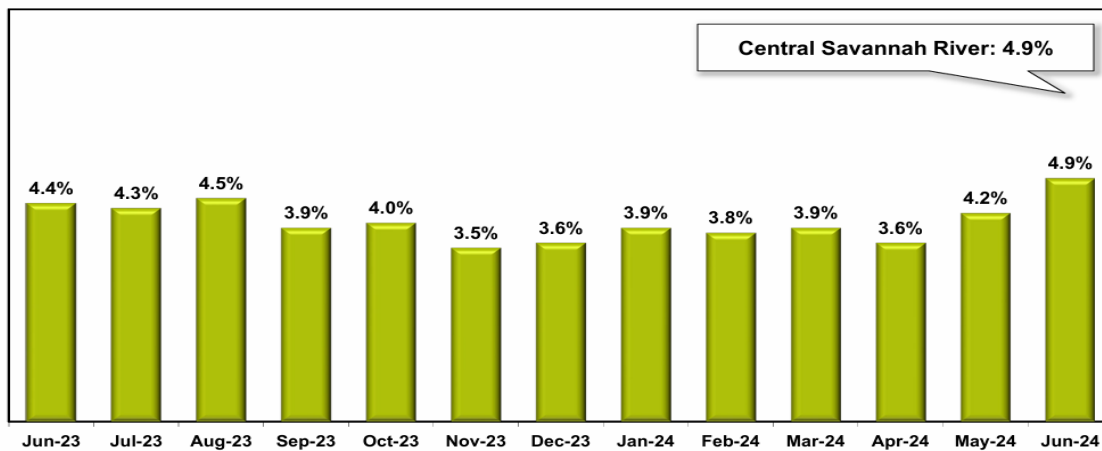
	Establishments			Employment			Weekly Wage		
	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
Construction	986	931	-5.6%	11,615	9,188	-20.9%	1,619	1,373	-15.2%
Education and Health Services	1,471	1,397	-5.0%	28,312	29,303	3.5%	1,094	1,083	-1.0%
Financial Activities	920	906	-1.5%	5,168	5,250	1.6%	1,288	1,325	2.9%
Information	116	117	0.9%	1,526	1,443	-5.4%	1,140	1,160	1.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,190	1,103	-7.3%	20,139	20,307	0.8%	424	447	5.4%
Manufacturing	377	371	-1.6%	16,422	16,806	2.3%	1,253	1,306	4.2%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	184	174	-5.4%	1,951	1,912	-2.0%	1,161	1,198	3.2%
Other Services	795	728	-8.4%	4,449	5,063	13.8%	739	793	7.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,767	1,637	-7.4%	20,705	19,817	-4.3%	1,031	1,052	2.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	2,347	2,225	-5.2%	32,222	32,165	-0.2%	924	959	3.8%
Unclassified	1,414	1,280	-9.5%	494	606	22.7%	1,328	1,233	-7.2%
Government	555	548	-1.3%	36,721	37,415	1.9%	1,168	1,216	4.1%
Total	12,122	11,411	-5.9%	179,721	179,277	-0.2%	1,043	1,050	0.7%

Note: All figures are Annual Average of 2022 and 2023.

Unemployment Data for Region 7:

The statistics reveal that the unemployment rate in The CSRA/Region 7 is currently at 4.9 percent, slightly higher than Georgia's rate of 3.4 percent and the national average of 3.8 percent. It is important to highlight that our rural counties are facing higher unemployment rates. Nevertheless, since March 2020, there has been a substantial decline in the economic and workforce effects of unemployment claims COVID-19-related.

Central Savannah River Area Unemployment Rate (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Note: Central Savannah River Region includes Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, and Wilkes counties.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor – Bruce Thompson, Commissioner

Labor Force Activity

	<u>ANNUAL AVERAGES</u>											
	Labor Force			Employed			Unemployed			Rate		
	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
Burke	8,999	9,003	0.0%	8,516	8,506	-0.1%	483	497	2.9%	5.4%	5.5%	1.9%
Columbia	75,689	76,003	0.4%	73,484	73,722	0.3%	2,205	2,281	3.4%	2.9%	3.0%	3.4%
Glascocock	1,248	1,237	-0.9%	1,208	1,195	-1.1%	40	42	5.0%	3.2%	3.4%	6.3%
Hancock	2,499	2,450	-2.0%	2,372	2,316	-2.4%	127	134	5.5%	5.1%	5.5%	7.8%
Jefferson	6,556	6,686	2.0%	6,283	6,418	2.1%	273	268	-1.8%	4.2%	4.0%	-4.8%
Jenkins	3,286	3,335	1.5%	3,141	3,169	0.9%	145	166	14.5%	4.4%	5.0%	13.6%
Lincoln	3,500	3,496	-0.1%	3,374	3,363	-0.3%	126	133	5.6%	3.6%	3.8%	5.6%
McDuffie	8,389	8,436	0.6%	8,005	8,026	0.3%	384	410	6.8%	4.6%	4.9%	6.5%
Richmond	82,486	82,954	0.6%	78,895	79,146	0.3%	3,591	3,808	6.0%	4.4%	4.6%	4.5%
Taliaferro	542	554	2.2%	519	533	2.7%	23	21	-8.7%	4.2%	3.8%	-9.5%
Warren	2,693	2,764	2.6%	2,587	2,651	2.5%	106	113	6.6%	3.9%	4.1%	5.1%
Washington	6,927	7,078	2.2%	6,646	6,782	2.0%	281	296	5.3%	4.1%	4.2%	2.4%
Wilkes	3,710	3,781	1.9%	3,556	3,640	2.4%	154	141	-8.4%	4.2%	3.7%	-11.9%
Central Savannah River RC	206,524	207,777	0.6%	198,586	199,467	0.4%	7,938	8,310	4.7%	3.8%	4.0%	5.3%
Georgia	5,222,263	5,305,623	1.6%	5,058,165	5,135,833	1.5%	164,098	169,790	3.5%	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%
United States	164,287,000	167,116,000	1.7%	158,291,000	161,037,000	1.7%	5,996,000	6,080,000	1.4%	3.6%	3.6%	0.0%

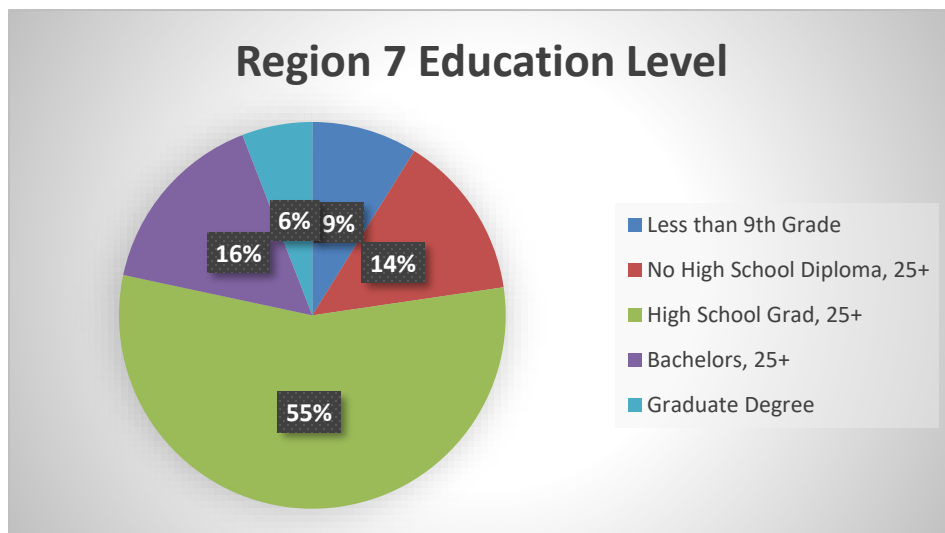
Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Educational and Skill Levels of Region 7:

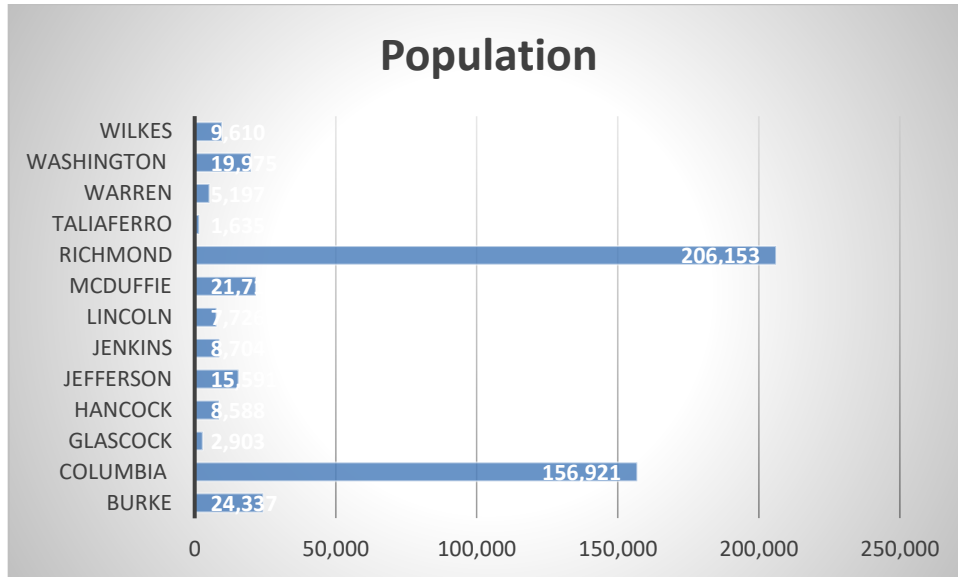
Educational attainment plays a crucial role in determining the eligibility of job seekers for specific occupations. The prevailing levels of educational attainment indicate the degree prerequisites necessary for candidates to qualify

Refer to the chart below for a detailed analysis of the educational attainment in Region 7 across all 13 counties. Over fifty percent of the population lacks post-secondary education, and 23% do not possess a high school diploma. There is a growing trend in recruitment that emphasizes skills rather than formal educational credentials. Recent initiatives, such as an Executive Order mandating that the federal government prioritize skills over traditional educational qualifications, along with numerous Fortune 500 companies removing the bachelor's degree requirement for specific positions, highlight this significant change.



Population

According to *Source: US Census Bureau – Population Estimates Program, July 1, 2023. The total population of the 13 counties in region 7 was 489,055.*



Burke County Summary	Census
Population	24,337
Households	8,913
Average Household Size	2.70
Owner Occupied Housing Units	72.6%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	24.7%
Median Age	38.8
Median HH Income	\$50,321
Mean HH Income	\$77,373
Poverty Rate	17.3%

Jefferson County Summary	Census
Population	15,591
Households	5,826
Average Household Size	2.59
Owner Occupied Housing Units	67.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	33%
Median Age	40.7
Median HH Income	\$46,865
Mean HH Income	\$64,495

Poverty Rate	19.4%
Jenkins County Summary	Census
Population	8,704
Households	3,297
Average Household Size	2.40
Owner Occupied Housing Units	82.8%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	17.2%
Median Age	44
Median HH Income	\$31,463
Mean HH Income	\$48,434
Poverty Rate	27.9%

Richmond County Summary	Census
Population	205,414
Households	74,028
Average Household Size	2.65
Owner Occupied Housing Units	51.4%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	48.4%
Median Age	34.4
Median HH Income	\$50,605
Mean HH Income	\$70,310
Poverty Rate	20.7%

Columbia County Summary	Census
Population	156,921
Households	50,056
Average Household Size	3.12
Owner Occupied Housing Units	78.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	21.1%
Median Age	37.4
Median HH Income	\$92,571
Mean HH Income	\$114,331
Poverty Rate	7.2%

Glascok County Summary	Census
Population	2,903
Households	1,057
Average Household Size	2.68
Owner Occupied Housing Units	70.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	29.1%
Median Age	43.2
Median HH Income	\$60,469
Mean HH Income	\$74,955
Poverty Rate	15.5%

Hancock County Summary	Census
Population	8,588
Households	2,785
Average Household Size	2.54
Owner Occupied Housing Units	75.2%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	24.8%
Median Age	46
Median HH Income	\$31,767
Mean HH Income	\$53,841
Poverty Rate	27.5%

Lincoln County Summary	Census
Population	7,726
Households	3,015
Average Household Size	2.54
Owner Occupied Housing Units	75.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	24.1%
Median Age	47.1
Median HH Income	\$50,754
Mean HH Income	\$71,037
Poverty Rate	18.1%

McDuffie County Summary	Census
Population	21,715
Households	8,212
Average Household Size	2.61
Owner Occupied Housing Units	65.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	34.1%
Median Age	38.5
Median HH Income	\$54,742
Mean HH Income	\$72,508
Poverty Rate	16.1%

Taliaferro County Summary	Census
Population	1,635
Households	178
Average Household Size	3.39
Owner Occupied Housing Units	82.0%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	18.0%
Median Age	47.2
Median HH Income	\$45,881
Mean HH Income	\$54,144
Poverty Rate	18.9%

Warren County Summary	Census
Population	5,197
Households	1,945
Average Household Size	2.63
Owner Occupied Housing Units	71.6%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	28.4%
Median Age	45.3
Median HH Income	\$45,901
Mean HH Income	\$57,899
Poverty Rate	22.9%

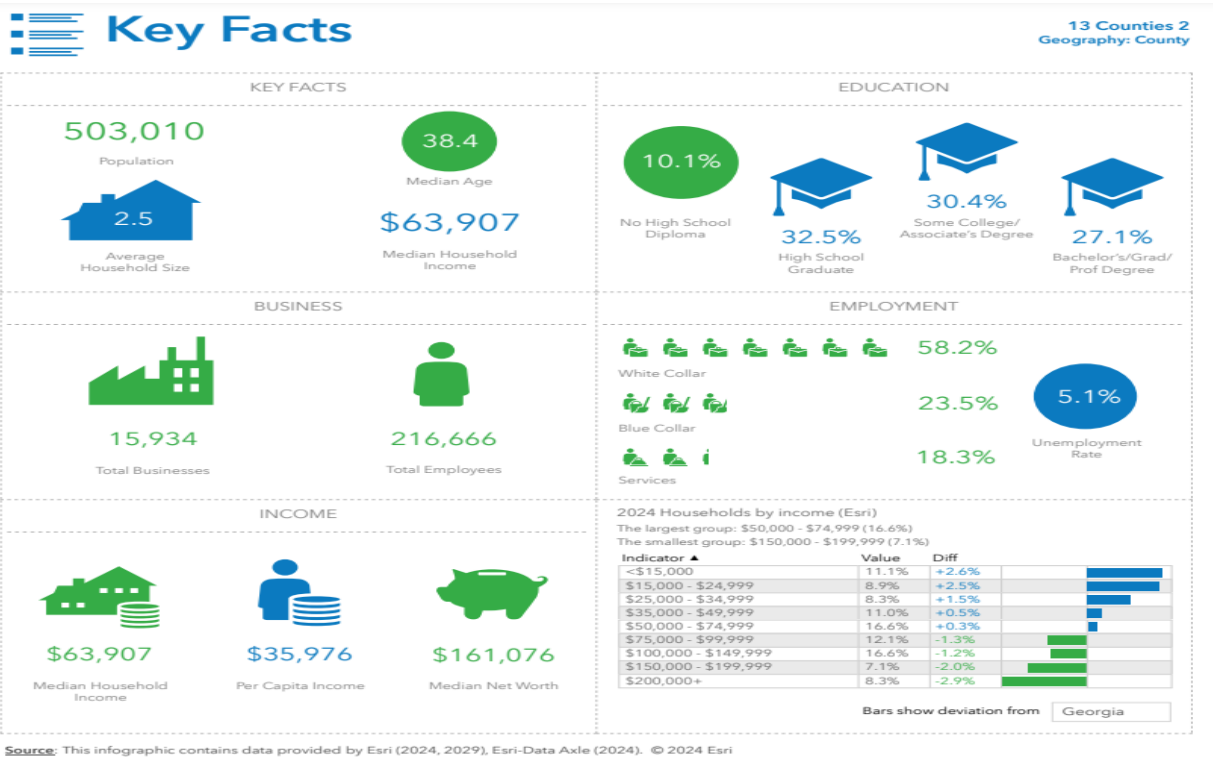
Washington County Summary	Census
Population	19,975
Households	7,256
Average Household Size	2.5
Owner Occupied Housing Units	67.8%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	32.2%
Median Age	40.8
Median HH Income	\$43,810
Mean HH Income	\$61,302
Poverty Rate	16.8%

Wilkes County Summary	Census
Population	9,610
Households	4,032
Average Household Size	2.35
Owner Occupied Housing Units	65.7%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	34.7%
Median Age	45.5
Median HH Income	\$51,780
Mean HH Income	\$67,385
Poverty Rate	17.8%

**Source: US Census Bureau – Population Estimates Program, July 1, 2023*

CSRA Business Summary

Total Businesses:	15,934
Total Employees:	216,666



The population of CSRA, Region 7 comprises individuals facing employment challenges, including Veterans, those living below the poverty threshold, persons with low education levels, limited skill sets, and/or who are homeless, justice involved individuals and persons with disabilities. In 2023, the absolute poverty rate in Georgia was recorded at 11.8 percent. Notably, twelve out of the thirteen counties within Region 7 exhibit poverty rates significantly exceeding the state average, ranging from 16 to 27 percent of the population living in poverty. We will operate a public workforce system with a comprehensive, integrated, inclusive, and streamlined approach to provide equitable and upward career pathways to prosperity for those that have barriers to employment and will continuously monitor and improve the quality and performance of the workforce system.

- d. **Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

Region 7 is home to 6 public higher education institutions, 4 for-profit institutions, and 1 private not-for-profit college and universities. Region 7 will work with employers, organized labor, community colleges, Vocational Rehabilitation, GDOL and industry leaders/groups, to continue building our in-demand sector strategies. Connecting with employers is a priority be it through the LWDA’s Rapid Response Team, local job, and resource fairs, through participation in local and regional employer meetings, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Commission and involvement in the Augusta Regional Development Alliance (ARDA).

Region 7 has one Comprehensive One-Stop Center, with information centers available throughout the 13-county area to provide access to employers and job seekers. WorkSource CSRA will continue to respond to existing and future needs of businesses to produce a more skilled workforce.

Business services also offer:

- Recruitment of job applicants

-
- Screening of job applicants
 - Job Postings
 - Job order referral
 - Job/Employee matching
 - Skills Assessments
 - Available space for employer interviews
 - Labor Market Information
 - Census Data
 - Job Fairs
 - On-The-Job Training
 - Apprenticeship Program
 - IWT (Incumbent Worker Training)
 - CT (Customized Training)
 - Rapid Response Workshops

Strengths

The strength of Region 7's workforce program is rooted in the history and capacity of the CSRA Regional Commission. The commission has more than fifty years of history with member communities and their constituents. This history provides confidence in the RC's ability to address the needs of the community with capable and financially prudent staff.

The region is also home to Fort Eisenhower. This regional asset provides unique program opportunities for service members who are exiting the military. In addition to traditional programs and services, the Area partners with Georgia Tech to offer VET2 to interested exiting service members.

Programs such as Georgia Hope Scholarship and Public Pre-K programs provide the state with remarkable infrastructure from which to increase access to quality education.

Region 7 staff are also a significant strength. The staff are diverse in their longevity and experience, ranging from 28 years to 2 years, but each of the staff is committed to excellence and service. Every team member works to ensure participants are given the opportunities and resources needed to succeed.

Weaknesses

The regional economy is ever shifting. Ft. Eisenhower is now home to the US Cyber Command. This relocation has spurred the relocation of numerous cyber security related businesses. It seems natural for the Workforce programs to align with these opportunities. However, the number of jobs in this sector coupled with the specialized skills and training required make it almost impossible for the Workforce Area to be of assistance. Most of the individuals reached by workforce programs, at least in the CSRA, lack the skills needed to be employed in the cyber industry.

