

Georgia Mountains



GEORGIA

Connecting Talent with Opportunity
A proud partner of the American **JobCenter** network

WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS PLAN 2027-2030

Prepared by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission



Contents

1.0: Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure.....	5
1.1: Identification of the Fiscal Agent & Governance Structure	5
1.2: Description of Strategic Planning Elements.....	5
1.3: Description of Strategies and Services	23
1.4: Regional Service Delivery (Not Applicable).....	28
1.5: Sector Strategy Development.....	28
1.6: Description of the One-Stop Delivery System	33
1.7: Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts.....	35
1.8: EEO and Grievance Procedures	36
2.0: Local Boards and Plan Development.....	36
2.1: Local Boards.....	36
2.2: Local Board Committees	38
2.3: Plan Development.....	39
3.0: Service and Delivery Training.....	39
3.2: Expanding Services to Eligible Individuals.....	41
3.3: Description of Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers.....	42
3.4: Description of Rapid Response Services	43
3.5: Description of Youth Services.....	45
3.7: Provision of ITAs	51
3.8: Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Micro-enterprise Services.....	52
3.9: Coordination with Education Programs.....	52
3.11: Coordination with Social Services Programs.....	53
4.0: Coordination with Core Partners.....	54
4.1: Description of the Workforce System.....	54
4.2: Coordination with Wagner-Peyser	55
4.3: Coordination with Adult Education	56
4.4: Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation.....	58
5.0: Performance, ETPL, and Use of Technology	59
5.1: Description of Performance Measures	59
5.2: One-Stop System Performance and Assessment	59
5.3: ETPL System.....	60
5.4: Implementation of Technology	62
6.0: State Initiatives and Vision.....	63
6.1: State Branding	63
6.2: Priority of Service	63
6.3: Alignment with State Goals	64

Acronym Guide

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CAPS	Childcare and Parents Services
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CLEO	Chief Local Elected Official
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DECAL	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
DHS	Georgia Department of Human Services
DVOP	Disabled Veteran Outreach Program
EDA	US Economic Development Administration
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EMC	Electric Membership Corporation
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETPL	Eligible Training Provider List
GDEcD	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDOL	Georgia Department of Labor
GED	General Educational Development test
GMRC	Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
GMWDB	Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board
GOSA	Georgia Governor's Office of Student Achievement
GVRA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
IET	Integrated Training and Education
ITA	Individual Training Account
IWT	Incumbent Worker Training
LEO	Local Elected Official
LTC	Lanier Technical College
LVER	Local Veteran Employment Representative

LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area
MDC	Manufacturing Development Center
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGTC	North Georgia Technical College
OJT	On-the-Job Training
RFP	Request for Proposal
RING	Rehabilitation Industries of Northeast Georgia
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TCSG-OAE	Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Adult Education
TCSG-OWD	Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Workforce Development
TOPPSTEP	The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UI	Unemployment Insurance
USG	University System of Georgia
WARN	Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WSGM	WorkSource Georgia Mountains
WSP	TANF's Work Support Payments program

1.0: Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure

1.1: 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 local elected official.

a. Chief Local Elected Official

The purpose of the Board of Local Elected Officials (LEO) is to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to the LEOs by WIOA and State codes and rules. The LEOs within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) collaborate with the Workforce Development Board to develop a comprehensive and effective workforce development system. The Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) serves as the chair and has the powers of the Chief Executive Officer of the LEO Board.

b. Fiscal Agent

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is a sub-state district created by local governments in 1962 under provisions of the Georgia Enabling Law. The GMRC aims to promote and guide the proper development of human, natural, physical, social, and economic resources locally within Georgia Mountain's twelve counties. The GMRC is guided by a forty-one (41) member Council and is composed of individuals appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, as well as one county elected official, one city elected official, and one private sector individual from each of the twelve member counties. City, Council, and private sector representatives are chosen by the cities and counties they represent. The GMRC Council is responsible for all policy decisions.

c. Local Workforce Board

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board (WDB) provides policy guidance for and exercises oversight concerning the workforce development system conducted under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in partnership with the Local Elected Official Board. The CLEO selects board members, and a minimum of 51% are representatives of business in the local area and who shall be owners, chief operating officers, chief executive officers, or other individuals with optimum policy-making or hiring authority and whose businesses provide employment opportunities in in-demand industry sectors or occupations. The current list of WDB members can be found in Attachment 1.

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.

The analysis in this section was completed in March and April of 2026. Slowing growth, a post-pandemic correction, and rapid technological shifts are all contributing to ongoing economic uncertainty, potentially causing severe effects on specific industries and employment rates. There is potential for significant impact on the estimates and projections utilized, and workforce needs over the next four years. The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board (GMWDB) and WorkSource Georgia Mountains are prepared to respond to these changes in the economic environment and will continue to provide quality workforce and business services to all eligible job seekers.

1.2.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.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 continues to reflect a broader evolving region in terms of geography, workforce composition, employers, and industry sectors. The area spans approximately 3,500 square miles (about the size of Connecticut) and now serves a population approaching or exceeding 800,000. The 13 counties within Area 2 range from metropolitan to rural and mountainous communities, all of which have experienced sustained population growth in recent years. Forsyth and Hall counties remain among Georgia’s most populous and fastest-growing areas, while surrounding counties continue to see steady expansion driven by both residential growth and economic opportunity.

Over the past several decades, Georgia Mountains Area 2 has transitioned from a region primarily reliant on agriculture and traditional manufacturing to a more dynamic and diversified economy. Key sectors now include healthcare, logistics and distribution, advanced manufacturing, tourism, retail, and emerging technology-driven industries. The region continues to experience economic growth and business expansion; however, like much of the nation, it also faces increasing uncertainty related to workforce availability, evolving skill requirements, and broader economic conditions. Despite these challenges, Georgia Mountains Area 2 remains well-positioned for continued growth, with strong demand across multiple high-growth industries and an ongoing need for strategic workforce development efforts aligned with employer needs.

Table 1.1: Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA

**Area Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment Data Table
December 2025**

Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
WorkSource Georgia Mountains	245,133	238,300	6,833	4.4%%
Georgia	5,412,470	5,219,749	192,721	3.6%
United States	171,495,000	163,992,000	7,503,000	4.2%

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit

Table 1.1 above demonstrates the strong labor market within the Georgia Mountains Area 2. As of December 2025, Georgia Mountains Area 2's unemployment rate is lower than the state and national rates for the same period.