This leads to a perception of weakness in our programs. The fact of the matter is that workforce programs are a better fit for other employment sectors. We are cognizant that the jobs that best fit many of our participants are not the high profile, news garnering positions.

Post secondary enrollment rates among graduating high school students in most of our counties within the region are far less than the statewide average. There are growing concerns that schools are not doing enough to boost career readiness or promote lifelong learning.

The majority of our 13 counties are predominantly rural, which presents significant challenges in providing safe, affordable, and dependable transportation options. The considerable distances involved serve as a major obstacle for many residents in these areas. On average, trips to school or work in rural regions are approximately 9 miles longer than in urban settings. Individuals with personal vehicles may find themselves negatively impacted by escalating fuel prices, which increase the cost of longer journeys. Conversely, those without access to a personal vehicle face

particularly difficult circumstances when needing to travel long distances. Individuals lacking a motor vehicle often depend on public transportation services, yet these services do not always cover the necessary destinations.

Capacity

WorkSource CSRA possesses the ability to assist a greater number of adults in its programs; however, the necessary funding is currently lacking. Local organizations continue to pursue funding for in-school youth, despite the fact that such funding has been constrained for several years. Staffing, program availability, and interest are all operating at optimal levels. WorkSource CSRA will persist in evaluating the supply of entry-level talent in Georgia in relation to employer demand. The Directors will collaborate with training providers and engage in discussions to assess their capacity to train clients.

- e. **Provide a description of the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

WorkSource CSRA’s Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) developed a vision and goals, as included in their local workforce plan. Below is a vision and goals for WorkSource CSRA.

The Vision of WorkSource CSRA is to establish a regional network that fosters collaboration to enhance local service delivery across the 13 counties served by WorkSource CSRA. This initiative aims to assist individuals in securing and maintaining careers while simultaneously enhancing employers' opportunities for success in the global market. Our commitment is to operate a public workforce system characterized by a comprehensive, integrated, inclusive, and efficient approach, ensuring equitable and upward career pathways that promote economic mobility for those facing employment barriers. We will consistently evaluate and enhance the quality and effectiveness of the workforce system.

The CSRA Local Workforce Development Board serves an essential function within our community by directing and managing the workforce development framework across our 13 counties. With a strong emphasis on fostering a cohesive system of education, training, and employment, the board strives to establish pathways that enable both residents and businesses to flourish. By offering resources, expert guidance, and strategic oversight, the board empowers residents to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for securing meaningful employment. Concurrently, they support businesses in identifying and retaining a skilled workforce that aligns with their requirements. Through their committed initiatives, the WorkSource CSRA Workforce Development Board plays a vital role in enhancing the economic vitality and prosperity of our region. It is also crucial to highlight that our content adheres to ethical standards, ensuring the absence of any explicit or harmful material, thereby promoting a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

Guiding Principles

- Ease of Access
- Self-Sufficiency Promotion
- Effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery
- Encourage quality innovation and creativity in service provision

Customers

The workforce development program plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of unemployed or underemployed individuals, offering them the necessary training and assistance to secure permanent employment to include youth and individuals who face barriers to employment. Providing them with opportunities, support, and guidance to help them overcome these obstacles. The WorkSource CSRA firmly believes in the potential of every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, and strives to create a nurturing and inclusive environment for their growth and development. Through our various programs and initiatives, we offer vocational training, skill-building

workshops, job placement assistance, apprenticeships and ongoing mentorship to equip these individuals with the necessary tools and resources to succeed in the workforce. All unique needs are prioritized, ensuring that everyone receives the necessary support to overcome any challenges they may face, and empowering them to achieve their personal and professional goals. This program not only caters to the residents, but also extends its services to businesses in the area. Whether it's aiding companies in expanding their workforce or providing assistance with workforce training, the workforce development system acts as a facilitating agent for local businesses. Moreover, this program serves the community at large by equipping residents with the skills and knowledge needed for employment while simultaneously helping businesses connect with qualified and suitable employees. It strives to bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, fostering economic growth and development.

- f. **Taking into account the analyses described in sections “2. a-e” (above), provide a description of how the region utilizes this data to drive decision-making; and include the strategies utilized to coordinate core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals. Provide a description of how the local board supports and carries out strategic partnering to help address local and regional challenges.**

The targeted areas of the CSRA’s Regional Goals for workforce development program include:

- Business and Industry
 - Address the workforce requirements of the regional economy and the high-demand industry sectors that present the greatest opportunities for job creation. Cultivate significant and focused partnerships with essential stakeholders in the business, education, training, and credentialing sectors to enhance the service, education, skill development, and preparation of individuals for sustainable employment.
 - Facilitate employer engagement and business services throughout the region while cultivating robust relationships with employers to identify the local talent they require and ensuring they have the resources for ongoing talent development.
- Adults/DW
 - Enhance the number of residents who obtain a marketable credential or degree.
 - Guarantee that job seekers can access high-quality career services, whether online or in-person, via a centralized entry point that links them to appropriate resources for achieving sustainable and self-sufficient employment.
- Youth
 - Enhance the proportion of high school graduates/ GED recipients who are adequately prepared for either a career or further education at the post-secondary level.

Support system alignment, service integration and continuous improvement through shared data, common participant tracking and evidence-based policy making. These priorities will be addressed through the following approaches:

- Use market and education data and technology to drive workforce development decisions
- Increase Post-Secondary Enrollment and Completion
- Address growing skills gap between education and training outcomes with business/industry needs
- Design and actuate a more efficient and effective workforce development system
- Assist targeted populations such as military veterans, at-risk youth, ex-offenders and those seeking employment in high demand sectors to improve the quality of Georgia’s workforce outcomes

Locally, the WDB has defined the workforce development system as the intersection of four community sectors where the educational sector (i.e., institutions that provide educational opportunities), the economic development sector, the community development sector and the talent development sector overlap in a common mission to match supply and demand.

The LWDB is tasked with formulating strategies to engage a diverse array of stakeholders, including employers, job seekers, government entities, educational institutions, organized labor, and community-based organizations within the CSRA. This engagement aims to enhance and broaden the workforce resources available in the region, ultimately

benefiting all participants and the communities in which we live, work, and raise our families. WorkSource CSRA LWDB operates as a regional organization encompassing 13 counties: Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, and Wilkes. It is composed of leaders from business, education and training, and workforce organizations, with a significant portion of its board members hailing from the private business sector.

The strategies and initiatives outlined in this Regional Plan will be executed uniformly at the local level by the board, with guidance and updates provided as necessary.

The WDB seeks to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers, specifically to address the following:

- To enhance the ability of CSRA residents to secure quality employment that offers a living wage and opportunities for career growth, it is essential to tackle the existing gaps and obstacles that impede this advancement. By concentrating on critical areas such as education and skill enhancement, access to networking and mentorship, and the encouragement of inclusive hiring practices, we can foster an environment where individuals can thrive and succeed in their selected careers. Additionally, investing in targeted programs that assist underrepresented communities, including the provision of affordable childcare and transportation solutions, can help create a more equitable landscape and guarantee equal access to job opportunities. By emphasizing these initiatives, we can empower CSRA residents to attain economic stability, improve their quality of life, and make significant contributions to our local economy.
- The primary objective of assisting employers in the CSRA is to identify the talent essential for their success and growth, which is vital for fostering economic prosperity in the region. By linking employers with suitable candidates, WorkSource CSRA can cultivate a vibrant business landscape and generate opportunities for both employers and job seekers. Through a range of initiatives, including job fairs, skills enhancement programs, and recruitment platforms, Region 7 effectively connects employers with skilled individuals. It is imperative, however, to uphold a responsible and ethical approach throughout this process. Consequently, adherence to stringent guidelines is essential to avoid any content that may be considered inappropriate or harmful. By abstaining from the creation or dissemination of offensive and potentially dangerous material, CSRA can ensure a safe and inclusive environment, contributing to the overall improvement of the community.
- The significance of effective and efficient job training cannot be overstated, as it plays a crucial role in equipping individuals for high-demand careers while addressing the requirements of employers. By tailoring training programs to align with the specific needs of the job market, participants acquire essential skills and knowledge that enable them to excel in their selected professions. Furthermore, this focused strategy ensures that their qualifications are valued in the workplace, thereby enhancing their employability and opportunities for career progression. Training initiatives that cater to employer expectations effectively bridge the divide between educational outcomes and industry requirements. Through thorough instruction, practical experience, and real-world application, individuals develop the competencies necessary to thrive in their careers. By offering relevant, industry-oriented training, individuals are empowered with the resources to achieve success and obtain esteemed credentials that are acknowledged and valued by employers.

3. DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES AND SERVICES -Provide a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to accomplish the items listed below.

a. Employer Engagement

Region 7 focuses on understanding and responding to employer workforce needs and working with a workforce partner network to implement regional job programs that meet the needs of employers and job seekers. WorkSource CSRA Workforce Development Board collaborates with local technical colleges, chambers of commerce, economic development partners, and TCSG's business services unit to engage high-demand employers in conversations regarding their training and hiring requirements. The LWDA Business Services Team, in conjunction with economic development partners, connects with employers to evaluate industry needs for training opportunities. Emphasizing the significance of the One Stop System, WorkSource CSRA aims to positively influence local and regional economic growth. The team's approach involves conducting personal visits to all businesses within in-demand industries and areas, irrespective of their size.

The LWDB will hold regular meetings and collaborate with business services and regional economic development personnel to gain insights into specific business sectors, understand their requirements for additional employees, and develop a flexible workforce in response to market demands. Subsequently, the business service representatives will partner with counselors to assist WorkSource clients in securing employment and will coordinate with training providers to deliver the essential training and skills.

Businesses play a crucial role in ensuring the growth and development of the workforce. To support this objective, we educate the businesses on reimbursement programs that have been designed to assist in their training efforts. Programs like our On-the-Job Training (OJT), allowing employers to receive financial support for training new employees. Additionally, Incumbent Workers Training (IWT) provides financial assistance for businesses to train and upskill their existing workforce. Customized Training (CT) programs offer tailored training solutions to meet specific business needs. Classroom training programs enable businesses to invest in formal education and skill enhancement for their employees. Furthermore, customized job fairs and access to labor market information help businesses in identifying and connecting with potential talent. These programs collectively foster a skilled workforce, driving economic growth and sustainability.

The following activities related to employer engagement under the Regional 7 includes:

1. Request state or federal grant money to fund a shared apprentice program (or other Work Based Learning programs) across companies. Educate employers on benefits of shared WBL programs.
2. Create regional best practices for business services to consistently provide the same high standard to employers and customers across the region.
3. Develop a comprehensive strategy that effectively showcases, incentivizes, and promotes the advantages of collaborating with WorkSource CSRA. This strategy should enhance the existing employer toolkit and establish a framework for ongoing improvement, emphasizing the benefits of on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships, career coaching, and upskilling, all of which contribute to decreased turnover rates and improved employee morale.
 - a. The strategy involves engaging with specific businesses within the region to explore their projections regarding customer demand, workforce changes such as hiring or layoffs, and their expectations for employee performance. This approach aims to identify skill overlaps, enabling the reskilling or transition of individuals from industries experiencing layoffs to those that are actively hiring.
 - b. Provide a guide to upskill employees within a firm from low-skill to middle-skill, to high-skill jobs.
 - c. Promote apprenticeship programs to companies with the advantage of developing a talent pipeline.
 - d. Provide better communication and education to business and staffing companies in the CSRA region by using federal dollars to upskill and train people.
 - e. Facilitate the connection between employers and employees by focusing on the skills possessed by individuals rather than solely on their academic qualifications. The industry is increasingly

shifting towards the utilization of non-degree credentials to identify candidates for job openings, reskilling initiatives, upskilling opportunities, and to create more equitable job pathways that consider factors such as age, race, disability, and veteran status. Additionally, there is a commitment to offering second chance employment and ensuring non-discrimination based on disability or criminal history in hiring practices.

- f. Collaborate with county-level Chambers of Commerce, county level economic developers, and county level development authorities, to formulate and implement a small business strategy aimed at fostering and maintaining business relationships with small enterprises in specific industries. This initiative seeks to facilitate the hiring of WorkSource customers in roles such as apprentices, interns, and employees

b. Sector Strategy Development (meeting the needs of Businesses)

Sector-based work academies are designed to assist individuals receiving unemployment benefits in transitioning to new employment sectors. These placements aim to address both immediate and long-term recruitment requirements while ensuring the acquisition of a skilled workforce essential for the sustainability and growth of businesses.

The Business Services team collaborates with local and state economic developers, the TCSG Business Services Unit, and Chambers of Commerce to align with the needs of the regional and local economies. All partnerships signify a strategic shift towards employer-centric service delivery and the provision of market-driven insights, supported by staff dedicated to meeting the demands of local and regional employers. This realignment underscores a commitment to the business community, fostering a more proactive and employer-friendly collaboration.

WorkSource CSRA's Local Workforce Development Board plays a crucial role in developing strategies to serve the workforce needs of businesses in a region. Through collaboration with business and organized labor representatives, the LWDB identifies skill gaps and develops strategies to address them, such as training programs, apprenticeships, and job placement services. The board's business representatives provide input on the types of skills and qualifications that are in demand by their industries, while labor representatives ensure that the strategies also address the needs of workers and promote equitable opportunities for all. By working together, the LWDB is able to develop effective strategies that benefit both businesses and the workforce, ultimately contributing to a more competitive and prosperous regional economy

- c. How will the area better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development? Additionally, identify economic development partners and describe the involvement of the economic development community in developing strategies. How will the area strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?**

The CSRA Regional Commission collaborates closely with economic development stakeholders across the region. As the federally designated economic development district, the Commission coordinates efforts and planning for economic development throughout the 13-county area. Local developers, government representatives, business proprietors, and other interested parties are regularly involved in the planning process. The CSRA Regional Commission played a key role in establishing a development authority encompassing the 13 counties and acts as the administrative body for this authority. Additionally, the Commission engages in a bi-monthly roundtable with economic development partners, which allows it to remain updated on available resources and emerging needs.

The alliance between WorkSource CSRA and economic development has proven to be exceptionally effective, providing advantages to both emerging and established businesses as we jointly assess the economic conditions of the region. Members of the Economic Development Board and their colleagues maintain ongoing communication with WIOA staff and partners to support employers in addressing staffing requirements and to keep them informed about new enterprises entering the area. Collectively, these entities engage in a deliberate effort to identify shared needs, opportunities, and actions, including advocacy, that position the region's workforce development initiatives as "non-competitive," thereby better serving the requirements of local employers and job seekers.

d. Per TEGL 4-23, “strengthening economic self-sufficiency hinges on the ability of individuals to obtain good jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and advancement opportunities.” Provide a description of how the area considers and incorporates job quality principles in local service delivery. Please note further guidance from OWD regarding these career path fundamentals is in development and will be released in the near future?

i. Family Sustaining Income and Benefits

Enhancing family income and benefits hinges on individuals' capacity to secure quality employment that offers wages sufficient to support a family and opportunities for career advancement. The On-The-Job Training Program and Incumbent Worker Training Program which are work-based, allows participants to be employed as full-time staff, receiving benefits that include health insurance, retirement plans, workers' compensation, and paid leave. This training approach facilitates access to income and benefits that might otherwise remain inaccessible. Comparable initiatives, such as pre-apprenticeships and occupational skills training, can significantly improve participants' prospects of obtaining quality jobs, thereby contributing to the reduction of equity disparities. WorkSource CSRA has established sector partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to foster entry-level employment opportunities and career pathways. A concentrated effort on securing quality jobs in advanced manufacturing and healthcare will yield benefits across all industry sectors.

ii. Defined Career Advancement Pathways

Career advancement denotes the development and evolution of an individual's professional journey as they strive to achieve their personal objectives. This process may encompass job promotions, heightened responsibilities, enhanced skill acquisition, and salary increases. Participants experience measurable skills gains during workforce training and employment. Additionally, Career Pathways are utilized within the structures of Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Programs.

iii. Accessible and Local Employment

Local Workforce Training enhances the availability of local employment opportunities. Career and technical education initiatives equip individuals with the necessary skills and credentials to secure jobs, while programs such as vocational rehabilitation facilitate access to employment for those facing substantial barriers to entering the workforce.

iv. Uplifting and Supporting Work Environments

The WIOA program in WorkSource CSRA Region 7 provides essential training and employment services. A positive and encouraging work environment is crucial as individuals transition from unemployment to gainful employment. Our Career Development Specialists serve as intermediaries to address any interpersonal or personal challenges that may arise. It is vital for employers and service providers to share a unified vision for the program, particularly concerning our youth. A robust organizational culture enhances engagement, increases productivity, and attracts high-caliber talent. Cultivating a positive workplace culture is an ongoing endeavor that necessitates the dedication and involvement of all members within the organization. Collectively, we can create a supportive work environment that fosters growth, satisfaction, and success, transforming the organization into a space where individuals not only work but also flourish.

-
- e. **How will the area/region leverage the historic infrastructure investments through the following pieces of legislation (IIJA/BIL, CHIPS and IRA)? While most of this work will be conducted at the State to create partnerships and identify connections with the public workforce system, local awareness and involvement in these projects is crucial for success. If applicable, please provide a description of any ongoing work the area is engaged in that supports the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) the creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act; and /or the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, amounting to 1.2 trillion dollars and signed into effect by President Biden, represents the most substantial and impactful investment in the history of our nation. This legislation aims to repair and replace bridges, modernize public transit and school buses, enhance water infrastructure, fund electric vehicle charging networks, expand high-speed internet access, promote environmental justice, stimulate economic revitalization, and generate employment opportunities through pollution cleanup and the fulfillment of infrastructure requirements.

Clean Energy Augusta

Solvay, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains, has successfully concluded an agreement for a grant amounting to \$178 million. This funding is designated to assist in the construction of a facility at Solvay’s site in Augusta, Georgia, which is anticipated to commence operations in 2026. The grant is part of the U.S. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and aims to bolster domestic manufacturing of batteries for electric vehicles and the electrical grid. This initiative is expected to address a critical supply shortfall while leveraging favorable regulatory conditions that encourage regional production and enhance material security.

BIL

Augusta Transit was awarded a BIL grant amounting to \$6.7 million for electric buses in FY2022, along with an additional \$300,000 in FY2023 designated for a micro-transit service study. Augusta Airport secured \$3 million in FY2023 for the rehabilitation of the commercial passenger terminal building, in addition to \$510,000 in FY2023 for enhancements to the terminal. The City of Millen received \$12 million in FY2023 for improvements to rail crossings within the city. Furthermore, Burke County was allocated \$750,000 in FY2024 for a segment of the new general aviation terminal building.

4. REGIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY- Not Needed

5. SECTOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Locally, the LWDB has defined the workforce development system as the intersection of four community sectors (Figure 1), where the educational sector (i.e., institutions that provide educational opportunities), the economic development sector, the community development sector and the talent development sector overlap in a common mission to match supply and demand.



Figure 1: Core Sectors of Workforce System

WorkSource CSRA has established a collaborative effort involving local government, educational institutions, and private sector organizations to enhance the coordination of workforce development programs and economic development. Our integrated strategy for workforce development is aligned with the organization's economic development objectives, while also offering training programs that target the skills gap and meeting the needs of local businesses. Additionally, WorkSource CSRA leverage resources to support initiatives that drive economic growth and job creation. By working together, stakeholders can ensure that the Region 7 is equipped with the skills needed to support local businesses and drive economic success

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area that includes the items detailed below.

a. Provide a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

Staff members conduct thorough annual evaluations of both mandatory and optional one-stop service providers, as well as other essential service providers, to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and to deliver high-quality services to the workforce system clientele. Upon submission of a training provider's application, which includes detailed performance objectives, cost information, and relevant program certifications or accreditations, it must receive approval from the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to be included on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Subsequently, staff will monitor the provider's performance. Providers that exceed budget constraints, fail to meet outcome expectations, or do not offer training for in-demand occupations may be removed from the list.

b. Provide a description of how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through use of technology, and other means.

In addition to the Comprehensive One-Stop located in Richmond County, the region offers access points in Burke, Jefferson, Washington and soon in McDuffie counties. Each site is specifically designed to provide direct assistance and referrals to potential participants. Although each One-Stop is operated by a different provider, their objectives remain consistent. Participants have the opportunity to utilize computers for job searches, application submissions, resume development, and skill enhancement. The self-service resource area is equipped with internet access, video-telecommunications capabilities, and various multimedia resources. Visitors to the One-Stop are greeted and directed to

the appropriate services through internet access, while partner staff members are available to assist with basic computer software, internet applications, resume preparation, job searches, and career opportunities. Partner agencies that are co-located or visit the One-Stops have dedicated computers and access to all available technological resources.

An online application for WIOA services can be accessed at www.worksourcecsra.org. This has streamlined the process by reducing the need for in-person meetings with career advisors to obtain or share information. In instances where a one-stop center is not easily accessible, additional access points for WIOA services are provided through Career Advisors who are available on a scheduled basis at technical college campuses.

Region 7's mobile computer lab will also function as a mobile career center, offering a range of job skills and development services to a wider area of the region while enhancing awareness of the offerings from the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and its partner organizations. Despite the presence of our other one-stop career centers in the region, many cities are located over 30 miles from these centers, making access challenging for individuals with disabilities who cannot travel, as well as for those with limited financial resources, unemployment benefits, or no transportation options. The mobile career center has computer stations, internet connectivity, video-telecommunications capabilities, and a printer. This setup will enable the delivery of more services to a larger audience of individuals and employers, empowering individuals to reach their full potential, ensuring that employers have access to the skilled workforce necessary to thrive in the global market, and tapping into the potential of underemployed and discouraged workers, youth, and other job seekers with unique needs.

c. Provide a description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA § 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This should include the provision of staff training and support and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Those who wish to engage with the Region's workforce system can anticipate that both physical and virtual facilities, policies, and programs will comply with federally mandated accessibility standards.

In accordance with federal regulations, Region 7 has appointed a local Equal Opportunity Officer responsible for addressing and resolving local grievances and complaints, as well as ensuring compliance with WIOA § 188. Certification of all one-stop centers and off-site partners will occur biennially. The local Equal Opportunity Officer will provide regulatory updates and guidance as necessary. The phrase "Equal Opportunity" will remain prominently featured in all advertising and printed materials and will also be incorporated into personnel policies.

d. Provide a comprehensive description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

WIOA legislation mandates that providers of specific programs collaborate as partners within the One-Stop System. The CSRA Regional Commission (CSRARC) is responsible for the fiscal administration and oversight of WIOA programs and projects. Other partners contribute to the provision of essential career services, either partially or fully. Individualized career services are offered by the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), and partner colleges. Furthermore, the comprehensive one-stop center works in conjunction with additional agencies to enhance the range of career services available to clients.

WorkSource CSRA is able to recruit and promote an array of programs through social media platforms, it is used to communicate, attract and provide a service to the younger and tech savvy generation.

The One-Stop delivery system provides services and activities pertaining to the following per 20 CFR 662.200: Programs offered by One-Stop partners are open to participants throughout the region unless otherwise specified in that agency's rules and regulations.

One-Stop programs and activities include:

- programs authorized under the WIOA
- programs authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C.49 et seq.)
- adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II of WIOA

-
- programs authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 {29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.}
 - programs authorized under section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603 (a)(5)) (as added by section 5001 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997)
 - activities authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)
 - postsecondary vocational education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act {20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.}
 - activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)
 - activities authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, United States Code
 - employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)
 - employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law)

Additionally, establishing a seamless referral process for individuals moving from unemployment insurance to employment services and vice versa can facilitate a smoother transition and improve the overall effectiveness of the programs.

Region 7 integrates job quality principles into the delivery of local services daily. To accomplish this goal, WorkSource CSRA focuses on offering training and education that result in wages and benefits that can support families, along with opportunities for career advancement that allow individuals to progress economically. This involves advocating for local hiring practices, aiding in entrepreneurship and the growth of small businesses, and cultivating workplaces that are inclusive and diverse. Local workforce development boards give priority to programs and services that cater to industries and occupations in high demand, offering competitive wages, strong job growth prospects, and chances for progression.

Moreover, Region 7 stresses the significance of work-based learning experiences like apprenticeships and internships, which provide hands-on skills and exposure to quality job prospects for trainees. Additionally, WIOA encourages the utilization of labor market data and industry partnerships to shape training programs and services, ensuring they meet employer requirements and align with sought-after skills. By incorporating these job quality principles, local workforce development areas can help ensure that workers are equipped for in-demand jobs with favorable wages and benefits, ultimately contributing to a more skilled and competitive workforce. Region 7's programs also strive to offer accessible employment opportunities by addressing obstacles to employment, such as transportation and childcare needs, and establishing supportive work environments that enhance employee well-being and engagement.

Partner Roles and Responsibilities

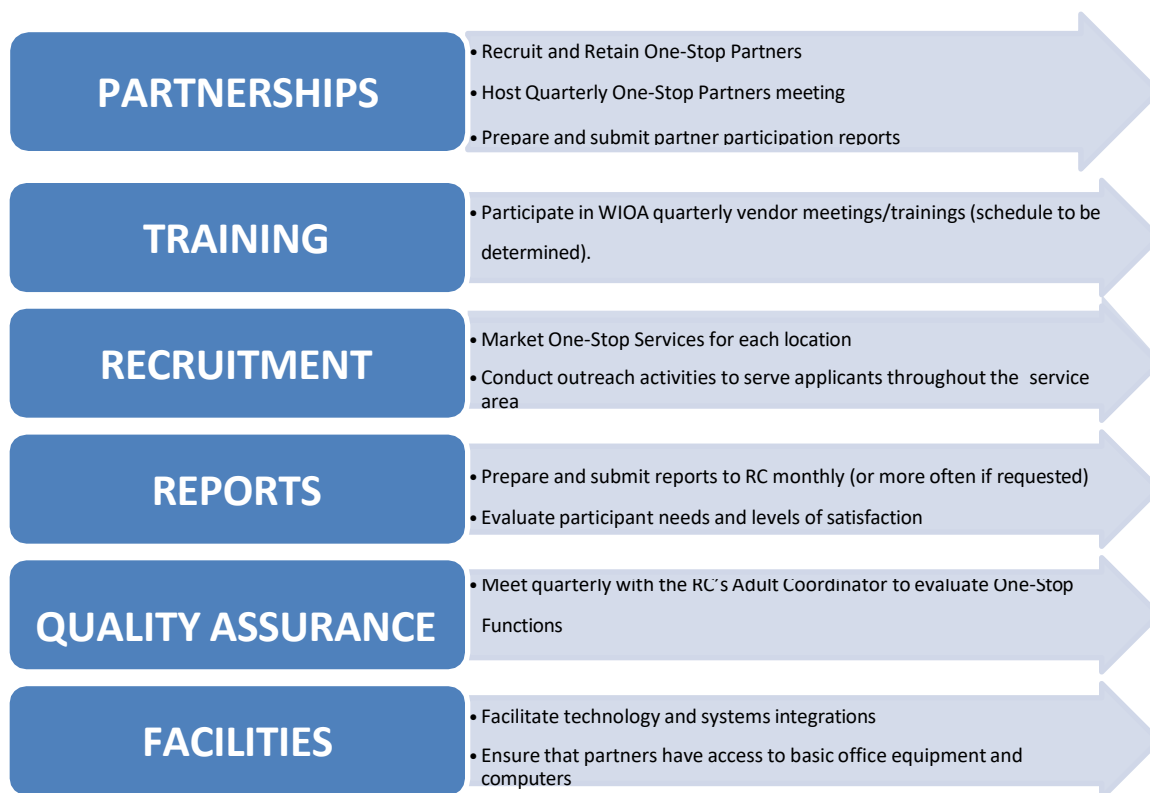
Each partner is actively involved in the planning and sharing of resources to enable co-enrollment to assist customers to upgrade skills and/or achieve the high school or GED credentials.

The LWDB one-stop delivery system includes all the required WIOA core program partners:

WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth Services	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy Programs
Job Corps	Carl D. Perkins Program
Youth Build	Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs
Wagner-Peyser Act Program	Jobs for Veterans State Grant Programs
Senior Community Service Employment Program	Community Service Block Employment & Training Programs
Vocational Rehabilitation	State Unemployment Programs

- e. **Identify the current One-Stop Operator in the local area(s) and describe how the region / local area is preparing for the competitive process for operator selection. Describe how market research, requests for information and conducting a cost and price analysis are being conducted as part of that preparation.**

The CSRA Regional Commission contracts with local providers for the operation of the designated One- Stop locations. The operator performs the following tasks associated with the success of the One-Stop:



WorkSource CSRA- Region 7 annually issues a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for the operation of Comprehensive/Affiliate One-Stop services.

The One Stop RFP process begins with market research to collect a list of agencies with the interest and capabilities to provide the Operator services. Current and past bidders' lists are reviewed and updated, and area agencies researched. Once all interested bidders have been added to the list, the RFP notice is published in local news outlets and sent to those on the bidders list.

Proposals are evaluated based on criteria such as organizational capacity, pertinent experience, range of services provided, and budget considerations. Augusta Technical College currently serves as the One-Stop Operator. Region 7 will comply with all procurement regulations established by state and federal funding authorities.

Negotiations with the selected agency will be held prior to the start of the contract. For more details about the One Stop procurement process please see the attached Procurement Policy (Attachment 5).

7. Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts – Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under Title I.

The CSRA Regional Commission has a competitive process that follows rules safeguarding fair and objective decision-making when choosing one-stop career center service providers or awarding other grant funds to partners. These rules must comply with appropriate federal, state, and local requirements. Central to this process are the core values of integrity, accountability, and a systems perspective.

It will be the responsibility of the CSRA Regional Commission's Executive Director to assure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations. The terms bidder, applicant, offeror, and responder are, for the purposes of these procurement policies, used interchangeably. The terms bidding, soliciting, and procuring are used interchangeably. The terms bid, response, offer, proposal, and application are used interchangeably.

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. The Regional Commission shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. To ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft grant applications, or contract specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements. Awards shall be made to the responder whose response or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the responder shall fulfill in order for the response to be evaluated by the Regional Commission recipient. Any and all responses may be rejected when it is in the Regional Commissions interest to do so. A copy of the Regional Commissions' procurement process is included in the appendix.

8. EEO and Grievance Procedures – Provide a description of local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.

WorkSource CSRA grievance policy is included in Attachment #3. The following graphic provides an overview of the general process. Complaints and grievances from all interested parties affected by the local workforce system may file complaint/grievance.



This inclusive approach ensures that individuals' voices are heard and that any concerns or issues are addressed promptly and effectively. In order to ensure fair and equal treatment, WorkSource CSRA has an assigned trained EO Officer who is dedicated to training and continuously updating staff on the rights and responsibilities under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA. This ensures that everyone involved in the workforce system is aware of their rights and obligations. It is important to note that when generating or sharing content, it must adhere to certain guidelines and restrictions.

In summary, any entity within the Georgia WorkSource System have a right to enter into the complaint process to resolve disputes.

Local Boards and Plan Development:

1. Local Boards – Provide a description of the local board that includes the components listed below.

a. Describe how local board members are identified and appointed. Include a description of how the nomination process occurs for adult education and labor representatives. (20 CFR § 679.320(g))

Nominations for Workforce Board Members are requested from each county via Local Elected Officials (LEO's), the chamber of commerce and the development authority for the necessary category. These nominations are then submitted to the chief elected official, who is responsible for appointing the board members. This process remains the top priority for nominations.

Local organized labor representatives, including those affiliated with registered apprenticeship programs, will be contacted. The inclusion of two organized labor representatives and a representative from registered apprenticeships is essential to fulfill the requirement of having 20 percent of the membership comprised of workforce representatives. Additionally, it is recommended to include a representative from a community-based organization and individuals with proven experience and expertise in youth services. The adult education representative, who oversees an out-of-school program, was chosen to satisfy both adult education and youth program requirements.



b. Describe the area's new member orientation process for board members.

Following their appointment, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) Chairman and the Workforce Director conduct an orientation session for newly appointed members. Each new board member is provided a copy of the by-laws, conflict of interest form and board expectations. The orientation aims to aid both new and existing members in understanding the Workforce Development program, the objectives of the board, their responsibilities, ongoing initiatives, member directories, by-laws, conflict of interest policies, and additional pertinent information. If necessary, individualized meetings will be arranged for new members to provide tailored board training and information. The Director and Board Chair are always available for questions and inquiries.

c. Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce development activities with regional economic development activities being carried out within the planning region.

The CSRA Unified Development Authority uses the tag line, “Thirteen Counties. One Economy.” The WDBs from Region 7 embrace the same concept. Programs and initiatives are geared towards regional impact, utilizing local area methodology. Members of each board represent industries and agencies that rely on the workforce throughout the region. All local planning and development are developed with that awareness. Region 7 has implemented an action-based process using the strategy results from the CSRA Unified Development Authority. This combines regional planning, the Augusta Regional Development Alliance (ARDA), the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) and WIOA plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region. Region 7 has a long history of working closely with the region’s economic development partners. They understand that all stakeholders: economic development, education, businesses, workforce development and community providers, must work together to develop optimal solutions that ensure the region’s economic prosperity.

Regional collaborative groups meet regularly to keep each other abreast of program updates, changes and current activities. The RC staff are actively involved in economic collaborations such as the Augusta Regional Development Alliance and the CSRA Unified Development Authority. They are also involved in the local Society for Human Resource Management, the quarterly City/County Administrators Roundtable and a number of other collaborative groups.

d. Describe how local board members are kept engaged and informed.

Local board members are kept engaged and informed primarily through email notices and engagement. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and CLEO Board receive communications through routine mail and email. LWD Board meetings are held quarterly, and LEO Board meetings are held bi-annually; additional call meetings are scheduled when needed. Members receive printed copies of all policy recommendations, finance reports and other relevant documents.

WorkSource CSRA strongly encourages board members to attend all scheduled meetings in person to foster networking and enhance engagement. Nevertheless, given that our region encompasses 13 predominantly rural counties, the enactment of SB26 permits development authorities and community improvement districts to conduct meetings and public hearings via teleconference. This legislation also enables local workforce boards to convene virtually, thereby facilitating greater participation among board members.

2. Local Board Committees – Provide a description of board committees and their functions.

a. If committees have not been utilized, provide a description of why.

The local board presently lacks any established committees. Given the rural characteristics of our region, which spans 13 counties, many of which are situated an hour or more from the Regional Commission, these committees have not been utilized due to logistical challenges and time constraints. Nevertheless, with the recent enactment of SB26, which permits Economic Development Boards and committees to convene virtually, we are dedicated to the formation of board committees.

b. Plan Development – Provide a description of the process by which the plan was developed to include the participation of core partners, providers, board members, and other community entities. Also describe the process by which the local board provided a public comment period prior to the submission of the plan to solicit input into the development of the plan.

This plan serves as a guidance document for all of the workforce development programs in Region 7. The plan is a living document that is updated and approved by the WDB annually. The Regional Commission updates the plan, and its components based on partner meetings, surveys, economic development planning processes, and changes to state and federal law.

The regional plan was formulated through a series of engagements with key partners and other pertinent stakeholders. Established industry data sources and methodologies were employed to assess the existing and anticipated local characteristics and trends. In compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 108(d), WorkSource CSRA, Region 7, will make the proposed local plan accessible to the public via electronic platforms. Following approval by the LWD Board, a draft of the local plan will be posted for review and feedback on the CSRA Regional Commission website (www.csrarc.ga.gov) for a 30-day public comment period prior to its submission. This comment period provides the public with an opportunity to gather input and receive feedback from representatives of business, labor organizations, and educational institutions. All comments will be integrated into the final version of the plan and resubmitted to the LWD Board for reapproval.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRAINING

- 1. Equity in Service Delivery and Educational Programming –Provide a description of how the area will develop education, training, and career service strategies that better address and promote equity in recruitment, service design, implementation, and support services to improve access and outcomes for individuals in such communities. Local areas should examine population groups, particularly those identified in the LMI analysis as having higher unemployment and lower earnings than the overall population and explore existing inequities with access to and participation in the local workforce and education programs, the outcomes in terms of employment and earnings, and placement in quality jobs.**

The objective is to attract individuals in need of training as well as those eager to secure employment. For those already employed, the focus may be on enhancing their existing skills. WorkSource CSRA, Region 7, is committed to identifying and promoting career pathways that facilitate sustainable and self-sufficient income. We will actively seek partnerships with businesses willing to engage with our underserved communities, particularly those involved in the justice system. WorkSource will conduct extensive recruitment efforts across the 13-county region. Our initiatives will include participation in job fairs, employer-employee layoff sessions, mass mailings, distribution of flyers at local businesses, and attendance at various collaborative meetings. WorkSource is dedicated to providing equitable services to our communities. We acknowledge that certain individuals may face restrictions in their access to technology, as well as limited availability of internet, broadband, and other technological devices. Nevertheless, every individual will be provided with options to select the delivery method that best suits their needs.

The Living Wage Calculator for Georgia serves as a resource for assessing the income necessary for individuals to achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency. It computes the hourly wage required for a person within a household to adequately support themselves and/or their family while working full-time. Detailed county-level information can be accessed through the Living Wage Calculator at <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>.

The Board will collaborate closely with our primary partners and additional stakeholders to improve service accessibility for qualified individuals. Regular meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis, as well as on an as-needed basis, with all primary partners to ensure that services are readily accessible and available to the eligible population within the region. To promote access to program activities, we will implement cross-referrals and staff cross-training, which will support the development of career pathways. When appropriate, we will also promote co-enrollment in other programs, particularly those that provide training leading to a credential, thereby enhancing both employment opportunities and retention for the region's eligible individuals.

- 2. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals – Provide a description of how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs, as**

appropriate; and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary, academic, or industry recognized credential.

The One-Stop provider is responsible for providing seamless and fully integrated core program activities such as job search activities, referrals to partner services, workshops, employer services, and much more. One-stop staff serve customers regardless of their barriers to employment, level of need, or degree of career development. Services are accessible to the “universal customer” at all of the one-stop/information centers throughout the LWDA. Each location, regardless of the partners co-located, participates in a system of referrals designed to link customers with partners and agencies within the area to meet their needs.

Through collaboration of the LWDB, employers and other key stakeholders, three sector strategies were identified to better serve the needs of the employers’ long and short-term needs throughout the region. The identified sector strategies are:

1. Advanced Manufacturing
2. Healthcare
3. Information Technology (IT)
4. Logistics

The LWDB is focusing on these three sectors due to their potential to offer diverse career pathways, thereby enhancing employment opportunities within the local area and the broader region. Region 7 is committed to developing a talent pipeline that addresses skill gaps and fosters significant career pathways. Establishing these pipelines necessitates efforts to eliminate obstacles faced by certain segments of the strategic population. WorkSource CSRA (Region 7) will persist in evaluating individuals for WIOA assistance. Access to these career pathways is available through various programs, including On-The-Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Apprenticeships, and Individual Training Accounts.

The local region collaborates closely with the Technical College System of Georgia and the University System of Georgia to facilitate participant access to postsecondary credentials, including for-credit diplomas, certificates, and degrees. Both TCSG and USG also offer continuing education programs that provide opportunities for non-credit industry credentials. In certain instances, diploma, certificate, and degree programs integrate industry credentials as well. The two-year and four-year institutions in the area have undertaken significant efforts to ensure that credits transfer smoothly between institutions, thereby enhancing the local area's ability to establish career pathways for participants. The adaptability of one-stop services guarantees that customers receive direct access to the services that align with their specific needs. The local area has developed a system that provides two tiers of services for adults and dislocated workers: career services and training services.