Table 1.2 below demonstrates projected regional growth by occupations between 2022 and 2032. The table focuses on the top 15 growth occupations. The five occupations that are projected to see the most significant absolute growth are:

- Fast Food and Counter Workers
- Retail Salespersons
- Cashiers
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
- Stockers and Order Fillers

Unfortunately, many of the top 15 occupations by annual openings are in the retail and food services industries, which remain a substantial portion of Georgia Mountains Area 2's economy. These industries typically provide jobs with wages below the standard living wage and offer fewer opportunities for advancement. Therefore, GMWDB's workforce system strategy will not prioritize these industries.

**Table 1.2: Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Long-Term Occupational Projections**

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research

Rank	Occupations	Annual Growth Rate	Annual Occupational Openings
1	Fast Food and Counter Workers	1.9%	2,580
2	Retail Salespersons	1.7%	1,670
3	Cashiers	0.9%	1,440
4	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1.9%	1,270
5	Stocker and Order Fillers	2.6%	1,080
6	Waiters and Waitresses	1.5%	1,030
7	Customer Service Representatives	0.8%	760
8	Cooks, Restaurant	3.7%	670
9	Office Clerks, General	0.7%	630
10	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	1.1%	620
11	General and Operations Managers	2.0%	600
12	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1.7%	560
13	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	1.5%	560
14	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2.1%	550
15	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2.3%	530

Turning toward regional industry growth, Table 1.3 shows the top twenty industries with projected growth between 2022 and 2032. While several top industries may have low absolute employment change numbers, multiple industries show large projected growth in annual percentage improvement and employment change.

**Table 1.3: Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Industries by Projected Growth**

Rank	Industry	Total Change	Employment	Annual Change	Percent
1	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,403		3.3%	
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	8,840		2.3%	
3	Transportation and Warehousing	1,944		2.3%	
4	Management of Companies and Enterprises	741		2.2%	
5	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,549		2.1%	
6	Accommodation and Food Services	5,973		2.1%	
7	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,499		2%	
8	Construction	3,050		1.9%	
9	Information	702		1.8%	
10	Retail Trade	6,114		1.7%	
11	Finance and Insurance	960		1.7%	
12	Educational Services	3,982		1.5%	
13	Manufacturing	6,924		1.5%	
14	Wholesale Trade	1,971		1.5%	
15	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	393		1.5%	
16	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,414		1.4%	
17	Local, Excluding Education and Hospitals	1,390		1.4%	
18	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	556		1.2%	
19	Utilities	101		1%	
20	Federal Government	120		0.8%	

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research

GMWDB also considered the current employment distribution across industries to understand where employment and demand may intersect, creating additional jobseeker opportunities. Employers across many industries cited concerns about an aging workforce and the availability of job seekers to replace retiring workers. While some of these industries may not appear to be growth industries, there will still be steady demand for a competent, ready workforce to replace workers retiring over the next four years. Table 1.4 below shows the most current employment distribution in the Georgia Mountains Area 2 industry.

**Table 1.4 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Industry Employment Distribution Table**

Rank	Industry Sector	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees
1	Manufacturing	1,040	46,494
2	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,117	40,734
3	Retail Trade	2,578	35,582
4	Accommodation and Food Services	1,739	28,957
5	Educational Services	483	25,590
6	Construction	2,403	17,968
7	Administrative and Support and Waste Management	1,511	14,582
8	Transportation and Warehousing	603	12,092
9	Public Administration	201	11,384
10	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,080	11,320

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program

Utilizing the data made available through the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), data provided by area employers, and data made available through the state’s Burning Glass Labor Insight analysis, the GMWDB has developed a comprehensive growth and demand occupation list. This list includes a variety of industries and employment types to account for all the different job seekers within the region. GMWDB’s growth and demand occupation list is included as Attachment 6. An excerpt is included below as Table 1.5.

**Table 1.5 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Growth and Demand List**

Accountant & Auditor	Firefighter	Personal Financial Adviser
Assembler & Fabricator	Graphic Designer	Pharmacy Technician
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanic & Installer	Phlebotomist
Bill & Account Collector	Heavy & Tractor Trailer Truck Driver	Physical Therapist
Bookkeeping	Hospitality Management – Travel Agent	Plumber, Pipe Fitter, & Steamfitter
Business & Administration	Human Resources Specialist	Police & Sheriff’s Patrol Officer
Carpenter	Industrial Machinery Mechanic	Production Worker
Cashier and Retail Salesperson	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operator	Project Manager
Cement Mason & Concrete Finisher	Janitor & Cleaner	Radiology Technologist
Childcare Worker	Landscaper & Groundskeeper	Registered Nurse
Clinical Laboratory Technologist	Licensed Practical Nurse	Security Guard
Computer Information Systems	Machine Setter, Operator & Tender	Social Worker
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operator	Machinist	Software Developer
Construction Laborer	Maintenance & Repair Worker	Supervisor of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers
Cook	Management Analysts	Supply Chain Operator & Management
Dental Assistant & Hygienist	Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialist	Surgical Technologists
Electrical Power-Line Worker	Medical Assistant & Secretary	Teacher & Assistant Teacher

Electrician	Medical Records & Health Information Technician	Telecommunications
Emergency Medical Technician / Paramedic	Nurse Practitioner	Water & Wastewater Treatment Plant & System Operator
Engineer	Occupational Therapist	Welder, Cutter, Solder & Brazer
Farm Worker, Laborer, Nursery/Greenhouse		

1.2.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.

In Georgia Mountains Area 2, for the majority of the occupations projected to have the most significant number of annual openings between 2022 and 2032, advanced degrees and specialized training are not required, as noted in Table 1.6. While many of the listed occupations are projected to have large annual openings, few offer living wages.

**Table 1.6 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Most Annual Openings**

Occupations	Typical Education	2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Annual Average Percent Change	Annual Openings
Fast Food and Counter Workers	No formal educational credential	9,403	11,390	1.94%	2,572
Retail Salespersons	No formal educational credential	9,480	11,170	1.65%	1,664
Cashiers	No formal educational credential	6,766	7,420	0.93%	1,434
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	No formal educational credential	7,817	9,447	1.91%	1,276
Stockers and Order Fillers	High school diploma or equivalent	5,084	6,586	2.62%	1,084
Waiters and Waitresses	No formal educational credential	4,314	5,004	1.49%	1,033
Customer Service Representatives	High school diploma or equivalent	5,068	5,510	0.84%	755
Cooks, Restaurant	No formal educational credential	2,957	4,254	3.70%	670
Office Clerks, General	High school diploma or equivalent	4,777	5,134	0.72%	627
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	No formal educational credential	4,557	5,094	1.12%	623

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics Division

Among occupations with the fastest job growth, most require no formal education, as shown in Table 1.7. However, the total number of openings in these occupations is projected to be relatively low.