For workers with low skill levels in our region, it is crucial to devise strategies that bridge the gap between unemployment or underemployment and viable career pathways. Those who secure employment will have the opportunity to continually enhance their skills, thereby advancing their careers and increasing their earning potential. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) collaborates closely with local training providers to create career pathways that offer low-income adults and youth clear and dependable routes for skill development to progress in their careers. As a workforce development initiative, Career Pathways is employed to facilitate workers' transitions from education into the workforce and throughout their careers, thereby expanding education, training, and learning opportunities for both the current and future workforce.

3. Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers- Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Adult and Dislocated Worker services provided may include; career, individualized and training services. These services may be provided by any partner agencies with funding from non-WIOA grant sources. Employment services and required partners are co-located within the comprehensive one stop with the contributing in kind services.

Unemployment insurance claimants can receive eligibility assessments and referrals to a wide array of training and education resources through WIOA.

The LWDA suggest all individuals interested in any type of services register in the WorkSource Online Participant Portal (VOS) online at www.worksourcegaportal.com.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) aims to provide a comprehensive range of integrated services for individuals pursuing employment and skills training, as well as for employers in need of skilled labor. This objective is accomplished through the enhancement of the workforce system, a closer alignment with regional economies, and the fortification of the one-stop center network. It is essential that customers have access to a cohesive system of high-quality services, facilitated by the coordination of various programs, services, and governance frameworks. The Act fosters stronger connections among critical workforce stakeholders, including business leaders, workforce boards, labor unions, community colleges, non-profit organizations, and state and local officials, in pursuit of a more employment-focused approach to training and skills enhancement. Under WIOA, the previous sequence of services has been eliminated; participants can now access services in any order deemed suitable, with Core and Intensive services being integrated into a single category known as "Career Services."

Basic career services are available to all individuals regardless of eligibility for WIOA paid training activities.

Services included but are not limited to:

- Orientation to WIOA service
- Job Search and/or application assistance
- Labor Market Information
- Job postings
- Intake, assess and WIOA eligibility determination
- Supportive services during training
- Resume writing/critiquing
- Interview prep/mock interviews
- Incumbent Worker Training, On the Job Training & Customized Training
- Referral to other services/partners
- Veteran representatives and programs
- GED study prep
- WorkKeys, WorkKeys Curriculum and all other assessments offered
- Job Fairs/Career Fairs
- Career guidance
- Follow up
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs for financial aid assistance for training and educational programs not provided under WIOA, including HOPE and PELL

A case manager will assess individuals who are interested in receiving additional career services and training to determine if there is a need based on the WIOA § 134.

Individual Training Account (ITA)

An ITA is a payment agreement established on behalf of the participant with a training provider. allows individual to receive training from eligible training providers. WIOA funding assist individuals in paying for educational training and can be used to pay for tuition, training related cost to include supportive services as noted on the mandatory course description and or class syllabus.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are offered by the LWDA through the local unions as well as the local Technical College. Individuals in these programs are engaged in paid working activities while attending training to learn a specific trade skill or skills.

WIOA funding is paid to the provider of the apprenticeship training and can be used to pay for tuition, fees and tools required for the training. Manufacturing leaders use registered apprenticeships programs to build their pipeline, programs are outlined by local technical colleges.

It is essential to provide individualized career services when deemed appropriate to assist individuals in obtaining or maintaining employment. As stipulated in TEGL 3-15, individuals must be recognized as eligible to access these services. The services offered must align with WIOA requirements and federal cost principles and include the following:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments to evaluate the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may involve diagnostic testing and various assessment tools, as well as thorough interviews and evaluations to identify employment barriers and suitable employment objectives
- Creation of an individual employment plan that outlines the employment goals, relevant achievement objectives, and a tailored combination of services necessary for the participant to reach their employment aspirations, including a list of and information about the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Group counseling sessions
- One-on-one counseling and mentoring.
- Career planning services.
- Short-term pre-vocational training that encompasses the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing techniques, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training opportunities
- Internships and work experiences that are connected to specific career paths.
- Activities aimed at workforce preparation.
- Financial literacy education.
- Assistance with job searches and relocation for positions outside the local area; and
- Programs focused on English language acquisition and integrated education and training.

Customized Training

Tailored training programs are developed to offer our local community the adaptability necessary to address the specific requirements of both job seekers and employers, or groups of employers. These programs are intended to fulfill the distinct needs of an employer, contingent upon the employer's commitment to hire all participants upon successful completion of the training. The employer is responsible for a substantial portion of the training expenses. The Workforce Development Board is establishing a formal policy for the selection of training providers.

The Work Experience Program, commonly referred to as Transitional Jobs, offers time-limited employment opportunities through subsidized positions in private, non-profit, or public sectors for individuals facing employment barriers. This program specifically targets those who are chronically unemployed or possess an inconsistent, poor, or nonexistent work history. Engaging in Work Experience can serve as a valuable means for individuals to acquire essential work experience that may not be attainable through traditional training or on-the-job training contracts. The primary objective is to help individuals build a work history, showcase their work capabilities, and cultivate skills that facilitate their transition into unsubsidized employment. Efforts are made to identify Adult Work Experience opportunities to support the region's most underserved populations.

Incumbent Worker Training is designed to assist workers in obtaining the skills needed to advance within the company or to avert layoffs and increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. An IWT policy has been developed to meet the needs of businesses in the region.

The On-the-Job Training (OJT) program offers participants the opportunity to gain training through practical experience with qualified employers. Participants are employed by these organizations and contribute to their operations through productive work. The purpose of On-the-Job Training is to equip individuals with the necessary

knowledge and skills required for effective job performance. The duration of the training is limited and tailored to the specific occupation for which the participant is being prepared, taking into account the training content, the participant's previous work experience, and the individual service strategy. Under the WIOA system, employers participating in OJT are eligible for reimbursement, as WIOA regulations permit reimbursements of up to 50 percent of the participant's hourly wage for a specified period. This financial support is intended to alleviate the additional costs associated with providing training and supervision. OJT can be conducted through contractual agreements with employers in various sectors, including public, private non-profit, and private enterprises.

4. Description of Rapid Response Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

The WorkSource CSRA's staff along with the Office of Workforce Development Rapid Response Coordinator coordinate Rapid Response employer and employee layoff meetings and participate in the strategic planning of activities. In cases of mass layoffs, WorkSource CSRA staff, one-stop staff or a combination of agencies join the Rapid Response team in on-site visits to employers/employees. In cases where employer/employee meetings are not conducted, information will be mailed, emailed or hand delivered to the employer, if appropriate, or directly to the employees, if their addresses are available.

The Rapid Response team, in collaboration with local personnel, may engage in discussions with employers when there is sufficient time and opportunity to implement layoff aversion initiatives. These strategies for layoff aversion encompass activities aimed at gathering pertinent information and fostering partnerships. Support for local employers in managing workforce reductions is synchronized with rapid response efforts and strategies designed to prevent layoffs. This may involve approaches such as the early identification of companies vulnerable to layoffs, conducting feasibility studies to evaluate the needs and options available for at-risk firms, and providing employment and training programs to mitigate risk factors.

Specific training programs also may be designed to meet the needs of a mass layoff or closing. One-stop staff are available to provide core and intensive services both for satellite access points and for larger layoffs. Teams, involving one-stop staff, GDOL Career Center staff, and Rapid Response staff, may be assembled to assist with large layoffs to provide on-site services either at layoff sites or at another local setting. Training providers also may assist with large layoffs in order to quickly process appropriate candidates for training. Dislocated Worker funding is utilized for core, intensive and training services, with the majority of training services accomplished through the individual training account system.

Participants then take the first step and complete their application with all necessary backup documentation. Participants who already have a career plan in mind may be expedited into training.

5. Description of Youth Services – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities. Include a description of the alignment and coordination, as appropriate, between the Title I Youth program, Job Corps centers in the State, Title II AEFLA program, and Title IV VR program for youth who could be co-enrolled in programs and served by program staff who are co-located in the One-Stops.

The youth demographic in the region encounters numerous obstacles to achieving economic stability and empowerment, including elevated levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime, alongside insufficient educational qualifications, teenage pregnancies, and substance abuse. Collaborative efforts within the community and strategic partnerships are essential in creating a cohesive framework aimed at enhancing educational outcomes, preparing individuals for unsubsidized employment, fostering leadership skills, providing mentorship, assisting with job placements, and ensuring ongoing support. The CSRA Regional Commission, in conjunction with Youth Providers and other community partners, plays a pivotal role in shaping a unified approach to effectively serve the youth within the regional economy, considering aspects of workforce development, social services, juvenile justice, and overall integration.

Youth Services Purpose

The main purpose of the Youth Services Program is to increase the focus on longer-term academic and occupational learning opportunities and provide long-term comprehensive service strategies. Youth services funded through WIOA will meet specific guidelines by preparing WorkSource CSRA's youth to enter post-secondary education, training, or employment upon completion of their secondary education.

WIOA services purpose to assist young people ages 14-21 if in-school youth (ISY) and ages 16-24 if out-of-school youth (OSY) who face significant barriers to education and/or employment by providing resources and support to overcome those barriers and successfully transition to self-sufficiency through:

- Assessing a participant's skills, interests, needs, and goals,
- Creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participants, and
- Expanding the participant's connection to the local economy, educational opportunities, and community resources.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that local workforce development organizations provide all fourteen essential program elements to youth participants. Eligible youth receive services through a collaborative network of youth service providers and their affiliates. While youth providers are not obligated to utilize WIOA funds for every program element, they may draw upon partner resources to deliver certain readily accessible elements. In instances where the program does not receive funding from WIOA Title I youth funds, a formal agreement with a partner organization will be established to guarantee the availability of the program element. The local Workforce Development Board (WDB) will ensure that the program element is effectively integrated and coordinated with the WIOA youth program. An objective assessment will be employed to evaluate a youth participant's eligibility, barriers, needs, and goals, which will inform the selection of program elements provided to them. These elements will be recorded in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and will be revised as new barriers or needs emerge. Youth programs encompass all fourteen mandated WIOA youth program elements, either through direct service provision or through referrals and linkages. Direct services include tutoring and study skills, summer employment opportunities, work experience, comprehensive guidance and counseling, leadership development opportunities, and follow-up services.

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction that lead to a high school diploma, its equivalent or a similar certificate for individuals with disabilities are reported under this program element. Such services focus on:
 - providing academic support,
 - helping a youth identify areas of academic concern, assisting with overcoming learning obstacles, and; providing tools and resources
 - develop learning strategies.
- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction can be provided one-on-one, in a group setting, through resources, and workshops.
- Secondary school dropout prevention strategies intended to lead a high school diploma are also reported under this program element and include:
 - services and activities that keep a young person in school and engaged in a formal learning and/or training setting, tutoring, literacy development, active learning experience, after-school opportunities, and individualized instruction.

According to 20 CFR 681.460(a)(2), alternative secondary school services encompass basic education skills training, personalized academic instruction, and English language learner training, aimed at supporting youth who have faced challenges in conventional secondary education. For youth who are not currently enrolled in school, the primary emphasis is on remediation courses and activities that enhance reading and mathematics skills, which may also involve preparation for the GED. These services will highlight the advantages of obtaining a high school diploma equivalency and will prepare individuals for further education beyond the high school level.

Paid and Unpaid Work Experience

The definition of work experience is further elaborated in 20 CFR 681.600, which describes it as a structured and planned learning opportunity occurring within a workplace for a specified duration. Such work experience can be either compensated or uncompensated, depending on the circumstances, and may occur in various sectors, including private for-profit, non-profit, or public sectors. Labor standards are applicable in any work experience where a relationship between employee and employer exists, as outlined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or relevant state legislation. In accordance with 20 CFR 680.840, funds allocated for work experiences must not be utilized to directly or indirectly support the recruitment for a position that is unfilled due to the previous employee being on strike, being locked out during a labor dispute, or any other situation related to a labor dispute that involves a work stoppage.

Work experiences offer young participants valuable opportunities for exploring career paths and enhancing their skill sets. These experiences will encompass both academic and vocational education. The educational aspect may take place either simultaneously or in succession with the work experience. This academic and vocational education can occur within the workplace or in external settings. Employers involved in the work experience may deliver the educational components, or these may be provided separately through classroom instruction or alternative methods. Local jurisdictions have the discretion to choose the providers of these educational components. The academic and vocational education refers to the contextual learning that supports the work experience, encompassing essential information needed to navigate and succeed in specific industries or occupations. It is important to note that this education will extend beyond a mere onboarding program offered by individual employers, aiming to be relevant across various employers within the same occupation. Local programs will have the autonomy to identify the most suitable types of academic and vocational education required for each specific work experience.

Occupational Skills Training

Occupational skills training is characterized as a structured educational program designed to impart specific vocational competencies that enable individuals to effectively execute tasks and technical functions pertinent to various occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. WorkSource CSRA prioritizes training programs that culminate in recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with high-demand industry sectors or occupations within the local community. The training will:

- be oriented towards achieving specific outcomes and focused on an occupational objective outlined in the individual service strategy,
- be of adequate duration to impart the necessary skills to achieve the occupational objective, and
- result in the acquisition of a recognized post-secondary credential.

For out-of-school youth (OSY) aged 16 to 24, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) may be employed when deemed appropriate. Participants will have the opportunity to select a training provider that best suits their requirements, provided that the chosen provider is listed on the Eligible Training Provider List as stipulated by regulations. In-school youth (ISY) are not permitted to utilize youth program-funded ITAs unless they are aged 18 to 21 and co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program, provided that the young adult's individual needs, knowledge, skills, and interests correspond with the WIOA adult program, allowing them to receive training services through an ITA funded by the adult program. The selected occupational skills training will adhere to the in-demand and quality standards as outlined in the state's demand-driven online resources. Education that is delivered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster is described in 20 CFR 681.630, which indicates that this program element embodies an integrated education and training model. It illustrates how workforce preparation activities, fundamental academic skills, and practical occupational skills training are to be conducted within the same timeframe and linked to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.

Leadership Development

Regulations define this program element as opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors including:

- exposure to post-secondary educational possibilities,

-
- community and service-learning projects,
 - peer-centered activities such as peer mentoring and tutoring,
 - organizational and teamwork training including team leadership training,
 - training in decision-making, including determining priorities and problem solving,
 - citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training
 - civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community.

Supportive Services

Regulations describe supportive service for youth as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(59), as services that enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities. These services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- linkages to community services,
- assistance with transportation,
- assistance with childcare and dependent care,
- assistance with housing,
- needs-related payments, including emergency needs,
- assistance with educational testing,
- reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities,
- legal aid services,
- referrals to health care,
- assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools such as eyeglasses and protective eye gear,
- assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for student enrolled in post-secondary education classes, and
- payment and fees for reemployment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

Incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experience. Region 7 will have:

- written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives,
- ensure that incentive payments are tied to the goals of the specific program,
- outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that provides incentive payments,
- align with the local program's organizational policies, and
- are in accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR part 200.

Employability Development Training

Activities designed to promote positive social behaviors (soft skills, positive attitudinal development, self-esteem building, cultural diversity, training, and work simulation).

Financial Literacy

- 20 CFR 681.500 states that the financial literacy education program element may include the following activities: support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and saving accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions,
- support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards
- teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, rights regarding credit and financial information, how to determine accuracy of a credit report and correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit
- support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, compare financial products and services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions,
- educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect from identity theft, how to resolve cases of identity theft, and in other way understand their rights and protections concerning personal identity and financial data,
- support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling,
- provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to practice lessons that enable money management and saving,
- support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials,
- implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training

Providing the basics of starting and operating a small business, this program element will develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship including:

- the ability to take initiative,
- the ability to creatively seek out and identify business opportunities,
- the ability to develop budgets and forecast resource needs,
- the ability to understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and;
- the ability to communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.

Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills may include, but are not limited to:

- education that provides an introduction to the values and basic of starting and running a business that includes the development of a business plan and may include simulations of business start-up and operation,
- enterprise development that provides supports and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses such as helping youth access small loans or grants needed to begin business operation and providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas,
- experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a youth-run business or facilitate placement in apprentice or internships positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

6. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives – Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training programs, On-the-Job Training programs, Customized

Training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy. If these services are not utilized, provide a description of why.

As the demand for various occupations increases and the skills gap continues to expand, there is a growing necessity for skilled positions and training programs among employers. In response, the local area has implemented long-term work-based learning strategies, including those facilitated through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). By utilizing ITAs alongside labor market information to ascertain employer requirements, partnerships will be established among employers, training providers, community organizations, and other essential stakeholders within specific industries. This collaborative approach aims to meet the workforce demands of employers while addressing the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. The core components of the local area strategies emphasize tailored solutions for particular industries at a regional level, fostering collaboration among industry partners.

In addition to formulating strategies for the implementation of work-based learning, which encompasses On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker training, and Customized Training within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), the locality has also established long-term strategies for work-based learning through capacity building initiatives. Individual Training Accounts (ITA) enable individuals to obtain training from accredited providers, such as local Technical Colleges. WIOA funds may cover any remaining tuition and book expenses once the PELL/HOPE grant has been fully utilized. In cases where customers do not qualify for the HOPE grant, WIOA can also finance tuition and book costs. Furthermore, ITA participants may receive additional support for transportation and other associated fees. The local area provides a diverse array of work-based learning services, allowing employers to tailor training programs to meet the specific tasks and functions required for their positions. This approach not only facilitates the acquisition of transferable skills for participants but also enhances their employability and opportunities for career advancement. OJT represents one of the most comprehensive services available to employers through the LWDA. The LWDA collaborates with local business leaders to identify potential needs for OJT. Efforts are made to ensure that this process is efficient and straightforward for participating employers. OJT assists employers by subsidizing a portion of the training costs and wages for employees during their training period. This support allows employers to allocate resources more effectively while maintaining high training standards for their new hires. OJT can facilitate large-scale recruitment while ensuring that companies are equipped to train their workforce adequately.

7. Provision of ITAs – Provide a description of how training services in WIOA § 134 will be provided through the use of ITAs. If contracts for the training services will be used, describe how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Individuals seeking training services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will receive comprehensive information regarding the available training options. Applicants have the choice to apply for an Individual Training Account (ITA) or explore other training opportunities that align with their interests. The ITA functions similarly to a voucher. Prior to enrolling in or purchasing training, customers will engage in a consultation with a Career Development Specialist. During this meeting, an assessment will be conducted to help the customer make an informed choice regarding their training options. Should any concerns arise during the consultation, the Career Development Specialist will offer support and constructive feedback. The Career Development Specialist will remain accessible to participants throughout their training journey. An ITA can be issued once the customer's assessment has been finalized and discussed. Additionally, an Individual Employment Plan will be utilized to document the customer's requirements, the selected training type, whether the training is included on the demand occupations list, board policies, and the choice of training program. Customers may choose training from the list of eligible providers, provided that the list has received board approval, and the associated costs do not exceed the established training cost cap.

8. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Micro-enterprise Services – Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

All youth programs incorporate an entrepreneurial aspect. The aim of this initiative is to expose young individuals to a diverse range of entrepreneurial curricula, programs, and models. This initiative includes a curriculum that prioritizes entrepreneurial education and promotes collaboration with local businesses to facilitate skill development. Such engagement provides youth with opportunities for experiential learning. Involvement in these programs can aid young people in their transition to adulthood and help them explore self-employment as a pathway to self-sufficiency. Currently, there is no established formal provider for entrepreneurial skills training in either area, which would offer more structured instruction. Adults and displaced individuals interested in entrepreneurship and microenterprise are linked with community partners. For instance, the Small Business Development Center provides various levels of support to those looking to establish their own small business ventures.

Region 7 will collaborate closely with local non-profit organizations and USDA Rural Development to foster the growth and sustained success of rural micro-entrepreneurs and microenterprises.

9. Coordination with Education Programs – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.

WorkSource CSRA, Region 7, will work closely with local technical colleges to provide training opportunities to meet the demands of employers in the region. We will work with key staff to develop curriculum customized to focus on programs and certificates identified as in-demand by industry. Additionally, Region 7's WDB has members from these technical colleges as well as the local boards of education.

Our Workforce Board firmly advocates for both education and employment. While post-secondary institutions are responsible for enrolling students in their chosen programs, employers are in search of qualified candidates. Both parties recognize that collaboration is essential for achieving success. We are privileged to have board members with backgrounds in both education and business sectors. Their collective knowledge and expertise are vital for developing a robust workforce. Employers are increasingly entering the region in pursuit of competent employees, consistently offering competitive wages for both skilled and unskilled labor. Nevertheless, skilled individuals tend to advance more rapidly than their unskilled counterparts. This underscores the importance of promoting enrollment in educational programs as a pathway to advancement.

10. Description of Supportive Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services regionally, if applicable

Supportive services are available to assist participants in areas that create barriers to program engagement. Transportation and Childcare are two of the most significant barriers to services throughout the region. A copy of the local supportive services policies is attached. See SS Policy, Attachment 6.

11. Coordination with Social Service Programs – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate with social service providers, including SNAP and TANF. The description should include the utilizations of both programs as a referral source.

Region 7's Workforce Board is actively collaborating with educational institutions, businesses, social service agencies, community organizations, higher education entities, parents, and mentors/volunteers. The demographic landscape in The CSRA is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of culture and ethnicity. The programs detailed below have been developed to address these evolving requirements and are designed to provide non-profit organizations with the necessary knowledge and skills to function as effective partners. Both SNAP and TANF serve as referral sources for these organizations.

Services to TANF recipients occur through One-Stops, which coordinate training services and resources with other TANF population service providers and partners. For the past several years, service to TANF populations has been very low (2%) due to TANF requirements. One-Stop computer labs are often used as resources for the TANF population.

Coordination with Core Partners:

- 1. Description of the Workforce System – Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies all relevant programs and how the local board will work with the entities to carry out both core and other workforce development programs to deliver well-aligned services in support of the strategies identified in the state plan. This should include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).**

Individuals interested in participating can obtain services via any of the partner organizations, which include both mandated and community partners. Mandated partners generally maintain a more formal presence within the One-Stop centers and often facilitate a smooth transition for those expressing interest. Area 12 is collaborating with its partners to amend the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to align with the program modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- 2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser – Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.**

In July 2022, Governor Brian Kemp appointed TCSG as the official provider of Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Services in Georgia. TCSG is strategically equipped to integrate customers into the workforce system, offering both comprehensive and targeted referrals to essential partners, available through online platforms and in-person interactions. The workforce system in Georgia facilitates easy access through multiple entry points, including referrals from the Unemployment Insurance program managed by the Georgia Department of Labor, as well as through the TCSG Business Services Unit, which aims to identify and engage potential customers. Regardless of the chosen entry point into the workforce system, customers initially receive career services through WP. These services are delivered at Comprehensive and Affiliate one-stop locations, which are distributed throughout the region for those who prefer face-to-face assistance in identifying their needs and accessing relevant services and referrals. Should a customer be assessed as ready for employment after receiving career services, WP staff will support them in their job search, encompassing job development and placement. Conversely, if a customer requires training services, WP staff will direct them to appropriate partner programs tailored to their individual needs.

The effective coordination of service delivery stands as a fundamental tenet of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which consolidates the essential programs of federal investment in skill enhancement. The primary objective of WIOA is to integrate service delivery, thereby facilitating a more cohesive experience for participants engaged in federal skill development and employment services programs, as outlined below:

- Offering TCSG customers access to information regarding community resources, labor market data, GED ® preparation, occupational training, on-the-job training (OJT), and support services that enable training, ultimately improving an individual's prospects for re-entering the workforce.
- Serving as the initial point of contact for the workforce system, personnel at the One-Stop career centers across the region assess customer needs and provide assistance with unemployment insurance, employment and reemployment support, trade services, automated resources, workshops, and referrals to more comprehensive services such as training, which are facilitated by WIOA through Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and other collaborators.

- 3. Coordination with Adult Education – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local**

applications submitted under Title II, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232 of WIOA.

The Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) are dedicated to Title II Adult Education, aiming to enhance and cultivate a successful labor force. Adult Education representatives are involved in both the Local WDB Board and the local sector strategy advisory board. The local boards are focused on creating strategies that connect adult education with the workforce development system, which encompasses the following actions:

- Create a delivery system that integrates educational and instructional services, workforce development services, and social services in partnership with employers, facilitating career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.
- Develop partnerships to support students at critical transition points, offering professional development for partner staff, tracking progress, and ensuring accountability through continuous evaluation of the system; - Harness technology to provide educational and training services, embedding digital literacy within adult education offerings. As most employers necessitate a degree of digital literacy, early incorporation of these skills boosts worker competitiveness; and
- Deliver fundamental educational resources and capabilities, including pathways to college and careers, co-located facilities, shared staff, testing, educational advising and navigation, training for current employees, employability skills training, and skills enhancement.

4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation – Provide a description of the cooperative agreement between the local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation office and the local board which describes efforts made to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, cross-train staff, provide technical assistance, share information, cooperate in communicating with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

A representative from Vocational Rehabilitation is a member of Region 7's Local Workforce Development Board. A Vocational Rehabilitation Representative is present at the Comprehensive One Stop at least once a week in person or virtually. Vocational Rehabilitation offers a comprehensive array of services designed to empower individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment aspirations, fostering independent living, and promoting self-sufficiency. WorkSource CSRA, Region 7, ensures that all sites and services are fully accessible. Staff members have undergone training in assistive technology within the resource room. Vocational Rehabilitation Services serves as the primary community rehabilitation provider, facilitating training and mutual referrals. The centers are equipped with specialized workstations featuring adaptive technology and software, along with additional adaptive equipment available for individual use within the center, as well as a resource services manual.

Performance, ETPL and Use of Technology:

1. Description of Performance Measures – Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to WIOA § 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance in the local area of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system.

WIOA mandates six performance measures for its core programs. Performance measures are calculated using the following methodology:

Entered Employment Quarter 2- Measures the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For youth, the measure also includes the percentage who were in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.

Entered Employment Quarter 4- Measures the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For youth, the measure also includes the percentage who were in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.

Median Earnings Quarter 2- Measures the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Credential Attainment Rate- Measures the percentage of participants who obtained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from the program.

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

WorkSource CSRA, Region 7 are urged to demonstrate ongoing improvement, which is evident in the objectives negotiated by the Workforce Development (WFD) team. In instances where LWDA's perceive their final negotiated rates as unachievable, the WFD program staff is available to provide technical assistance regarding program design and exit strategies. Additionally, the state's data and information team conduct year-round performance monitoring, allowing LWDA's the opportunity to renegotiate their performance levels if they are not meeting expectations due to special or unforeseen circumstances. The WFD staff adopts a proactive approach, striving to intervene promptly if quarterly performance data indicates that an LWDA is facing challenges with a specific measure. This support mechanism ensures that necessary adjustments to program design can be implemented in a timely manner to address issues and achieve the final performance targets. LWDA's have the capability to produce reports focusing on hard-to-serve populations and to assess the likelihood of achieving performance measures in advance. The performance percentages under WIOA were negotiated in collaboration with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Office of Workforce Development (OWD).

A spreadsheet of the Area's performance measures is included in the appendix (Attachment 2).

2. **One-Stop System Performance and Assessment –Provide a listing of locally/regionally developed one-stop performance standards and describe the criteria used to develop the performance standards. Describe how the one-stop system and regional service delivery is assessed by the local board.**

The CSRA Regional Commission staff monitor the One-Stop locations on a continuous basis. Tools such as the state's One-Stop certification guide and local monitoring tools are utilized to develop reports that are presented to the board. Additionally, this allows the RC to provide feedback to one-stop providers on a regular basis.

The one-stop centers undergo annual monitoring conducted by WDB staff or the One-Stop Operator to assess their compliance with established criteria. These evaluations are informed by interviews with one-stop managers and comprehensive data regarding customer services. The recertification of the one-stop centers takes place on a biennial basis, contingent upon the findings from the monitoring reviews. Recommendations for recertification are submitted to the WDB for approval. All centers have received certification in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Each partner agency is tasked with ensuring that its mandated programs, services, and activities align with its specific goals, objectives, and performance metrics. Furthermore, each partner commits to facilitating the achievement of the performance measures, goals, and objectives of the one-stop center/system, which encompass relevant WIOA measures as well as any additional metrics set forth by the WDB, The Regional Commission, or the management team of the local one-stop center.

3. **ETPL System – Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.**

a. **Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.**

Potential eligible providers can discover information about our program via our website, career advisors, and local partners. We also encourage them to contact our agency directly for further details on the application process to become a provider.

-
- b. Provide a description of how the board(s) evaluates providers and proposed training programs for initial eligibility, based on (at a minimum) criteria of proven effectiveness, local employer/industry demand, accreditation and customer accessibility.**

Upon the completion of a Georgia ETP Application, our agency evaluates various factors including historical performance data, the agency's accreditation status, the qualifications of the training personnel, and whether the training offered aligns with in-demand or growth occupations. Additionally, all relevant information from the State regarding the program/provider application responsiveness checklist is considered. This data is compiled within the Georgia ETP application. Following a thorough review by the staff, the application is presented to the Proposal Review Team, whose recommendations are subsequently forwarded to the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for final approval. Once approved, the application is submitted to the State for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

- c. Provide a description of the formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers and providers of unapproved training programs.**

Discontented ITA customers and providers initially reach out to the staff of WorkSource CSRA, Region 7 WDB. Every effort is made to informally resolve their issues or reported grievances. Should these efforts prove unsuccessful, the region adheres to our agency's established complaint and grievance procedure, as detailed in the attached Grievance Form.

- d. Provide a description of the ongoing process used to update the data on the eligible providers list (exclusive of the state-conducted continued eligibility process).**

The eligible provider list is revised whenever providers inform us of any increases in costs or modifications to the program rates. Adjustments, including price hikes, are reviewed by Workforce Development Board (WDB) and staff before being communicated to OWD and subsequently reflected on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

- e. Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.**

The Individual Training Account (ITA) provides funding specifically designated for an individual's training costs within the 13-county area of the CSRA. Adults or dislocated workers who qualify for services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) have the option to select a training provider from an approved list at both state and local levels, after consulting with a WIOA Career Development Specialist. If a participant undergoes career counseling and receives support services funded by PELL/HOPE, the regulations governing the ITA will apply, with WIOA funds disbursed as a third-party payment following Pell and Hope funding. The training must focus on occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth or demand occupations, or participants must provide documentation of employment opportunities in areas not included in the Plan. Additionally, the training must lead to a wage that enables self-sufficiency without reliance on public assistance. Training must be pursued on a full-time basis, as defined by the institution in its agreement with CSRA RC. Exceptions to this policy may be granted in writing on an individual basis.

For further details, please refer to the attached ITA Policy for Region (Attachment 7).

- f. Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.**

ITAs and enrollments are monitored using the State GEO Solutions system. The customer's career advisor is responsible for entering the data.

- g. Provide a description of local board policy on use of statewide eligible training provider list (including financial and duration limits, out-of-area training, service to out-of-area customers, etc.).**

The Local Board policy restricts tuition and associated expenses, excluding support, to a maximum of \$12,000 for one-year training programs and \$9,000 for two-year training programs. Training agreements have been established with several providers within our 13-county region, provided they are located at a reasonable distance from our service area and are listed on the State EPL.

h. Provide a description of how registered apprenticeship programs are added to the ETPL.

Upon request, they are automatically qualified for inclusion on the state's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list. In contrast to standard Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), they are exempt from the initial application and performance evaluation process, as they have already undergone a thorough application and vetting procedure with the USDOL. The Workforce Development Board (WDB) must grant local approval for all apprenticeships utilized within our 13-county region. The Board will provide a Training Provider Agreement to facilitate collaboration and notify the state of their intention to be added to the ETP list. Non-apprenticeship ETPs are required to comply with local protocols. The Board will continue our efforts to work with the State to streamline the complexities and alleviate the apprehension often associated with the Registered Apprenticeship program.

4. Implementation of Technology – Provide a description of the technology used to enhance customer (participant and business) experience and any additional data analytics used to enhance planning and measure outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.

Recent technological advancements have significantly enhanced the promotion of WIOA services through an outreach initiative. By leveraging technology, we have created brochures and flyers to effectively communicate the available WIOA training and job services in our region. WorkSource CSRA remains committed to actively exploring and implementing new technologies to bolster WIOA initiatives and disseminate information to the Workforce Development Board, contractors, and business partners. The objective of this progress is to equip our region with the necessary resources that empower local participants and employers to develop effective strategies for job development, job searching, hiring, assessment, and to gain insights into the local labor market, available services, and service providers.

WorkSource CSRA acknowledges the significance of leveraging technology to improve customer experience. The staff employs a diverse array of tools, including webinars, on-site training, video conferencing, seminars, and workshops, to ensure that training partners and providers are well-prepared to promote ongoing improvement and sustain their capacity to achieve performance outcomes that exceed the required performance standards.

State Initiatives and Vision:

1. State Branding – Provide a description for how the area has adopted and will continue to utilize the state brand.

To establish a cohesive and unified identity throughout the one-stop system, the LWDA integrated the state's branding standards into all signage, printed materials, and media utilized for training, marketing, and communication. The LWDA's marketing initiative was synchronized with the WFD branding launch, employing a uniform logo, color scheme, and messaging to enhance awareness and disseminate information regarding the services offered and funded by WorkSource CSRA and WIOA outlined in PS-16-002 Unified Branding Standards.

2. Priority of Service – Describe how the area/region will identify and administer the state's priority of service policy. Identify if the region will add target populations in addition to those specified by state and federal policy.

Individuals will be recognized at the entry points to WIOA programs and services to ensure they can benefit from the priority of service. These entry points encompass WorkSource Georgia CSRA locations, One-Stop Career Centers, websites, and various virtual service delivery platforms. All individuals will be informed of their rights to priority service, the comprehensive range of programs and services accessible to them, as well as any relevant eligibility criteria for those programs and services.

WorkSource CSRA, Region 7, is dedicated to adhering to the priority of service protocols set forth by the OWD. When funding levels are adequate, the eligibility criteria for adult services stipulate that applicants must be at least 18 years old and currently unemployed. Should the unobligated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult funds fall to 25% of the total grant award, priority for intensive and training services will be extended to individuals who meet the basic eligibility requirements and possess one or more characteristics that

may hinder their employment prospects or limit their ability to seek and sustain employment. Interested individuals are required to submit the necessary documentation, reside within the designated service area, and demonstrate a barrier to employment. Barriers to employment may include:

- Absence of a high school diploma or GED
- Criminal record (felony)
- Deficiencies in basic skills (reading or math below the 6th-grade level)
- Current or recent food stamp recipient (within the last six months prior to application)
- Current or recent TANF recipient (within the last six months prior to application)
- Underemployment, defined as an individual who is currently employed but whose job has one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Temporary, seasonal, or interim nature
 - Employment in an industry with a history of frequent layoffs
 - Employment with a company that does not provide health insurance benefits
 - Employment with limited or no opportunities for career advancement - Part-time employment while seeking full-time work
 - Employment that does not align with the individual's educational qualifications
- Lack of self-sufficiency
- Limited proficiency in English (as assessed through both written and oral communication) –
- Status as a single parent

It is important to note that the eligibility criteria are based on the information provided by the customer at the time of application, with the exception of public assistance status.

3. Alignment with State Goals – Describe how the area/region will align with each of the goals listed in the State Unified Plan.

a. Develop a streamlined and regionally integrated workforce system that delivers efficient services to both businesses and individuals.

The CSRA Regional Commission collaborates with a diverse range of partners to minimize service duplication and improve the opportunities available to participants. The Commission is especially cognizant of the necessity to facilitate access to businesses and thus coordinates its efforts with state economic developers and local development authorities.

b. Capitalize on the workforce system’s strengths to create opportunities for all Georgia communities to prosper. Continuously align workforce and education system objectives to current and future occupational skill requirements.

The CSRA collaborates extensively with the Boards of Education and local colleges and universities across various counties to facilitate connections to the workforce. This is particularly evident in Richmond County, where the WIOA program offers a Credit Recovery initiative that enables high school dropouts to pursue a high school diploma and achieve financial independence.

c. Expand the pool of available employees by increasing the participation of WIOA Strategic Populations in the workforce system.

Region 7 recognizes that effective outreach to citizens in the region necessitates a concerted effort to enhance communication among all partner agencies that support job seekers. This objective can be achieved by creating

programs aimed at improving and promoting resources and support services for youth, individuals with disabilities, returning citizens, veterans, and transitioning service members. A key focus for Region 7 is to assist specific populations facing employment barriers and to facilitate their access to the workforce system.

Workforce Development will strive to raise public awareness and eliminate obstacles that may prevent individuals from utilizing these services. In addition to providing career services to targeted populations, WorkSource CSRA will endeavor to expand access points for training and employment assistance in rural and remote areas. This initiative will strengthen the workforce's capacity to assist individuals in rural counties with limited-service access. Various resources are available to support this effort, including the Mobile Career Center, which features computer stations, satellite and internet connectivity, and is designed to be accessible for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, public libraries and local technical colleges serve as valuable resources. The overarching aim is to eliminate all barriers that adversely affect individuals within these targeted populations.

Attachments**Attachment 1: Local Workforce Development Board Members**

Member Name	Title	Entity	Board Category
Stich, Lisa	Project Manager/ HR	Motion Metalworks	Board Chair
Baker, Jerry	Veterans Employment Representative	Office of Workforce Development	Board Member
Dutterer, Keith	Plant Manager	Ingevity	Board Member
Fiorre, Nick	Plant Vogtle Site Coordinator	Building & Construction Trades/AFL-CIO	Board Member
Forshee, Matt	Community & Economic Development Manager	Georgia Power	Board Member
Hink, Kenneth	Servicing Director/Business Representative	Painter's Union	Board Member
Hodges, Matthew	HR Manager	Battle Lumber	Board Member
Howell, Amber	HR Manager	Fulghum Industries	Board Member
Jones, Daphne	Manager	Express Pros	Board Member
Lauger, Nate	Operations Manager	Manpower GA	Board Member
Lawhead, Nicholas	President	Outro Steel Structures	Board Member
Lewis, Michael	Director of Testing Services	Jefferson County BOE	Board Member
McClain, La'Rona	Supervisor Vocational Rehab	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Board Member
Moseley, Angela	Adult Education	Augusta Technical College	Board Member
Pennington, Carl	Operations Manager	Whitstone Transportation	Board Member
Shaw, John	WP Employment Services	Office of Workforce Development	Board Member
Underwood, Mandy	Executive Director	Jenkins County Development Authority	Board Member
Whirl, Dr. Jermaine	President	Augusta Technical College	Board Member
Wimberly, Barrett	Testing Manager	Alstom Grid	Board Member
Walden, Susan	Director of Human Resources	Jefferson Energy	Board Member

Attachment 2: Local Negotiated Performance

WIOA Performance Measure	PY24 Goal	PY25 Goal
Adult Q2 Entered Employment	82.0%	82.5%
Adult Q4 Entered Employment	80.5%	81.2%
Adult Median Earnings	\$9,000	\$9,150
Adult Credential Rate	51.0%	52.0%
Adult In-Program Skills Gain	50.0%	50.5%
DW Q2 Entered Employment	85.0%	86.0%
DW Q4 Entered Employment	74.3%	74.8%
DW Median Earnings	\$11,803	\$11,928
DW Credential Rate	64.3%	64.8%
DW In-Program Skills Gain	40.9%	41.5%
Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education	60.5%	62.0%
Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education	75.0%	75.5%
Youth Median Earnings	\$4,538	\$4,663
Youth Credential Rate	54.0%	54.5%
Youth In-Program Skills Gain	33.9%	34.5%

ADDENDUM (6)

Equal Opportunity Complaint & General Grievance For Applicants, Participants, Other Interested or Affected Parties

SECTION I:	Equal Opportunity Complaint Policy
SECTION II:	General Grievance Policy
SECTION III:	Complaints of Fraud, Abuse, or Other Alleged Criminal Activity
SECTION IV:	Complaints against Public Schools

I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMPLAINT POLICY

WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 (Recipient) adheres to the following United States law: "Equal Opportunity Is the Law". It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following basis: race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas: (1) Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity; (2) providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or (3) making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity.

Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

What To Do If You Believe You Have Experienced Discrimination

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either:

- The recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer (or the person whom the recipient has designated for this purpose); or
- The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW. Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210 or electronically as directed on the CRC Website at www.dol.gov/crc.
- If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center.
- If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you may file a complaint with CRC before receiving that Notice. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after the day on which you filed your complaint with the recipient).
- If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

A **complaint** is an allegation of discrimination on the grounds a person, or any specific class of individuals, has been or is being discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship status, or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity as prohibited by WIOA or part 29 CFR 38.69. An allegation of retaliation, intimidation or reprisal for taking action or participating in any action to secure rights protected under WIOA will be processed as a **complaint**.

Note: A complaint cannot be processed as both a program complaint and as a discrimination complaint.

FILING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION (under Equal Opportunity Complaint Policy)

Who May File: Any person requesting aid, benefits, services or training through the WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC workforce system; eligible applicants and/or registrants; participants; employees, applicants for employment; service providers, eligible training providers (as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act), and staff with the workforce system that believes he/she has been or is being subjected to discrimination prohibited under the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions 29 CFR Part 38 and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/CSRARCWDB is prohibited from discriminating against a person, or any specific class of individuals, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship status, or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity as prohibited by WIOA or part 29 CFR 38.69 in admission or access to, opportunity or treatment in, or employment in the administration of or in connection with, any WIOA funded program or activity. If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA funded program or activity, you may file a complaint within **180 days** from the date of the alleged violation with:

Tenika Harris, EO Officer
WORKSOURCE CENTRAL SAVANNAH RIVER AREA RC
3626 Walton Way Ext., Suite 1
Augusta, Georgia 30909
(706) 210-2000
tharris@csrarc.ga.gov.

Each complaint must be filed in writing, either electronically or in hard copy, and must contain the following information:

- (A) The complainant's name, mailing address, and, if available, email address (or another means of contacting the complainant).
- (B) The identification of the respondent (the individual or entity that the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination).
- (C) A clear description of the allegations in sufficient detail including the date(s) and timeline that the alleged violation occurred to allow the recipient, as applicable, to decide whether: (1) what agency has jurisdiction over the complaint; (2) the complaint was filed in time; and (3) the complaint has apparent merit; in other words, whether the complainant's allegations, if true, would indicate noncompliance with any of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA or part 29 CFR Part 38.
- (D) The written or electronic signature of the complainant or the written or electronic signature of the complainant's representative.

Complaint Processing Procedure

An initial written notice to the complainant will be provided within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the complaint. The notice will include the following information pursuant to part 29 CFR 38.72:

- (1) Acknowledgement of complaint received including date received; notice that the complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process; notice of rights contained in §38.35; and notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into the non-English languages as required in §§38.4(h) and (i), 38.34, and 38.36.
- (2) A written statement of issue(s) which includes a list of the issues raised in the complaint; for each issue, a statement of whether or not the issue is accepted for investigation or rejected and the reasons for each rejection after performing a period of fact-finding.
- (3) Notice that the complainant may resolve the issue through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) any time after the complaint has been filed, but before a Notice of Final Action has been issued.

If the complaint does not fall within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act jurisdiction for processing complaints alleging discrimination under Section 188 or Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination provisions at 29 CFR Part 38.74, the complainant will be notified in writing within five (5) business days of making such determination. The notification shall include the basis of the determination as well as a statement of the complainant's right to file with the Civil Rights Center (CRC) within thirty (30) days of the determination.

Upon determination that the complaint has merit and is within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act jurisdiction and period of fact-finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint.

Complaint Processing Time Frame

A complaint will be processed and Notice of Final Action issued within ninety (90) days of receipt of the complaint pursuant to 29 CFR 38.72. Complainant may elect to file his or her equal opportunity complaint with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) Office of Workforce Development (OWD). TCSG OWD's contact information is as follows: Compliance Director, 1800 Century Place N.E., Suite 150, Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304, (404) 679-1371, wioacompliance@tcsge.edu.

If WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC has not provided complainant with a written decision within ninety (90) days of the filing of the complaint, complainant need not wait for a decision to be issued. Complainant may file a complaint with TCSG or CRC within thirty (30) days of the expiration of the 90-day period. If complainant is dissatisfied with WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC resolution of his or her equal opportunity complaint, complainant may file a complaint with TCSG. Such complaint must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date you received notice of WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC proposed resolution.

OR

Complaints may be initially filed or appealed to the Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC) U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210 or electronically as directed on the CRC website at www.dol.gov/crc within thirty (30) days of complainant's receipt of either WorkSource Central Savannah Area River Area RC/Area 12 Notice of Final Action or TCSG Notice of Final Action. In other words, within one hundred twenty (120) days Complainant may file his or her appeal.

Resolution Process

Alternative Dispute Resolution: Complainant must be given a choice as to the manner in which they have their complaint resolved. After an investigation is conducted by the Equal Opportunity Officer, ADR may be chosen by the complainant to resolve the issues, as long as a Notice of Final Action has not been issued. Mediation is recommended ADR and will be conducted by an impartial mediator. Complainant must notify the Equal Opportunity Officer within ten (10) days of receiving the Notice of Issue Statement letter of whether ADR is selected to resolve the dispute. WorkSource Central Savannah Area

River Area RC/Area 12 will provide an impartial mediator and will provide interested parties information regarding the arrangements (date, time, and location).

Time Frame: The period for attempting to resolve the complaint through mediation will be thirty (30) days from the date the complainant chooses mediation; but must be performed within ninety (90) days of the initial filing date.

Successful Mediation: Upon completion of successful mediation, the complainant and respondent will both sign a conciliation agreement attesting that the complaint has been resolved. A copy of the conciliation agreement will be provided to Technical College Systems of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development within ten (10) days of the date the conciliation agreement was signed.

Unsuccessful Mediation: In the event mediation was not successful, WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 shall proceed with issuing a Notice of Final Action within the ninety (90) day limit. **If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with Central Savannah Area Regional Commission (CSRA RC) Executive Director as described in 29 CFR §38.69 through 29 CFR §38.71**

Complainant Responsibility: The complainant may amend the complaint at any point prior to the beginning of mediation or the issuance of the Notice of Final Action. The complainant may withdraw the complaint at any time by written notification.

Breach of Agreement: Any party to any agreement reached under ADR may file a complaint in the event the agreement is breached with Compliance Director, Technical College Systems of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development, 1800 Century Place N.E., Suite 150, Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304 or Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC) U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210. The non-breaching party may file a complaint within thirty (30) days of the date that party learns of the alleged breach (29 CFR 38.72). **The Central Savannah River Area (CSRA RC) Executive Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the CRC Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with the recipient's procedures.**

II. GENERAL GRIEVANCE POLICY

Any person applying for or receiving services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (WIOA) paid for by WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Central Savannah River Area RC Workforce Development Board (CSRARCWDB) will be treated fairly. WorkSource Central Savannah Area River Area RC/Area 12 will make every effort to resolve all general, non-discriminatory complaints informally between those involved before a grievance is filed. Grievances may be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/CSRARCWDB. **If you believe a violation of Title I of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of the program has occurred, you have the right to file a grievance.**

A **grievance** is a complaint about customer service, working conditions, wages, work assignment, etc., arising in connection with WIOA Title I funded programs operated by WIOA recipients including service providers, eligible training providers, one-stop partners and other contractors.

FILING A GENERAL GRIEVANCE (violations of the act or regulations not alleging discrimination)

Who May File: Any person, including WIOA program participants, applicants, staff, employers, board members or any other interested parties who believes they have received unfair treatment in a WIOA Title I funded program.

Any person may attempt to resolve all issues of unfair treatment by working with the appropriate manager and/or supervisor and staff member, service provider, or one-stop partner involved informally prior to a written grievance being filed.

All complaints as described in the previous definition may be filed within one hundred twenty (120) days after the act in question by first completing and submitting the General Grievance Form to:

Tenika Harriss, EO Officer
WORKSOURCE CENTRAL SAVANNAH REGIONAL AREA RC
3626 Walton Way Ext., Suite 1
Augusta, Georgia 30909
(706) 210-2000
tharris@csrarc.ga.gov

Grievance Processing Procedure

WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC will issue a written resolution within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed. Pursuant to Section 181 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 shall provide the grievant with an opportunity for a hearing within sixty (60) days of the complaint's filing, if requested in writing by the grievant. In the event a hearing is not requested, WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 shall issue a decision as to whether provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act were violated. In the event the grievant is dissatisfied with WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/CSRARCWDB's decision, he or she may appeal the decision to the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development (OWD) within sixty (60) days of the date of the decision. If such an appeal is made, the OWD shall issue a final determination within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the appeal.

In the event **WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12** does issue a written resolution within the sixty (60) days of the complaint's filing as required, the grievant has the automatic right to file his or her complaint with the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development.

Hearing Process

A hearing on any complaint filed shall be conducted as soon as reasonably possible, but within sixty (60) days of the complaint's filing. Within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the request for a hearing, WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 shall: (1) respond in writing acknowledging the request to the grievant; and (2) notify the grievant and respondent of a hearing date. The notice shall include, but not limited to: (1) date of issuance; (2) name of grievant; (3) name of respondent against whom the complaint has been filed; (4) a statement reiterating that both parties may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing; (5) the date, time, place of the hearing, and the name of the hearing officer; (6) a statement of the alleged violation(s) of WIOA ; (7) copy of any policies and procedures for the hearing or identification of where such policies may be found; and (8) name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing shall be conducted in compliance with federal regulations. The hearing shall have, at a minimum, the following components: (1) an impartial hearing officer selected by WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/CSRARCWDB; (2) an opportunity for both the grievant and respondent to present an opening statement, witnesses, and evidence; (3) an opportunity for each party to cross-examine the other party's witnesses; and (4) a record of the hearing which WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/Area 12 shall create and maintain.

The hearing officer, considering the evidence presented by the grievant and respondent, shall issue a written decision which shall serve as WorkSource Central Savannah River Area RC/CSRARCWDB's official resolution of the complaint. The decision shall include the following information: (1) the date, time, and place of hearing; (2) a recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint; (3) a summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the grievant and respondent; (4) an analysis of the issues as related to the facts; and (5) a decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

No applicant, participant, employee, service provider or training provider will be intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against because they have made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing.

Appeal Process

An appeal may be requested by contacting the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development, Attention: Compliance Director, 1800 Century Place N.E., Suite 150, Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304, (404) 679-1371, wioacompliance@tcsgeorgia.edu within sixty (60) days of the date of the decision.

III. COMPLAINTS OF FRAUD, ABUSE, OR OTHER ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

In cases of suspected fraud, abuse or other alleged criminal activity, you should direct your concerns to the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor, at 1-866-435-7644 or inspector.general@oig.ga.gov.

IV. COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If the complaint is not resolved informally and it involves public schools of the State of Georgia, the grievance procedure will comply with WIOA and OCGA 20-2-1160.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT.

Participant Signature

Date

Print Name

Last 4 SS#

Parent/Guardian Signature

Attachment 4: IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS LIST- WORKSOURCE CSRA

Business Services

Administrative Assistant/Office Manager
Advertising Sales Agent
Audio and Video Equipment Technician
Bill and Account Collector
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerk
Claims Adjuster, Examiner, and Investigator
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerk
Insurance Sales Agent
Office Manager
Paralegals and Legal Assistant
Project Manager
Property and Real Estate Manager
Secretaries and Administrative Assistant
Tax Preparer
Telecommunications Equipment Installer

Construction

Carpenter
Electrician
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanic
Industrial Machinery Mechanic

Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics

Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technician
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
Business Operations Specialist (All Other)
Flight Attendant
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver
Maintenance and Repair Worker
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerk

Health Sciences

Dental Assistant
Dental Hygienist
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurse Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technician
Medical Assistant
Medical Records and Health Information Technician
Medical Secretary
Healthcare Assistant
Nursing Assistant
Pharmacy Technician
Radiologic Technologist
Respiratory Therapist
Surgical Technologist
Registered Nurse

Hospitality and Tourism

Retail Store Assistant Manager

Information Technology

Computer Network Support Specialist
Computer User Support Specialist
Graphic Designer
Help Desk Specialist
PC Repair and Network Technician
Web Developer

Public Services & Professional Services

Correctional Officers and Jailers
Firefighter
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officer
Preschool Teacher
Teacher – STEM (Others on case-by-case basis)

This listing serves as a guide and is not meant to be all-inclusive. There may be additional occupations in which demand occurs based on the job market or specific opportunities within the broad spectrum of occupations. WorkSource CSRA may provide training for a job where demand is limited, but current openings exist. Bona fide job offers, letters of pre-hire and/or three current employment postings for the occupation maybe required for training in limited demand areas.

Training is not provided for careers or jobs with commissions and fees (this included real estate, cosmetology, massage therapy, nail technicians...). Additional sources of financial aid may be available through the school's Financial Aid Office.

CSRA Regional Commission Procurement Policies

POLICIES

It will be the responsibility of the Commission's Executive Director to assure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

The terms "bidder," "applicant," "offeror," and "responder" are, for the purposes of these procurement policies, used interchangeably. The terms "bidding," "soliciting," and "procuring" are used interchangeably. The terms "bid," "response," "offer," "proposal," and "application" are used interchangeably.

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. The Regional Commission shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft grant applications, or contract specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids and/or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for such procurements.

Awards shall be made to the responder whose response or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered.

Solicitations shall clearly set forth all requirements that the responder shall fulfill in order for the response to be evaluated by the Regional Commission recipient. Any and all responses may be rejected when it is in the Regional Commission's interest to do so.

The Regional Commission shall maintain written standards of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, or any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the recipient shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to contracts/agreements. However, recipients may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct shall provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employers, or agents of the recipients.

PROCEDURES

These procedures shall, at a minimum, provide that,

1. The Regional Commission avoid purchasing unnecessary items;
2. Where appropriate, an analysis is made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement for the Regional Commission; and
3. Solicitations for goods and services include the following:
 - a. A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. In competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features which unduly restrict competition.
 - b. Requirements which the responder must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
 - c. A description, whenever practicable, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.
 - d. The specific features of "brand name or equal" descriptions that responders are required to meet when such items are included in the solicitation
 - e. The acceptance, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement if applicable.
 - f. Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient.
 - g. Positive efforts shall be made to utilize small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises, whenever possible.

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES AUTHORIZATION

Under the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 50-8-64, the Regional Commission is required to develop a system for competitive procurement relating to the purchase of supplies, equipment, and services and the letting of other contracts. This section of relevant state law authorizes the Commission to award such contracts/agreements to the lowest responsible bidder. These procurement procedures are developed in accordance with the provisions of state and applicable federal laws and regulations.

SUBRECIPIENT AND VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS

For the purposes of these Procurement Policies, the following definitions shall apply

1. **Subrecipient** means a non-Federal entity that expends State or Federal awards received from a pass-through entity to carry out a State or Federal program but does not include an individual who is a beneficiary of such a program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other State or Federal awards directly from a State or Federal awarding agency. Guidance on distinguishing between a subrecipient and a vendor is provided below.
2. **Vendor** means a dealer, distributor, merchant, or other seller providing goods or services that are required for the conduct of a Local, Regional, State, or Federal program. These goods or services may be for an organization's own use or for the use of beneficiaries of the Local, Regional, or State Federal program. Additional guidance on distinguishing between a subrecipient and a vendor is provided below.

SUBRECIPIENT AND VENDOR DETERMINATION

1. General. An awardee may be a recipient, a subrecipient, and/or a vendor. State and Federal awards expended as a recipient or a subrecipient would be subject to audit under relevant State and Federal auditing requirements. The payments received for goods or services provided as a vendor would not be considered State or Federal awards. The guidance in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section should be considered in determining whether payments constitute a State or Federal award or a payment for goods and services.
2. State or Federal award. Characteristics indicative of a State or Federal award received by a subrecipient are when the organization
 - a. Determines who is eligible to receive what State or Federal financial assistance;
 - b. Has its performance measured against whether the objectives of the State or Federal program are met;
 - c. Has responsibility for programmatic decision making;
 - d. Has responsibility for adherence to applicable State or Federal program compliance requirements; and

Uses the State or Federal funds to carry out a program of the organization as compared to providing goods or services for a program of the pass-through entity.

1. Payment for goods and services. Characteristics indicative of a payment for goods and services received by a vendor are when the organization
 - a. Provides the goods and services within normal business operations;
 - b. Provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers;
 - c. Operates in a competitive environment;

-
- d. Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the State or Federal program; and
 - e. Is not subject to compliance requirements of the State or Federal program
 2. Use of judgment in making determination. There may be unusual circumstances or exceptions to the listed characteristics. In making the determination of whether a subrecipient or vendor relationship exists, the substance of the relationship is more important than the form of the agreement. It is not expected that all of the characteristics will be present, and judgment should be used in determining whether an entity is a subrecipient or vendor. The Regional Commission has the sole authority to determine whether a subrecipient or vendor relationship exists based on the substance of the relationship. In cases where there is a question as to the type of relationship, the Commission's Executive Director shall make the final determination as to the type of relationship.

Compliance responsibility for vendors. In most cases, the Regional Commission's compliance responsibility for vendors is only to ensure that the procurement, receipt, and payment for goods and services comply with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements. Program compliance requirements normally do not pass through to vendors.

However, the Regional Commission is responsible for ensuring compliance for vendor transactions which are structured such that the vendor is responsible for program compliance or the vendor's records must be reviewed to determine program compliance. Also, when these vendor transactions relate to a major program, the scope of the review must include determining whether these transactions are in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements.

SUBRECIPIENT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

When the Regional Commission awards state or federal funds to subrecipients, the applicable agreement shall be used outlining the scope of work to be performed, the time period of the award, and any conditions associated with the funding and reporting requirements of the subrecipient. Due to the nature of award and the relationship between the Regional Commission and the subrecipient, formal request for proposals or sealed bids are not required to enter into subrecipient Cooperative Agreements. The Regional Commission may, at the

Commission's sole discretion, seek a request for qualifications from potential subrecipients to ensure that the subrecipients have a reasonable expectation of success in fulfilling the requirements of the agreement.

PURCHASE THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

The Commission will utilize the following purchasing thresholds for acquisitions of goods and services from vendors except as outlined under "Purchase Requirement Exceptions" below.

1. For all purchases with an estimated cost up to \$1,000, the buyer will use their best judgment as to the vendor selection.

-
2. Purchases with an estimated cost between \$1,001 and \$25,000 require quotations, either in person, telephone, fax, email, or written form, from at least three prospective vendors. Such documentation must be submitted along with the Purchase Order to substantiate that quotes were obtained.
 3. Purchases for materials, supplies, and/or goods with an estimated value cost over \$25,001 require competitive procurements. All competitive procurement must be authorized by the Commission's Executive Director. This authorization by the Executive Director must be in the form of a memo signed by the Executive Director setting forth the nature of the procurement. Note that some programs may require approval from the grantor which will need to be secured by the Executive Director prior to purchase.
 4. Any purchase over \$125,000 must be approved by the Regional Commission's governing Council. This approval will be documented in the minutes of the Council.