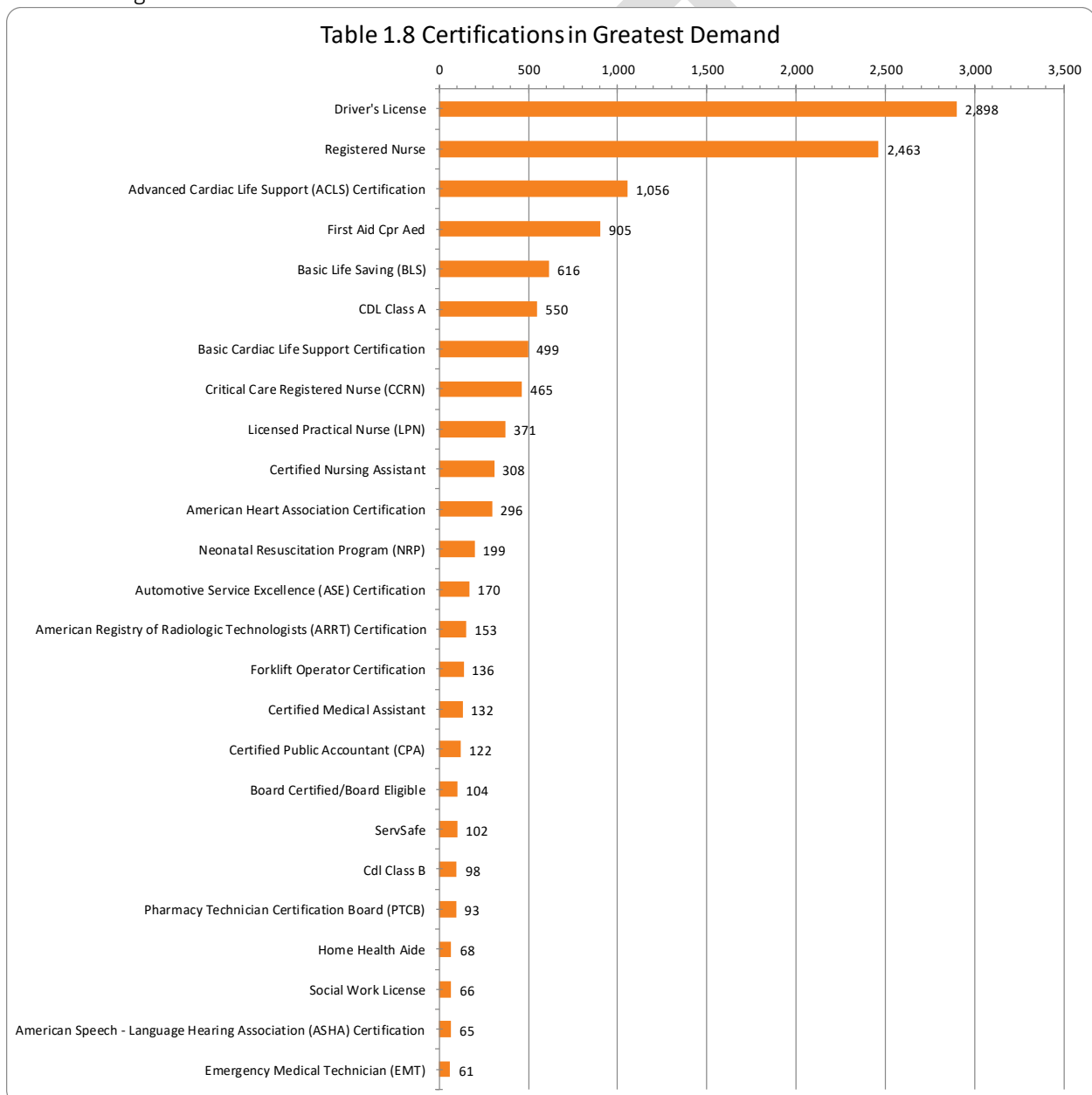
**Table 1.7 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Fastest Job Growth**

Occupations	Typical Education	2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Annual Openings	Annual Growth Rate
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	625	1,084	84	5.6%
Information Security Analysts	No formal educational credential	136	207	17	4.2%
Data Scientists	Master's degree	158	238	19	4.1%
Physician Assistants	Master's degree	214	313	23	3.8%
Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	361	528	47	3.8%

Cooks, Restaurant	No formal educational credential	2,957	4,254	670	3.7%
Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers	Associate's degree	44	63	7	3.6%
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	Associate's degree	349	491	92	3.4%
Logisticians	Bachelor's degree	348	485	47	3.3%
Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	Associate degree	149	206	23	3.2%

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research

The education requirements information in Tables 1.6 and 1.7 above align with information about the current greatest-demand certifications, found in Table 1.8 below. Data from Burning Glass Labor Insight on certifications currently in greatest demand illustrates that over half of the most in-demand certifications are in the healthcare field. Many of the certifications require more education than a high school diploma but less education than a bachelor's degree.



GDOL publishes “Georgia’s Hot Careers to 2032” infographic highlighting growing and demanding occupations statewide. To be included, occupations must demonstrate fast job growth, above-average wages, and have at least 100 average annual openings statewide. The list available in March of 2026 consists of 90 occupations. Of these 90 occupations, 93% require more than a high school diploma. 81% of the professions require a bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.

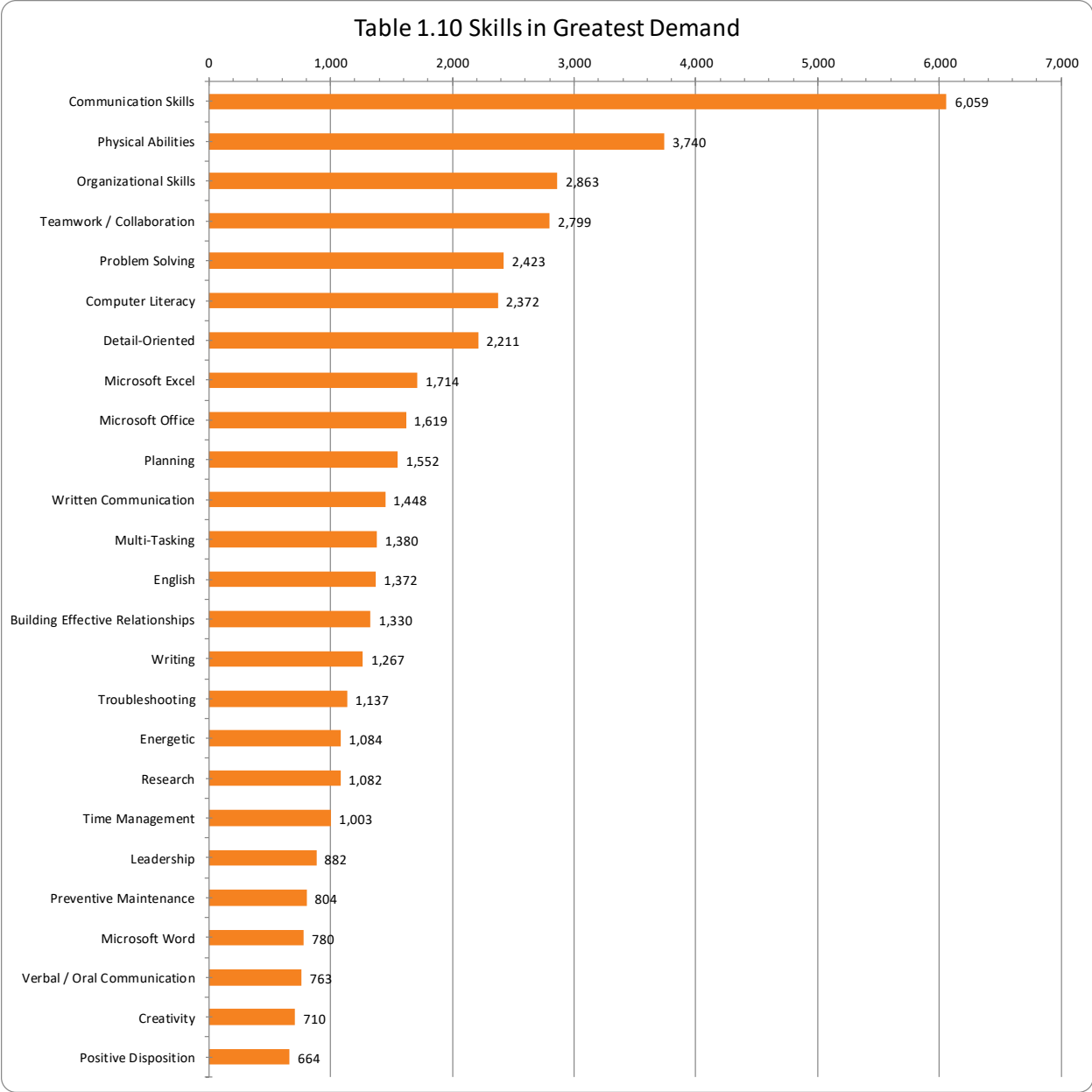
The average age of the Georgia Mountains Area 2 workforce continues to rise, creating concerns about replacing retiring workers and meeting the demand for new positions in growing industries and occupations. As noted in Table 1.9 below, from 2022-2025, almost every county in the Georgia Mountains Area 2 saw a decline in its 18-65 population. The region is experiencing a demographic shift characterized by growth in youth and older populations alongside a notable decline in the prime working-age population. This trend indicates increasing pressure on the available labor force in the short term and highlights the importance of strengthening workforce pipelines and engaging underutilized populations to meet employer demand.

**Table 1.9 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
Age Distribution**

	<18			18-65			65+		
	2022	2025	Change 2022-2025	2022	2025	Change 2022-2025	2022	2025	Change 2022-2025
Banks	21.2%	27.0%	5.8%	60.8%	54.4%	-6%	18.0%	18.6%	0.6%
Dawson	19.8%	26.0%	6.2%	60.0%	54.2%	-6%	20.2%	19.8%	-0.4%
Forsyth	25.4%	29.8%	4.4%	61.7%	56.9%	-5%	12.9%	13.3%	0.4%
Franklin	21.8%	28.0%	6.2%	59.0%	52.7%	-6%	19.2%	19.3%	0.1%
Habersham	22.0%	27.1%	5.1%	59.3%	53.5%	-6%	18.7%	19.4%	0.7%
Hall	23.7%	29.3%	5.6%	60.2%	53.8%	-6%	16.1%	16.9%	0.8%
Hart	20.0%	24.9%	4.9%	57.1%	51.7%	-5%	22.9%	23.4%	0.5%
Lumpkin	16.8%	21.1%	4.3%	64.6%	59.7%	-5%	18.6%	19.2%	0.6%
Rabun	15.4%	20.6%	5.2%	55.6%	49.1%	-7%	29.0%	30.3%	1.3%
Stephens	22.2%	27.0%	4.8%	56.5%	51.6%	-5%	21.3%	21.4%	0.1%
Towns	13.2%	16.3%	3.1%	49.9%	45.0%	-5%	36.9%	38.7%	1.8%
Union	15.1%	17.9%	2.8%	50.6%	46.5%	-4%	34.3%	35.6%	1.3%
White	19.1%	23.8%	4.7%	57.6%	52.3%	-5%	23.3%	23.9%	0.6%

Source: US Census

In addition to a need for skilled workers, current labor market data suggests a strong need for soft skills. As noted in Table 1.10 below, soft skills are in greatest demand in many current job listings.



1.2.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.

As noted in Table 1.1, Georgia Mountains Area 2 continues to demonstrate a strong labor market, with high labor force participation and persistently low unemployment rates. Throughout 2025, Georgia’s unemployment rate remained between approximately 3.4% and 3.6%, consistently below the national average. While these indicators reflect overall economic stability, they do not fully capture individuals who are not actively seeking employment, including discouraged workers and the long-term unemployed. Broader measures of labor underutilization, which

include marginally attached workers and those employed part-time for economic reasons, reached approximately 6.5% in 2025, indicating additional untapped labor potential. As a result, targeted strategies will be implemented to identify and re-engage these individuals and reconnect them to the workforce system.

Demographic trends further highlight emerging workforce challenges. As shown in Table 1.9, the region is experiencing growth in both the youth and older adult populations, while the prime working-age population (ages 18–65) continues to decline. This shift indicates a tightening labor supply and increasing pressure on employers to attract, train, and retain talent. The aging population is contributing to a corresponding aging workforce, with many employers reporting concerns about impending retirements in critical occupations.

Local industry feedback continues to confirm that employers are particularly concerned about the loss of experienced workers in high-skill positions, especially in manufacturing, skilled trades, and mechanical occupations. In addition to the loss of institutional knowledge, employers report ongoing gaps in essential soft skills—such as communication, dependability, and problem-solving—among newer entrants to the workforce. The combined loss of technical expertise and foundational workplace skills presents a risk to productivity, operational continuity, and long-term competitiveness.

At the same time, a portion of the regional workforce faces barriers to employment that limit full participation in the labor market. These barriers include low educational attainment, lack of industry-recognized credentials, limited work experience, transportation challenges, childcare needs, and involvement with the justice system. Persistent disparities in labor force participation among certain populations further indicate the need for targeted outreach and service strategies. Addressing these barriers through career services, supportive services, and work-based learning opportunities remains a priority to ensure a resilient workforce.