Under no circumstances shall any such purchases be split to avoid these purchasing thresholds.

All purchases will be from the responder which responds with the most reasonable offer, considering price, responsibility of the responder, and all other relevant factors such as delivery date, quality of product, service, etc. (such factors being used by the Commission to determine the lowest responsible responder). These procurement policies do not require the Commission to purchase from the lowest responder, but the responder deemed, at the Regional Commission's sole discretion, to be the lowest responsible responder.

All original documentation of the procurement procedures used shall be forwarded to, and maintained by, Accounts Payable. Accounts Payable will review the documentation related to these procedures prior to processing for payment. Each employee who initiates the purchase is responsible for ensuring adherence to these policies. Failure to follow these policies may invalidate the purchase and may make the employee responsible for the payment.

PURCHASE REQUIREMENT EXCEPTIONS

Any purchases of goods, services, or equipment that meet any of the following criteria do not have to follow the purchase threshold requirements outlined above

1. Purchases from vendors of goods, services, or equipment obtained under state contracts.
2. Purchases of goods, services, or equipment from member jurisdictions. Purchases made through the Department of Administrative Services.
3. Purchases made through the Georgia Technology Authority or with other state agencies and/or regional commissions providing goods, services, or equipment.
4. Professional Services (such as legal services, information technology services, accounting or auditing services (unless otherwise required by applicable law), temporary employment services, and insurance brokerage services).
5. Membership dues/subscriptions to relevant job/organization related associations, organizations, or entities.

-
6. Annual software maintenance and/or update costs.
 7. Annual budgeted insurance costs.
 8. Utility costs.
 9. Other items specifically outlined and approved in the Commission's annual operating budget.

Additionally, the issuance of any cooperative agreement, grant, or contract between the CSRA Regional Commission and any of its member jurisdictions shall not require any competitive procurement process.

RIGHT TO AUDIT

All contract(s)/agreement(s) awarded by the Regional Commission shall include a provision to the effect that the Regional Commission, a Federal or State awarding agency, the U.S. Comptroller General, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

The selection procedures to be used for procuring vendor contracts will include the following

1. Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material(s), supply(ies), product(s), or service(s) to be procured.
2. Clearly set forth all requirements which responder must fulfill and identify factors to be used in evaluating responses to the procurement.
3. Awards shall be made only to responsible responders who possess, at the Commission's sole discretion, the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement.
4. Proposed procurement actions shall be reviewed by Commission officials, the Executive Director, and/or the Finance Officer to avoid purchasing unnecessary or duplicative items. Where appropriate, an analysis should be made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement.
5. The Commission shall perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action, which in the judgment of Commission officials, is of a material amount.
6. The Commission shall maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of all procurements that are material in amount. These records shall include but are not necessarily limited to information pertinent to rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the cost or price.
7. The Commission will ensure that contractors and/or vendors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contract or purchase order.

-
8. Affirmative steps shall be taken, if required, to assure that small and minority businesses are utilized where possible as sources of supplies, equipment, construction, and services.

AFFIRMATIVE STEPS

Affirmative Steps shall include the following

1. Including known qualified small and minority businesses on solicitation lists.
2. Assuring that known small and minority businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources.
3. When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit maximum small and minority business participation.
4. Where the requirements/regulations permit, establishing delivery schedules which will encourage participation by small and minority business.
5. Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration, the Office of Minority Business Enterprise of the Department of Commerce and the Community Services Administration whenever required.

CSRA REGIONAL COMMISSION PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR PURCHASES \$25,000 AND LESS

1. Identify funds to be utilized in the project. Ideally, the project should be included in the budget, in which case it would have already received any necessary Council approval.
2. Prepare a purchase order request form through the Commission's online request system (including relevant funding information in the description box) then forward to your supervisor for his/her approval.
3. Submit the appropriate supporting documentation to your Department Head for further action.
4. Your supervisor may either approve or deny your request (in which case a disapproval notice is sent to you), or approve the request, and forward it to the Administration Department. It is your responsibility to follow-up on all purchase order requests prior to purchasing any items included on the request. (NOTE YOU AS THE PURCHASER ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING YOUR COMPLIANCE WITH THESE PROCEDURES. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN THE COST BEING DISALLOWED. THE COMMISSION MAY HOLD YOU FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR A DISALLOWED COST.)
5. Your request, once assigned a purchase order number, will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer for his/her approval/disapproval and then to the Executive Director for final approval/disapproval.
6. After the Executive Director approves/disapproves of your request, you will be notified via email of the final status of your request.
7. If the request is approved, you may proceed with the purchase and/or coordinate with the Administration Department for such purchase. (Note If your PO request results in a vendor relationship, a contract MUST be developed and signed BEFORE any work can be authorized. If you do not know whether such a contract is needed, please do not hesitate to contact Accounts Payable staff.)

CSRA REGIONAL COMMISSION PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR PURCHASES \$25,001 AND GREATER

1. Purchases for materials, supplies, and/or goods with an estimated value cost over \$25,001 require competitive procurements.
2. All competitive procurements must be authorized by the Commission's Executive Director. This authorization by the Executive Director must be in the form of a memo signed by the Executive Director setting forth the nature of the procurement.
3. Establish a Procurement Folder including the name of the procurement, its legal notice date, and the date procurement documents are due.
4. Identify the funds to be utilized in the procurement.
5. Identify the scope of work and/or list of materials, goods, and/or supplies to be procured.
6. Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) package (to include the legal advertisement, the Executive Director's memorandum of approval, and the relevant procurement documents) and submit to the Executive Director for his/her approval prior to releasing such documents to the public.
7. All competitive procurement notices must be announced at least thirty (30) days prior to the deadline for acceptance of responses unless the Executive Director explicitly approves in writing a waiver of this requirement.
8. The procurement documents must outline the specifications for the procurement including, but not necessarily limited to the following
 - a. the date of any responder's conference (if applicable),
 - b. the due date and time for responses,
 - c. the number of copies of the response to be submitted, and
 - d. include a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for any material(s), supply(ies), product(s), or service(s) to be procured.
 - e. identify how potential responders can obtain copies of the RFP/RFQ; and
 - f. set forth all requirements which responder must fulfill; and
 - g. identify factors to be used in evaluating responses to the procurement, specifically noting that "The CSRA Regional Commission will evaluate each Response, choosing the one that, in the CSRA RC's sole discretion, is the most responsive Response for the particular contract, best addresses the work to be performed, taking into consideration factors such as price, potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the contract, analysis of applicable Unit Cost Methodology or other cost analysis, relevant past project experience/qualifications, organizational capacity, budget/financial capacity, and

responses to the scope of work and performance overview sections of this response.

9. All procurement documents must also include clear language outlining the following Regional Commission rights
 - a. The CSRA Regional Commission reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to contact any and/or all Responders after receiving the Responder(s)'s submittal to seek clarification of any portion thereof. The CSRA RC reserves the right to request additional information from any and/or all Responder(s) if the CSRA RC deems, in its sole discretion, such information necessary to further evaluate the Responder(s)'s qualifications and/or capacity to perform.
 - b. The CSRA Regional Commission reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel the RFP/RFQ at any time, to amend the RFP/RFQ before the due date for responses, to alter the time tables for procurement as set forth in the RFP prior to the due date, to reject any or all Responses submitted, and/or to waive any technicalities or formalities
 - c. Awarding of any contracts and any subsequent periodic payments during the grant period is contingent upon receipt of local, state and federal funds during the contract period.
10. Upon the Executive Director's approval, the employee must work with the administration department to ensure that required advertisements, if applicable, are placed in the Commission's legal organ.
11. An applicant/responders' conference, if applicable and if listed within the RFP/RFQ legal notice, can be held to discuss the procurement documents/process with potential responders.
 - a. If such a conference is held, the following must be included in the Procurement Folder
 - i. a sign-in sheet signed by all those in attendance (including Commission staff) demonstrating those in attendance at the meeting; and
 - ii. minutes from the conference.
12. In some cases, it may be necessary to send out addendums or written correspondence to questions raised during the conference or during the procurement process. If such addendums and/or correspondence is sent out, you must include all copies of any such documents in the Procurement Folder.
13. Written procurement responses should be time stamped upon receipt. If the document is sealed and cannot be time stamped in the time stamp machine, an administration department employee or designee may use a sign-in sheet to reflect the date and time of receipt of all procurement responses. In such cases, a copy of the sign-in sheet must be included in the Procurement Folder.

-
14. Electronic procurement responses must be made in a manner prescribed in the request for proposals or qualifications. Submittals will be reviewed to ensure that they meet the deadline requirements. Late submittals will not be considered.
 15. No responses shall be accepted after the time due.
 16. If a public opening of the procurement responses (commonly called a bid opening) is held pursuant to the procurement documents, the following must be included in the Procurement Folder
 - a. a sign-in sheet signed by all those in attendance (including Commission staff) demonstrating those in attendance at the opening; and
 - b. minutes outlining, at a minimum, the names of those responding to the procurement on time.
 17. Procurements that are expected to result in an award/contract greater than \$50,000 in aggregate must be reviewed by a review committee assembled by the CSRA RC, which may or may not include staff of the CSRA RC and/or independent individual(s). Such procurements should also include an acknowledgement by the responder demonstrating his/her understanding at a minimum that the
 - a. response submitted may be reviewed by a review committee assembled by the CSRA RC, at its sole discretion, which may or may not include staff of the CSRA RC and/or independent individual(s); and
 - b. that any notes and/or discussions generated during the review by the review committee are private and will not be shared with any Responder(s); and
 - c. that only a summary of the Review Committee's comments/recommendations will be made available upon completion of the Regional Commission's award of the procurement.
 18. A copy of the Review Committee's summary comments/recommendations will be included in the Procurement Folder.
 19. If the Regional Commission decides to reject any and/or all proposals, any letters sent to responders denoting such rejection shall be included in the Procurement Folder.
 20. If the Regional Commission decides to make any award(s), a copy of the award letter(s) shall be included in the Procurement Folder.
 21. Awards greater than \$125,000 require Regional Commission Council approval. A copy of the minutes denoting the Council's approval is required prior to finalizing the contract with the successful responder.
 22. Once the successful responder is selected, a contract/agreement is negotiated and prepared in duplicate.

-
- a. Submit the Procurement Folder and recommended contracts/agreements to the Director of Finance for review (Note contact Accounts Payable staff if you need assistance with the contract/agreement development).
 - b. After review, the Director of Finance will forward the Procurement Folder and both copies of the contract/agreement to the Chief Financial Officer for review who will then forward to the Executive Director.
 - c. A cover letter will be prepared to accompany the contract/agreement.
23. Upon execution of the cover letter, the contract/agreement is sent to the award recipient for signatures. The RC Executive Director will execute the contract/agreement after the recipient has signed the contract.
24. A copy of the contract/agreement with original signature is to be referenced as included in any award. Contracts will be issued in a manner prescribed by the Commission's Executive Director and may include electronic signatures and/or wet signatures if deemed necessary. At this time a copy of the contract/agreement will be made available to the employee for management of the project.
25. Implementation of the project is ready to begin.

APPEALS PROCESS

Responders not selected may appeal the CSRA Regional Commission's decision to award a competitively solicited contract/agreement to another Responder by submitting a written appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) calendar days of being notified that they were not selected. The written appeal must be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested to Attn Appeal of Procurement Award, CSRA Regional Commission, 3626 Walton Way Ext., Suite 1, Augusta, GA 30909.

For procurements resulting in awards of less than \$125,000, the Executive Director will schedule a time within ten (10) business days to hear the Responder's appeal. The Executive Director will consider the information presented and submit to the appealing Responder(s) his/her decision within ten (10) business days after hearing the appeal.

For procurements resulting in awards equal to or greater than \$125,000, the CSRA Regional Commission's Council will hear any such appeal at the Council's next regularly scheduled meeting (where the Responder may present an argument on its behalf, and the Executive Director, or his/her designee, may submit the Regional Commission's counterargument(s)). The Council will consider the information presented and submit to the Responder(s) its decision within ten (10) business days after hearing the appeal. The decision of the CSRA Regional Commission's Council shall be final and binding.

After the Regional Commission's Council or the Executive Director issues an appeal decision, any dispute that shall arise as to the procurement process shall be referred to a(n) arbitrator(s) selected in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, and such dispute shall be settled by arbitration in accordance with the rules prescribed by the CSRA Regional

Commission, and judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator(s) may be entered in any court of competent jurisdiction. The party requesting arbitration and the CSRA Regional Commission shall share equally the cost of the arbitration process.

Once the arbitrator(s)'s judgment has been rendered, the decision will be presented to the CSRA Regional Commission's Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting for further consideration and/or action, if necessary.

End Policy Number 985

2.4.6 Supportive Services

I. Definition

Supportive services are defined as services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. WIOA §3 (59). The purpose of this policy is to set thresholds for supportive service payments and to ensure that financial assistance is made available to support WIOA participants when needed.

II. Supportive Services

Supportive services are services which are reasonable and necessary to enable a WIOA participant who cannot afford to pay for such services to participate in career and training activities funded under WIOA. **The provision of supportive services must be determined on an individual basis.** Limited supportive services may be provided to individuals receiving Basic Career Services; however, such individuals must be registered as a WIOA participant and are subject to performance outcomes and must receive prior approval from the CSRA Regional Commission.

Follow-up career services are not a qualifying service for the receipt of supportive services; therefore, an adult/dislocated worker who is only receiving follow-up services may not receive supportive services. Supportive services may also not be used to extend the date of exit for performance accountability purposes. Supportive Services, like follow-up services, do not make an individual a participant or extend participation (TEGL 19-16). Youth follow-up services also may include the following program elements: (1) Supportive Services (WIOA §681.580).

All supportive services must have been approved and recorded in the WorkSource Portal prior to the participant receiving or obtaining the goods or services. Backdated requests for services will not be approved.

A participant may waive WIOA payments (except for Work Experience) if accepting payment would mean the loss of benefits. The participant may request the payment to start at a later date but may not claim retroactive payments. Advances against future payments are not allowed.

To be eligible for any WIOA financial assistance payments, a participant must have been determined WIOA eligible and:

- A. Participating in career services and/or training services. Exception: Limited supportive services may be provided to eligible applicants (e.g., paying for a birth certificate) before they are enrolled as participants to permit participation in assessment activities;
- B. be unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services; and
- C. must comply with program regulations and policies during the period of training and/or enrollment.

Service providers should provide no further payments to participants that fail to participate without good cause. Participants must be attending classes on campus, be registered as a full-time student, and attending all required hours. In order to receive support while in training, students must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress (a minimum of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or a minimum of “C” on an “A, B, C, D, F” scale or 70% on a 100% scale). Those in pre-vocational or other approved core or intensive service must meet required attendance and make satisfactory progress as provided by a signed agreement.

Except for extenuating circumstances (such as an approved exception for childcare specified below) payments will not be made for the days that the participant does not attend training (sick days, holidays).

The career development specialist will use forms and processes provided to support all payment documentation. These payment requests shall be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. Any childcare and attendance forms submitted for payment for classes/training held more than eight (8) weeks in the past will not be eligible for payment. The CSRA Regional commission will issue transportation, dependent and childcare payments directly to the participant. Other supportive services may be made to the vendor.

The use of supportive services is encouraged to enable hard-to-serve populations to participate in longer-term interventions. The provision of supportive services must be determined on an individual basis and requires proof of the expenditure in the participant's file.

These policies are consistent with all applicable federal regulations and requirements mandated by the State Workforce Development Board and the TCSG's Office of Workforce Development (OWD).

III. Eligibility and Determination of Need for Supportive Services

- A. All participants will be determined eligible as WIOA participants utilizing the CSRA-RC's enrollment process. Participants must be enrolled in the WorkSource GA Portal system prior to the supportive services being provided.
- B. Each supportive service provided must have justification in the case file as to the need for the service. These services must be necessary to enable the individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA, Title I.
- C. The Career Development Specialist will conduct a needs assessment for supportive services on a case-by-case basis.

Documentation of eligibility and determination of need for supportive services. The career development specialist will document the participant's eligibility and determination of need in each participant's case file and/or the WorkSource GA Portal.

The documentation must cover:

- a. Financial/Physical Need
There must be documentation in the case file that the participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves. Example: low-income status as documented by family/household income determination, receipt of federal/state public assistance. UI benefits, documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in-demand occupation, documentation of lack of employment or underemployment, separation notice, birth certificates for children receiving childcare, documentation of transportation distance to attend training, etc. Participants with an income of greater than 200 % of poverty are not eligible for supportive services.
- b. Resource Coordination
There must be documentation supporting that these services or funds for these services were not available from any other state and/or federal grant/program/ funding stream/agency. There should be an analysis of all the federal/state/local resources available in the LWIOA's and how they are being coordinated to promote the most efficient use of resources.
Examples of acceptable documentation includes, but is not limited to:
 - UI records, application for applicable state and federal funds (Hope, PELL, etc.)
- c. Description
Type of supportive service requested and how the supportive service will assist their participation in WIOA, Title I activities. Examples of acceptable documentation include but is not limited to:
 - LWDA created "Supportive Services Request" form.
- d. Amount Requested

Amount requested, approved, and justification for the amount necessary and reasonable to enable participation in qualifying WIOA activities must be documented. Case notes must be entered in the WorkSource GA Portal to document the justification OF SERVICES. The case notes should stipulate the time frame for supportive services. Each participant will complete a “Supportive Services Request Form” and “Prepaid Card Form” provided by the CSRA Regional Commission. Participants will complete all required information. Paper checks will be issued on a case-by-case basis and must be approved.

e. Documentation

Documentation should be collected and included in the participant’s case file.

Policy

All WIOA enrolled adults, dislocated workers, and youth are eligible to receive supportive services as defined in WIOA Section 3 (59). Provisions to receive supportive services must be determined on an individual case-by-case basis to encourage the hard-to-serve WIOA enrolled adults, dislocated workers, and youth to participate in long-term intervention. Participants may waive WIOA payments (except for Work Experience) if accepting payment would mean the loss of benefits. Participants may also request that payments start at a later date but may not claim retroactive payments. Advances against future payments are not allowed. Backdated requests for services are not allowed. Supportive services are based on financial need and participants are not automatically entitled receive these support payments. WIOA funds must be only for expenses not covered by other funding sources. Payments are made bi-weekly to the participant from the CSRA Regional Commission in form of pre-paid cards, direct deposit (case-by-case), and check (case-by-case).

Supportive Services may be provided to eligible WIOA adults, dislocated workers, and youth who:

- Are enrolled in WIOA career and training services
 - Are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services
 - Comply with program regulations and policies during the period of training and/or enrollment.
- Note:** Support payments should not be made to participants that fail to participate without good cause.

Adult/Dislocated Worker

Career Development Specialists will evaluate each participant for supportive services eligibility and extent of the need. The following types of assistance may be available for adult and dislocated worker participants contingent upon available funding and/or level of participants need.

- Assistance with Transportation
- Assistance with Childcare
- Assistance with Housing
- Referrals to medical and dental services
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes
- Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, and certifications
- Services/materials for the disabled
- Emergency assistance to meet household expenses or other justified expenses

**If the total cost of required tools exceeds \$1,000, there will need to be three (3) quotes and documentation from the instructor the tools are required for the program of training.*

Allowable supportive services provided after receiving individualized career and/or training services in order to obtain employment include, but are not limited to:

1. Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools, including eyeglasses and protective ear gear;
2. Tools, work clothing, and boots/shoes required for employment;
3. Drug testing required by employer;
4. Financial counseling; and
5. Auxiliary aides and services necessary for persons with disabilities to obtain and retain employment.