Table 1.11 below shows that, in the region, while many individuals possess a high school diploma or some college experience, fewer hold postsecondary credentials aligned with high-demand industries. This contributes to a skills gap that is reinforced by strong employer demand for trained workers. Employer-driven training programs are critical to aligning the workforce with regional industry needs. WSGM will leverage labor market data, credential attainment outcomes, and direct employer input to guide investments in training initiatives that promote worker mobility, career advancement, and long-term economic self-sufficiency. Priority will be given to short-term, stackable, and industry-recognized credentials that prepare individuals for entry into high-demand occupations and support advancement along clearly defined career pathways.

Table 1.11 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
2026 Education of the Labor Force

	Percent Distribution by Age					
	% of total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	5.5%	2.3%	4.5%	7.5%	5.7%	6.1%
Some High School	8.0%	11.1%	8.4%	8.2%	6.3%	8.8%
High School Grad/GED	26.9%	38.4%	26%	19.6%	25.6%	28.9%
Some College	21.1%	33.9%	21.6%	16.4%	19.5%	20.1%
Assoc Degree	6.9%	5.1%	8.5%	6.6%	7.4%	6.4%
Bach Degree	20.1%	8.1%	22.3%	24.3%	22.8%	17.3%
Post-Graduate Studies	11.5%	1%	8.7%	17.4%	12.7%	12.5%

As noted in the table above, 13.5% of the current workforce does not have high school diplomas or General Educational Development test (GED) diplomas. This lack of credentials leaves this portion of the workforce vulnerable during economic downturns, layoffs, and company closures.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 also continues to struggle with low incomes and poverty. Table 1.12 below illustrates the average per capita income for the region and for each county. There is a significant disparity among some of the Georgia Mountains Area 2 counties, so workforce strategies should be tailored to each county's needs.

Table 1.12 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA
County Per Capita Income

Per Capita Income				
	2021	2022	% change	% of persons in poverty (2022)
Georgia	\$ 56,079	\$ 57,193	1.9%	12.9
United States	\$ 64,658	\$ 66,259	2.5%	11.5
Banks	\$ 42,335	\$ 42,335	6.4%	12.1
Dawson	\$ 57,898	\$ 61,067	5.5%	8.0
Forsyth	\$ 74,888	\$ 79,382	6.0%	4.1
Franklin	\$ 40,700	\$ 44,078	8.3%	16.0
Habersham	\$ 39,411	\$ 40,155	1.9%	13.8
Hall	\$ 55,175	\$ 57,416	4.1%	11.7
Hart	\$ 44,058	\$ 45,862	4.1%	14.2
Lumpkin	\$ 47,783	\$ 47,019	-1.6%	12.1
Rabun	\$ 52,393	\$ 52,393	0.6%	12.7
Stephens	\$ 43,679	\$ 44,891	2.8%	13.7
Towns	\$ 47,696	\$ 47,620	-0.2%	12.9
Union	\$ 45,300	\$ 44,591	-1.6%	10.3
White	\$ 47,977	\$ 49,331	-1.6%	12.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Data, Carl Vinson Institute

Compounding the economic challenges faced in several Georgia Mountains Area 2 counties—including lower per capita income levels and higher rates of poverty—residents continue to experience multiple barriers to employment.

Transportation remains a significant challenge across the region. Recent American Community Survey (ACS) journey-to-work data indicate that a majority of employed residents commute outside their immediate communities for work. A substantial share of workers travel more than ten miles, and a significant portion commute more than 25 miles each day. These patterns reflect the geographic distribution of employment opportunities across the region and suggest that individuals without reliable transportation may face difficulty accessing available jobs, training, and support services.

Access to affordable and reliable childcare also continues to be a critical barrier to workforce participation. The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) reports that many rural and semi-rural counties experience limited childcare supply, particularly for infants and for care during non-traditional hours. Limited availability of evening and weekend childcare constrains the ability of parents to accept employment in healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, and other sectors that rely on shift-based scheduling. High childcare costs further compound this issue, placing a disproportionate burden on low- and moderate-income families and reducing labor force participation among parents of young children.

Justice involvement remains another barrier affecting workforce attachment for some residents. Data from the Georgia Department of Corrections indicate that thousands of individuals are released from state facilities each year. Data in Table 1.13 shows that over 500 individuals are potentially released into the region each year. Educational attainment among the incarcerated population remains a concern, with correctional education programs continuing to focus heavily on adult basic education and GED completion to address the large number of individuals entering or leaving the system without a high school credential. Limited education, combined with criminal history restrictions and gaps in work history, can significantly reduce employment prospects and earnings potential following release.

Together, transportation limitations, childcare accessibility and affordability, and reentry-related challenges create structural barriers that impact both job seekers and employers across Georgia Mountains Area 2. These factors contribute to reduced labor force participation, longer job search durations, and difficulty filling critical workforce shortages in key regional industries.

Table 1.13: Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA

GA Department of Corrections Releases by Home County

County	2024
Banks	24
Dawson	28
Forsyth	74
Franklin	35
Habersham	59
Hall	155
Hart	38
Lumpkin	22
Rabun	8
Stephens	35

Towns	12
Union	33
White	29
Totals	552

Source: Georgia Department of Corrections

Finally, According to the American Community Survey’s 2021 – 2022 5-year survey, 12.7% of the Georgia Mountains Area 2 population identified as having a disability. These individuals may need additional resources and assistance to access the workforce. GMWDB will continue working with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) to address this population's education and training needs.

1.2.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.

The WorkSource Georgia Mountains one-stop system provides an array of services designed to provide job seekers with the resources and support necessary for success. Under WIOA, advancements in partnership and program integration have strengthened the workforce system and enhanced WSGM’s ability to assist all jobseekers, including those facing the barriers identified in Section 1.2.c. WSGM remains committed to connecting job seekers with the most appropriate services and resources available through one-stop and other regional community partners.

Jobseekers can access unemployment insurance services through the Georgia Department of Labor, while TCSG offers Wagner-Peyser and other career services. TCSG also houses the DVOPs (Disabled Veteran Outreach Programs) and LVERs (Local Veteran Employment Representatives), providing vital support to Georgia’s veterans and transitioning service members.

GDOL and TCSG often serve as entry points into the workforce system and provide referrals to many partner programs. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Business Services Unit partners with WSGM business services staff to provide outreach and other resources, including Rapid Response services. WSGM partners with TCSG on Rapid Response service provision and provides services to many of the job seekers they refer.

GVRA provides a variety of individual services to job seekers with disabilities. These services, including education, employment, and training, prepare job seekers for the competitive labor market. GVRA also conducts business outreach to help employers understand the value of hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.

For individuals seeking assistance with obtaining their GED, local technical colleges, which serve as adult education providers through funding awarded by the Technical College System of Georgia’s Office of Adult Education (TCSG-OAE), provide valuable educational resources and support. TCSG-OAE adult education providers also offer literacy programs and support for English language learners.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 benefits from the presence of three technical colleges and several universities in the region. The technical colleges are actively engaged in offering programs of study aligned with locally relevant

career pathways. Technical colleges also have strong economic development programs that regularly partner with businesses and industries to create customized local solutions for their workforce hiring and training needs.

WSGM also works with local secondary education systems and technical colleges in the investment of Carl Perkins Act funds. WSGM staff regularly participate in the annual local planning process for all participating institutions and share labor market analysis, industry needs, and other information that helps strengthen the alignment between Perkins-funded education and local employer needs. WSGM also regularly collaborates with local secondary schools on work-based learning opportunities and on students' transition to post-secondary education and occupational training. Many Georgia Mountains Area 2 secondary schools, including local Colleges and Career Academies, already have strong relationships with local industry partners and have developed robust work-based learning opportunities for students.

Table 1.15 shows the number of participants and employers engaged in work-based learning activities. This is a critical indicator of the strength and effectiveness of the local workforce system. Higher levels of participation reflect increased access to hands-on training opportunities that allow individuals to develop in-demand skills, gain real-world experience, and transition more successfully into employment. At the same time, strong employer engagement demonstrates that local businesses are actively investing in talent development and helping to shape a workforce that meets their evolving needs. A growing number of employers participating in work-based learning signals confidence in the system and helps ensure that training remains aligned with current labor market demands. Additionally, expanding participation supports greater access to career pathways for individuals with barriers to employment. Together, these measures serve as key indicators of economic vitality, talent pipeline development, and the workforce system's overall responsiveness to regional needs.

Table 1.15 Area Profile for Georgia Mountains LWDA

CTAE Workforce Impact

	2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Students Enrolled	Work-Based Learning Employers	Students Enrolled	Work-Based Learning Employers
Banks	69	64	121	98
Dawson	122	114	98	94
Forsyth	801	580	965	708
Franklin	115	69	102	78
Habersham	133	87	122	81
Hall	908	738	1,054	891
Hart	115	67	190	139
Lumpkin	120	73	157	105
Rabun	78	61	75	62
Stephens	218	106	195	118
Towns	71	58	70	55
Union	117	95	141	110
White	145	135	119	117

Source: Georgia Insights Dashboard

WSGM regularly provides training funds, supportive services, work-based learning funds, and business services to eligible job seekers and employers throughout the region. More information about WSGM services is found throughout this plan.

Strengths:

GMWDB continues to work with secondary education systems, postsecondary education institutions, and other training providers to bridge the gap between talent development and talent deployment. Georgia Mountains Area 2 is working to ensure that educators and training providers know the skills employers need. In addition, WSGM Business Services and local TCSG Economic Development staff have made connections to link job seekers and those in training with industries and employers who are ready to hire them.

As part of this effort, WSGM continues to prioritize industry-driven workforce strategies that align education, training, and workforce investments with regional labor market demand. Emphasis will be placed on expanding Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, and other work-based learning opportunities that strengthen talent pipelines and support long-term economic growth. These strategies support regional talent pipeline development while helping employers address workforce shortages in high-demand industries. GMWDB will also continue strengthening partnerships among employers, educational institutions, economic development entities, and workforce partners to ensure training investments remain responsive to evolving industry needs and support long-term economic competitiveness throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains has also seen an increased demand for the work-based learning and business services offered through WIOA. As a result, WSGM Business Services staff and contractors have developed relationships with employers of all sizes and represent most of the region's growth and demand industries. These relationships have led to increased internships, Registered Apprenticeships, incumbent worker training (IWT), on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work experience opportunities throughout the region, strengthening employer engagement and creating additional pathways to industry-recognized credentials and sustainable employment..

Through the sector strategies partnership growth, Georgia Mountains Area 2 has developed stronger partnerships between workforce partners, secondary education systems, postsecondary education institutions, and local employers. This has led to increased interest in local-demand careers, increased K-8 student awareness of local-demand industries, increased work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities for local job seekers, and the development of the Apprenticeship 101 program at Lanier Tech. Apprenticeship 101 supports local businesses by serving as the apprenticeship sponsor for needed programs, reducing the administrative burden on employers and increasing the pipeline of qualified job seekers for advanced manufacturing and related industries. Additionally, the sector partnership has led to the development of a first-in-the-state Quality Control Apprenticeship program and a leadership course for manufacturing supervisors. Local area employers developed both of these programs in partnership with TCSG, WSGM, and sector leadership provided by Workforce Strategies Group.

GMWDB has an active and engaged group of local one-stop partners. Post-COVID meeting attendance has continued to grow, with upwards of 30 individuals from multiple agencies attending meetings. There is a strong spirit of collaboration. The one-stop partners regularly contribute during GMWDB meetings and provide

thoughtful insight into their services and the resources their customers require. They also regularly participate in the bi-monthly one-stop partner meetings and invite and encourage other local community resource partners to attend.

Weaknesses:

GMWDB has made considerable progress in enhancing the visibility and awareness of the WorkSource Georgia workforce system within Georgia Mountains Area 2. However, the barriers of comprehensive jobseeker and employer awareness of the information and resources available through the one-stop system persist. Much progress has been made in reaching advanced manufacturing employers through sector partnership grants and collaborations. GMWDB will utilize leading practices learned through the sector partnership process to grow and develop its business services strategy for reaching employers in other demand industry sectors.

As WSGM works to expand regional awareness of business services and work-based learning, WSGM staff have learned that GMWDB members, community partners, and contractors need a better understanding of eligibility and suitability for WIOA services for jobseekers and employers. WorkSource programs staff and Business Services staff hold bi-monthly meetings with contractors, Lanier Technical College and North Georgia Technical College Economic Development staff, and OWD Business Services staff to better collaborate and empower our partners and contractors to understand WSGM's strategic mission and priorities for workforce services. WSGM continues to work with GMWDB to reinforce program understanding through regular meetings and "mini-trainings," zeroing in on specific topics to provide a better understanding of workforce programs.