Youth

Career Development Specialists will evaluate youth participants for eligibility and extent of need. The following services me be available based upon funding and level of need.

- Linkages to community services
- Assistance with Transportation

-
- Assistance with housing
 - Referrals to medical and dental services
 - Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear
 - Services/materials for the disabled
 - Emergency assistance to meet household expenses or other justified expenses

IV. Allowable Supportive Services:

1. The supportive services are primarily provided to qualifying participants in classroom training and to youth in out-of-school programs. Others include career services such as pre-vocational training must receive prior approval for the CSRA Regional Commission's Director of Workforce Development.
2. Those enrolled in work-based training where wages are being paid will qualify for supportive services for the first two weeks allow time for wages to come in. All others will qualify for supportive services except for work related tools, clothing, shoes, equipment, or other necessary items needed for the job. In addition, cost of credentialing training, books and supplies may be paid as support. These can be paid the day training begins.
3. Allowable supportive services provided during training include, but are not limited to:
 - Transportation
 - Childcare
 - Meals during the training day (out of area training Ex. CDL programs)
 - Tools, uniforms, work clothes, boots or shoes required for training
 - Emergency healthcare and medical services (case-by-case)
4. Flat rate payments are made to qualifying adults, dislocated workers, and youth for the following supportive services:
 - a. **Transportation Stipend**- Eligible participants will receive a total of \$15 a day (round trip) for transportation. Participant must attend at least one class per day in order to qualify to receive the stipend. Attendance must be verified by their instructor and submitted to Career Development Specialist on a timesheet document.
For those attending out of area training, stipends will be calculated at a mileage rate according to the standard mile rate for business travel.
 - b. **Childcare Stipend**- Assistance with childcare for children aged 12 and under:
 - Child(ren) must reside in the home of the participant and the participant must be the primary caregiver or the custodial parent. In the case where there is equal custody, only one parent is eligible to receive childcare supportive services.
 - Reimbursement to the participant is limited to a maximum of \$12.00 per day, per child, up to two (2) children.
 - Birth certificates are necessary to verify the age of the child(ren) or a form from public assistance agency.
 - Childcare/Dependent care may not be paid to a provider who resides in the same residence with the participant (example: spouse, older child, etc.). Therefore, ALL documentation of provision of childcare services must be the providers full name, address, phone number, relationship to the participant, and the providers signature verifying that they are being paid for their services.
 - If the participant plans to use a license childcare provider, the participant is responsible for the payment to the facility and any overage.
 - c. **Tools, Uniforms, Clothing, and Electronic Devices Required for Training**
Tools, Uniforms, work clothes, electronic devices, shoes, and other occupational specific equipment may be provided for participants when such items are required for program of study, secondary education, or post-secondary education. Funding will dictate how much may be spent on training-related items and support. Participants enrolled in programs such as Welding, Machine Tool Technology, HVAC, etc., must submit three (3) written estimates from reputable companies. The lowest estimate will be accepted. Additionally, if tools are needed as a requirement for employment, confirmation from the employer that the participant has been offered a job will be necessary. Signed receipts for all purchases are required. Participants must sign a *Tool and Equipment Agreement* agreeing to return the tools if training approved by WIOA is not completed satisfactorily. Tools become the property of the participant upon completion of WIOA training.
 - d. **Medical Exams and/or Immunizations**- Required medical examinations and/or immunizations for certain areas of training are allowable and are reimbursable by the CSRA Regional Commission in the form of pre-paid card, direct deposit, or check if applicable. Participant must provide proper documentation, a receipt, or an invoice for services received. Funding will dictate how much may be spent on medical exams and/or immunizations.
 - e. **Drug Testing, Background Checks, CPR Required for Training/Employment**-
Payments for drug testing, CPR training, and background checks required for training or employment are allowable in the expenses are required for progression within the training that has been approved by WIOA.
 - f. **Computer Purchases & Internet Service**- If funding is available, CSRA Regional Commission may provide a loner laptop or purchase a laptop under \$250 for participation in an approved training program. Purchase of a laptop is not allowed for full-online

degree curriculum. Exception is given to those participating in a virtual work experience or short-term training offered by the CSRA Regional Commission. Internet service payments are allowable if a participant is currently participating in an approved training program where instruction is required and can only be received from a remote location. This support payment is only allowed if remote location instruction is required and if funds are available. Participants are allowed to keep the laptop if the program is completed successfully.

- g. **Lodging-** Lodging may be requested if a participant's training location is more than 50 miles, one way, from their residence. The participant will be required to obtain (3) lodging quotes, within the area of the training provider, if the training provider does not offer, their own lodging. After all quotes are received, basis for selection of lodging would be the lowest quote. If the basis is something other than the lowest quote, the Career Development Specialist will prepare justification for the selection, relevance of the need, and the advantage of choosing the lodging other than the one with the lowest quote. Total lodging cost should not exceed \$2,500 per participant.
- h. **Emergency Support Assistance-** Emergency assistance payments may be allowable as a one-time assistance payment on a case-by-case basis if the assistance eliminates a barrier to continue participation in training. A one-time payment up to \$500 per participant is allowed for housing assistance, dental/medical care, car repairs, prescription drugs, eyeglasses, etc. This request must be for assistance necessary to successfully continue training or to enable the individual to accept employment. The request must be in writing to the CSRA Regional Commission justify the need for this assistance. If receiving car repairs, the car must be titled in the participant's name (copy of vehicle registration required in participant file. Three estimates with description of repairs are required and must not exceed \$500.

A. Unallowable Supportive Services

Payments are not allowed for titled or deemed items or when recovery of the expense is anticipated. Such items include:

- 1. Rent deposits or housing deposits
- 2. Mortgage payments
- 3. Car payments
- 4. Purchase of vehicles; and
- 5. Fines

IV. Needs-Related Payments

Needs-related payments provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA sec 134(d)(3). Unlike other supportive services, in order to qualify for needs-related payments, a participant must be enrolled in training. **Needs Related Payment must be approved by Director.**

Eligibility requirements for adult to receive needs-related payments include:

- a) Be unemployed;
- b) Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation; and,
- c) Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3).

Eligibility requirements for dislocated workers to receive needs-related payments include:

- a) Be unemployed, AND
 - 1. Have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA.
 - 2. Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA sec. 134 (c)(3) at the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility as a dislocated worker, or if later, at the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed 6 months.

OR

- b) Be unemployed and did not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA and be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3).

Needs-related payments may be provided if the participant has been accepted in a training program that will begin within 30 calendar days. Extension of the 30-day period (to address appropriate circumstances) require approval from TCSG.

Establishing payment levels for needs-related payments:

-
- a) The payment level established by the Local Workforce Development Board made to Out-of-School Youth and Adults is the effective Calendar Year HHS Poverty Guidelines for a family of one. (HHS Poverty Guidelines for a family of one ÷ 260 (training days) = round down to nearest dollar).
 - b) For statewide projects, the payment level for adults must be established by the State Workforce Development Board.
 - c) For dislocated workers, payment must not exceed the greater of either of the following levels:
 1. The applicable weekly level of the unemployment compensation benefit, for participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying dislocation.
 2. The poverty level for an equivalent period, for participant 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 the Local Workforce Development Board WIOA §6880.970. Needs-related payments should be provided when it is determined that ongoing resources and income from all other sources are insufficient to support participants in WIOA-funded training. The minimum NRP will be \$25 per week. The attached Worksheets (attachments A&B) will be used in documenting eligibility and need.

VI. Coordination of Supportive Services

A participant will not be authorized supportive services if that support is being provided by or available from another agency; to include supportive services in the needs-related payment area (e.g., meals and transportation for adults and dislocated workers).

If funds are available through other funding sources, the career development specialist will coordinate the receipt of those funds with the providing agency. A record of each supportive service authorized should be maintained in the participant's file. Participant's receiving supportive services should be re-evaluated quarterly or as activities change to determine if needs have changed.

VII. Documentation of Services

If WIOA funds are allocated for supportive services, the need to be addressed must be fully documented. All supporting documentation must be maintained in participant's case file (e.g., timesheets, copies of vouchers). The career development specialist is responsible for coordinating the receipt of supportive services.

Additionally, all payments must be reconciled online and determined to be accurate with 60 days of a participant's exit. All substantial changes in a participant's supportive services must be updated in real time in WorkSource GA Portal.

- A. All supportive service information for participant's must be entered into the WorkSource GA Portal (type of supportive service, amount, date of service, etc.). All supporting documentation for a participant's supportive services can either be scanned into the WorkSource GA Portal or maintained in another system or physical case file (participants time sheets, income determination, UI records, supportive service request form, etc.).
- B. Documentation of each supportive service payment type and amount must be entered into the supportive service section of the participant's WorkSource GA Portal profile. This information should be updated and completed at the end of each fiscal quarter for all participants having received supportive services in the fiscal quarter.
- C. Supporting documentation of the participant's qualifying WIOA activity, for which the participant is receiving supportive services, should be included in the case file and/or scanned into the participant's WorkSource Ga Portal profile. Examples of this supporting documentation are but not limited to in-training participant time sheets signed by instructor/supervisor or documents proving participation in other types of intensive or training services.

VIII. Process for Payments

Vendors will issue supportive service payments directly to participants. The CSRA Regional Commission will reimburse vendors for supportive service payments that are properly documented and authorized. Vendors must submit pay requests within 60 days of issuing a payment. Failure to submit pay requests in a timely manner may invalidate the request.

X. Supportive Services Limits

At a participant level, supportive services may not exceed \$5,500 per participant per year (365 days after date of first service). There is also a limit on total supportive service expenditures for an LWDA by funding stream. No more than 25% of the allocation for a particular funding stream) i.e., adult, dislocated worker, or youth) will be spent on support. The 25% determination will be taken from the program year's total allocation per funding stream. Separate caps will be determined for each funding stream. Waivers to this policy will be requested on a case-by-case basis.

XI. Transition

Policies outlined herein will be effective on July 1, 2021, for new participants. Current participants will be allowed to continue receiving the amount of supportive services previously approved until June 30, 2021. Thereafter, all supportive services will follow the policies herein.

	Year 1 Eligible Expenses	Maximum	Year 2 Eligible Expenses	Maximum	Total Maximum
Training-Related Expenses	Tuition, books, and fees related to training	\$6,500 calendar year	Tuition, books, and fees related to training	\$3500 calendar year	\$10,000
	Testing/License Certification	\$500 Testing/License Certification - Lifetime	Testing/License Certification	\$500 Testing/License Certification - Lifetime	\$1,000
	Tools/Equipment for Training	\$1,000	Tools/Equipment for Training	\$1,000	\$2,000
	Uniforms Work Attire Safety Equipment	\$500/Year	Uniforms Work Attire Safety Equipment	\$500/Year	\$1,000
Supportive Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Assistance • Child/Dependent Care Assistance 	\$3,000/ Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Assistance • Child/Dependent Care Assistance 	\$3,000/ Year	\$6,000
Emergency Support Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare – Non-Surgical • Dental • Optical • Medical • Car Repairs • Housing 	\$500/ Lifetime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare – Non-Surgical • Dental • Optical • Medical • C 	\$500/ Lifetime	\$1,000
	Total Maximum Cost of WIOA Services	\$12,000		\$9,000	\$21,000

Date Adopted: September 22, 2022

Date Effective: July 1, 2021

Supportive Services for Co-enrolled Participants

An Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth program participant may receive supportive services when engaged in individualized career or training services funded by WIOA one-stop partners, or other funding sources, if the services are included in the participant's IEP or ISS (WIOA Desk Reference). There is no requirement that WIOA fund the service or activity in order to provide supportive service to an eligible participant. This access to supportive services gives a participant the resources needed to participate in career and/or training services that are not directly funded by the Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth program, but that the participant and career planner deem necessary and appropriate for the participant to achieve the employment and training goals identified in their IEP/ISS (TEGL 19-16, p. 18). Access is permitted if:

1. the individual has been determined eligible for WIOA Title I services;
2. the individual has received, or is receiving, at least one participation-causing service provided by WIOA Title I (NOTE: this requirement is minimally satisfied by the development of an IEP/ISS);
3. the supportive service provided is an allowable supportive service; and
4. the need for support is included in the participant's IEP/ISS and documented via a local
5. "Determination of Need" form for Supportive Services (known as Supportive Service Request Form).

NOTE: Services being supported that are not funded by WIOA Title I should be entered in GEO in the Partner Programs section of the Programs page. If the partner program is not listed, the case manager should select "Other."

EXAMPLES: A participant co-enrolled in the Adult or Youth Title I program and Adult Education Title II program may receive transportation assistance funded by Title I to attend a training program funded by the TCSG foundation. Similarly, an Adult program participant with an active IEP that identifies a training need, but whose tuition is being fully funded with a PELL grant, may receive childcare assistance to support their participation in the training program.

2.4.1.1 Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

I. Description

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are established on behalf of the participant. WIOA Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth participants will use ITAs to purchase training services from eligible providers in consultation with the career development specialist, counselor, or coordinator.

ITAs may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who have met the eligibility requirements for Intensive services and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency through such services.

The participant must have a completed IEP that indicates, through interview, evaluation or assessment, the participant's employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals have been identified.

Selection of a training program must include the identification that the training is directly linked to occupations that are in demand in the LWDA, or in another area to which an adult or dislocated worker is willing to relocate. In determining local demand occupation(s), LWDA's may allow for training in occupations that may have high potential for sustained demand or growth in the LWDA.

II. Limitations:

Training services may be made available to employed and underemployed adults, dislocated workers or out-of-school youth after an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning with a WIOA Career Development Specialist. ITAs are limited to participants who (20 CFR § 680.230):

- A. Are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment (WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers); and
- B. The participant is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment (WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers); and
- C. The participant has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.
- D. The training will assist the individual in obtaining employment upon completion of training.

Tuition is the sum charged for instruction and does not include fees, books, supplies, equipment, and other training related expenses. Reimbursement is not required from the portion of Pell Grant assistance disbursed to the participant for education-related expense.

The following policies may be utilized to establish local parameters for service. The participant must apply for HOPE, PELL, GI Bill, and all other appropriate funding sources. If a customer receives career advisement and supportive services, and the program of study is funded by PELL/HOPE funds, the ITA policies will apply. The ITA policies are to be implemented and followed by WIOA career development specialists and are also to be implemented and followed by training providers for WIOA participants.

Policies:

1. Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA plan as growth occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the plan should be provided.

-
2. Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to obtain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.
 3. Training must be at full-time status (as defined by the institution) to accommodate existing unemployment insurance requirements. Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.
 4. Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.
 5. Applicants must be fully accepted into the specific occupational skills training program of their choice.
 6. Training providers must conduct classroom instruction in person or in a hybrid model. LWDB has not approved any 100% online or remote training programs.

It is the general rule to provide assistance during the specific program of study, rather than prerequisite studies. Some technical colleges provide healthcare technologies program. This usually covers the required prerequisites for more advanced healthcare training such as nursing, radiology technology, dental hygiene, etc. The general health technology program will not be considered program acceptance for WIOA because it does not prepare a student upon completion to begin a specific career. Rather it prepares a student to enter the specific advanced healthcare training.

For extremely competitive program acceptance such as nursing, radiology technology and dental hygienist, customers must select a second alternative. Degree/certificate program may include courses from an approved core of general education (i.e., math and English) required for the degree/certificate. WIOA funding can be used for core in these cases. Prerequisites or developmental studies are not considered core and no WIOA funding will be provided. WIOA funding will be provided when the student has received formal acceptance into a career program.

Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.

Extended critical shortage healthcare curricula will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. **EXCEPTION:** Limitations have been increased to four years for graduate degrees for Registered nurses seeking nursing instructor positions at universities and technical colleges. Applicants with non-medical baccalaureate degrees will be considered for accelerated Registered Nursing Master's level programs at Regents Schools.

7. In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area training programs that are not within commuting distance to the WIOA local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the United States.
8. All applicants must apply for the Pell Grant and/or HOPE Scholarship program, if eligible. Pell funds may be combined with WIOA funds to cover total expenses.
9. WIOA funding may be provided for college level and post baccalaureate instruction only if all of the following conditions have been met:
 - a) The customer must be accepted into a certificate or degree program, and the course of study must be occupation-specific (i.e., radiological technician, accounting, teacher certification), or the customer is a Registered Nurse seeking a graduate degree in nursing to fill a vacant instructor position at a university or technical college. No funds shall be provided for general academic programs (i.e., General academic Studies, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Art, etc.
 - b) Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (2 years) to complete and be a certificate, diploma, or degree program. Extended critical shortage healthcare curricula will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.
 - c) The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training.
10. Applicants with multiple degrees other than an Associate degree will not be eligible for enrollment. Those with a degree which is considered obsolete, or those that are working towards a bachelor's degree and lack two years or less of training to complete, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if they can be enrolled into the program.
11. Continuing Education and other similar courses will be approved if the following conditions apply:
 - a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal.
 - b) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase his/her employment marketability.
12. Short-term vocational services are intended for workers who lack occupational credential/certification and require short-term continuing education offerings to enhance and upgrade skills for certification. Short-term (less than 120 clock hours) training, preparation and review activities which prepare customers to sit for certification examination courses may be provided as an Intensive Service rather than an ITA.

-
13. ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including but not limited to the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, tools, uniforms/shoes, certifications, licensing, testing fees, drug testing and background checking for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance and such items specifically required for a course or program.

The following items are not provided by ITAs: computers, computer equipment, computer program software, peripherals, electronic and wireless equipment, *unless approved on a case-by-case basis by the CSRA Regional Commission.*

14. ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees caused by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.

III. Funding

The maximum funding allowed for Adult and Dislocated Worker participant ITA is \$10,000 per program. Youth aged 18-24 may be eligible for the ITA program discussed above and the maximum funding allowed is \$10,000 per program. The funding total includes tuition and required fees. The maximum ITA limit is not an entitlement. However, the amount to be funded for each participant is on an individual basis and determined by the WIOA Case Manager Supervisor or Director.

Training limitations follows:

- a) Up to \$6,500 in training costs, excluding support, may be expended for each participant for the first year of training. One year is defined as up to 52 calendar weeks from the initial start date of training. The limit of \$6,500 will apply in circumstances where training is designed to be completed in 52 weeks or less and includes short-term training programs. Training costs above \$6,500 for the first year of training must be approved by the LWDB. Exceptions can be made for healthcare students on a case by case basis. Approval must be made by WIOA Case Manager Supervisor or Director.
- b) For training that exceeds beyond one-year, total training costs may not exceed \$10,000, excluding support (*If the cost of training exceeds funding limitation guidelines, workforce staff should assist the participant in developing a financial plan to cover the cost of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans or incur personal debt as a condition of participation*). Exceptions can be made for students in healthcare careers on a case-by-case basis. Documentation of need, the amount needed must be approved by the WIOA Case Manager Supervisor or Director. ITA increase must be included in the participant's file and in case notes.
- c) Exceptions approved by the WDB include the VET2 program. For this program, the total cost of the program may be expended in the first year, up to \$10,000. Other exceptions may be added upon approval of the Board.

Unallowable expenses:

- Any tuition or cost associated with training purchased prior to enrollment will NOT be covered.
- Start-up costs for a business
- Items NOT required for a program

IV. Payment

ITAs are paid per semester or once for short term training programs.

Attachment 8: Public Comments on the Regional Plan that Express Disagreement

Comment 1

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 2

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 3

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 4

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Attachment 9: Signature Page

The undersigned hereby agree to adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies in performing any duty associated with the funds made available under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Name:

Title:

Entity Representing: CSRA Regional Commission

Signature: _____

Name:

Title:

Entity Representing:

Signature: _____

Name:

Title:

Entity Representing:

Signature: _____