In the current uncertain economic climate, while still experiencing low unemployment numbers and increased economic growth, WSGM is providing more services to adults and increasing the share of services provided through work-based learning, such as OJT, work experience, and IWT opportunities. GMWDB has already transferred a majority of dislocated worker funds to adult funding eligibility. Given the increased costs of work-based learning compared to traditional educational offerings, there is still a decrease in the number of participants that GMWDB can serve. There is still a gap between employer demand and WSGM's ability to provide services to all employers using the current WIOA grant allocation. GMWDB will look to the state for additional assistance and guidance on the best way to leverage limited funding to meet the needs of jobseekers and employers.

COVID brought staffing issues to the forefront for many employers in the region. Employers have continued to indicate the need to emphasize finding entry-level employees with basic skills. WSGM quickly pivoted to begin focusing on short-term training and developing alternative workforce pipelines.

Due to the rural nature of much of Georgia Mountains Area 2, transportation and accessibility of services can hinder service provision and continued outreach. Staff consistently work to develop strategies to help increase program access and awareness. However, progress must continue to ensure that job seekers and employers are aware of all available resources.

WSGM has invested time and money into technology updates and partner integration efforts. Merging Wagner-Peyser and Workforce data has been helpful, along with the availability of a customer relationship

management tool. GMWDB has also made use of outside services such as UniteUs and worked to spread awareness of the platform in the region. Continued data integration for jobseeker services and case management will need additional assistance from the state. Updating technology and introducing new systems are also expensive. Balancing the need for further technology to support employer and participant services and the demand for these services continues to be challenging.

1.2.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.

GMWDB's strategic vision is centered on developing a skilled, adaptable, and competitive workforce that supports regional economic growth and promotes economic self-sufficiency for all residents, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. This vision is supported by a responsive regional talent pipeline system that aligns workforce, education, economic development, and employer partners around shared goals. The strategy emphasizes industry-driven talent development, expansion of work-based learning, attainment of industry-recognized credentials, reduction of barriers to employment, and advancement of economic mobility for all residents.

After the passage of WIOA, GMWDB and WSGM staff held a strategic planning meeting to develop a vision and a path forward. The meeting resulted in an updated mission, identified key focus areas, and established priorities for continued development. To support this vision, GMWDB will continue prioritizing industry-driven workforce strategies that align education, training, and workforce investments with employer demand. Emphasis will continuously be placed on expanding Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, work-based learning, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and sector partnerships that connect participants to industry-recognized credentials and sustainable employment. GMWDB will also leverage labor market information, employer engagement, and performance data to strengthen career pathways, improve participant outcomes, and meet the workforce needs of the region's high-demand industries.

Mission: To achieve sustainable economic growth and individual self-sufficiency by developing, sustaining, and promoting employment resources and opportunities for all job seekers and employers through community partnerships.

GMWDB and WSGM staff identified four critical areas for strategic focus and effort – cooperation and collaboration, jobseeker skills, public awareness, and board development. Table 1.16 outlines the goals established for each focus area. GMWDB and WSGM staff will review progress in these focus areas and refine goals and plans.

Table 1.16 GMWDB Strategic Focus Areas and Associated Goals

Cooperation and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve coordination among local organizations, educational institutions, and community services to create a more integrated and efficient support system for job seekers and employers. • Identify service gaps and identify resources to fill the gap and eliminate possible weaknesses in the program, allowing for better services to the area • Enhance target strategies with a strong focus on the unemployed and underemployed; youth, both in school and out; dislocated workers; and OJT strategies • Develop a comprehensive inventory of services available to job seekers and employers • Increase agency administrators' awareness of employment and training (WIOA) services by increasing visibility and communication
Job Seeker Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure job seekers receive education and training in demand, specialized fields that make them attractive to specific industry needs
Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop positive name recognition for GMDWB and WSGM to increase visibility and word-of-mouth promotion • Develop relationships with local news media to continue to promote WSGM programs and their benefits • Increase outreach to employers to make them aware of the benefits available through WSGM programming • Continuously improve outreach strategies to potential applicants throughout the region with a focus on the untapped and special populations
Board Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and support a Workforce Development Board that is representative of the community, comprised of influential stakeholders, and enjoyable for all members. A well-rounded board will help engage all facets of local communities and provide services to all eligible individuals • Develop strategies for Board engagement and connection to the work being done in the region

1.2.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.

WSGM prioritizes sharing data with our partners and ensuring that we make strategic investments of our time and resources. The Eligible Training Provider list is reviewed and compared to available data to ensure we support high-growth fields and forecast what education will be valuable to our employers in the months and years to come.

GMWDB has developed the following strategies to ensure core programs and partner resources are aligned to maximize support for jobseeker success:

- Regularly review the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure all partners are engaged and participating
- Host bi-monthly one-stop partner meetings
- Establish cross-training opportunities for core and community partners
- Honor and respect the value of all partners' contributions
- Ensure the one-stops are welcoming, pleasant, and customer-centered spaces
- Utilize digital and electronic connections and coordination for core programs and aligned resources
- Seek additional partners and linkages to provide a broad array of services and resources
- Encourage regular communication among all partners
- Celebrate innovation

1.3: 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.

1.3.a: How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Provide a listing of business services available through the area(s) such as employer workshops and assessment and screening of potential employees.

WSGM has developed a local workforce development system that regularly seeks input from business and labor employers throughout the region, including those who serve on the GMWDB. GMWDB members regularly provide input and insights into their industry's successes and struggles. GMWDB's roster includes two organized labor representatives. Both representatives regularly attend and participate in WIOA planning and business service strategy development.

WSGM has also increased the presence of its Business Services team, developed outreach material to promote the range of business services available to area employers, and increased its presence at local chamber meetings, economic development meetings, and other community events that afford opportunities to network with local employers.

Business Services offered through the one-stop system include:

- Job applicant recruitment

- Job applicant screening
- Job postings/orders
- Job/employee matching
- Skills assessments
- Meeting space for employer interviews
- Labor market information
- Census data
- Unemployment insurance information
- Job Fairs
- On-the-Job training
- Incumbent worker training
- Layoff aversion
- Apprenticeship assistance
- Rapid Response services
- Internship and work experience

1.3.b: Describe how local employers play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and identifying credentials of value. How does the LWDB ensure training programs are designed around employer competency requirements rather than academic program availability?

Employers play a central role in shaping workforce strategies within Georgia Mountains Area 2 by helping identify in-demand occupations, define required competencies, validate training models, and confirm the value of industry-recognized credentials. The GMWDB engages employers through sector partnerships, business services outreach, workforce committees, apprenticeship initiatives, labor market analysis, and ongoing collaboration with industry, education, and economic development partners.

Employer input guides the development of career pathways, work-based learning opportunities, and occupational skills training investments. Businesses provide direct feedback on skill gaps, technical competencies, workplace readiness skills, credential requirements, and emerging workforce needs to ensure training remains aligned with current industry demand. Work-based learning strategies such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), internships, clinical experiences, and Registered Apprenticeships further strengthen alignment between training and employer competency requirements by integrating hands-on learning in actual work environments.

The Board supports the use of short-term, stackable, industry-recognized credentials that are valued by employers and connected to career advancement opportunities. Employer feedback is continuously incorporated into the review and refinement of eligible training programs to ensure the regional workforce system remains responsive.

industry-driven, and focused on preparing participants for sustainable employment in occupations critical to the regional economy. Training providers and programs are evaluated based on demonstrated employment outcomes, alignment with regional workforce priorities, employer demand, credential attainment rates, and wage potential rather than solely on existing academic program availability. Programs that do not align with documented employer demand or fail to support quality employment outcomes may not be prioritized for WIOA funding.

1.3.c: How will the area engage employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?

WSGM Business Services staff and contractors regularly engage employers throughout the Georgia Mountains Area 2. They frequently attend local chamber meetings and other networking events. Strengthened relationships with local economic developers have facilitated additional introductions and insight into new and growing local employers and industries. Business Services staff and contractors frequently meet with businesses to share information about available services and provide copies of the local WSGM service guide. A survey was recently conducted to ensure the sector work was focused on the occupational titles that businesses most needed. Additionally, employers frequently participate in hiring fairs for short-term training cohorts that have completed in-demand training.

Local technical college economic development staff also attend WSGM Business Services meetings to share insight and information about local business needs.

1.3.d: 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?

Georgia Mountains Area 2 has developed strong working partnerships with local economic developers. These partnerships have been strengthened through participating in regional and statewide sector strategy workshops and planning sessions.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 includes the service delivery area for three technical colleges. Two of the three technical colleges have representation on the GMWDB. The economic development staff from North Georgia Tech and Lanier Tech are invited to WSGM Business Services meetings.

WSGM has a strong relationship with Lanier Tech and North Georgia Tech for the development and sponsorship of Registered Apprenticeship programs. Both technical colleges are approved sponsors and can assist local employers of all sizes in beginning Registered Apprenticeship programs. The school's Economic Development department is also critical in planning the curriculum for many short-term training cohorts.

WSGM regularly meets with the University of North Georgia's economic development staff and collaborates with the Brenau University business incubator program.

WSGM also partners with local economic development authorities at the city and county level and participates in local economic development committees through local chambers, rotary clubs, and other community organizations supporting economic development and growth activity.

WSGM is actively involved in the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee. The CEDS Committee regularly updates the GMRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Regional Plan that establishes a roadmap to create jobs, foster more stable, resilient, and diversified economies, improve living conditions, and provide a mechanism for guiding and coordinating the efforts of persons and organizations concerned with economic development. The CEDS Committee monitors several performance measures in real-time. WSGM regularly contributes data and insight to the committee and integrates the Committee's goals and strategies into the larger workforce system goals and strategies.

For many jobseekers, GDOL's unemployment insurance programs are the gateway to the workforce system. GDOL regularly coordinates the efforts of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program with the Business Services Unit, looking for opportunities to pair unemployed job seekers with employers looking to grow or replace their workforce. Rapid Response services also seek to minimize the utilization of UI services through partnership with WSGM and other one-stop partners to quickly put job seekers back into the workforce. WSGM and its workforce partners have implemented and are committed to continue improving an integrated workforce system that streamlines service delivery, reduces duplication of effort, and improves customer access to workforce, education, and supportive service resources. Through coordinated referral processes, shared partnerships, data-informed collaboration, and cross-agency communication, the region will continue building a more seamless and customer-centered workforce system.

1.3.e: Describe how the local area helps job seekers identify, document, and communicate their existing skills – including through competency-based assessments, digital credentials, badges, or skills portfolios. How are One-Stop Center staff trained to use skills-based tools for career counseling and job matching? How are employers in the area engaged to recognize skills and prior experience in lieu of traditional degree requirements?

Georgia Mountains Area 2 supports a skills-based workforce system that helps job seekers identify, document, and communicate transferable and occupational skills aligned with employer needs through the One-Stop delivery system. Participants can receive career assessments, employability evaluations, interest inventories, and individualized career counseling to identify competencies, prior work experience, and skill gaps related to in-demand occupations. Staff use labor market information, career pathway tools, and competency-based assessment strategies to connect participants with training and employment opportunities aligned with their abilities and career goals.

One-Stop Center staff receive ongoing training in skills-based career counseling, transferable skills identification, labor market trends, career pathway development, and employer engagement. Staff are trained to interpret assessment results, identify transferable skills, match competencies to in-demand occupations, and connect participants to appropriate training and employment

opportunities. Cross-training among workforce partners further supports coordinated, customer-centered service delivery.

The workforce system promotes industry-recognized credentials, stackable certifications, work-based learning, and documented experience as evidence of skill attainment. Participants may develop resumes, career portfolios, and other materials that highlight technical and employability skills, credentials, and prior learning gained through employment, military service, education, apprenticeships, or other work-based experiences. WSGM also supports apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeships, OJT, and other work-based learning opportunities that allow participants to demonstrate competencies in workplace settings.

Employers play a central role in advancing skills-based hiring practices throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2, through sector partnerships, business services outreach, and work-based learning initiatives. Employers also provide input on the competencies, certifications, and foundational skills needed for success in high-demand occupations. They are encouraged to recognize demonstrated skills, industry-recognized credentials, and relevant experience whenever appropriate, in place of traditional degree requirements. This employer-driven approach broadens access to employment opportunities while helping businesses meet evolving workforce needs.

1.3.f: Describe how real-time, localized labor market data is being used to guide career counseling, individual employment plan development, and training investments. How do these tools help participants understand career options and take clear steps toward better-paying jobs?

WSGM uses real-time, localized labor market data to strengthen every stage of service delivery—from career counseling to training decisions.

In career counseling, case managers use this data to show participants what jobs are currently in demand in the local region, what those jobs pay, and what skills employers are actively seeking. This helps individuals move beyond general interest and better understand which career paths are realistic, accessible, and sustainable.

When developing Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), case managers use this information to align a participant's existing skills, interests, and barriers with specific occupations and training pathways. The result is a clear, step-by-step plan identifying the training, credentials, or work experience needed to move into higher-wage employment.

For training investments, WSGM uses labor market data to prioritize programs in high-growth, high-demand industries. This ensures WIOA funding supports training that leads to measurable employment outcomes rather than programs with limited job opportunities.

Overall, these tools help participants connect the dots between their current situation and viable career pathways by clearly understanding the outlined in-demand occupations, required skills, wage potential, and concrete steps needed to reach better-paying, long-term employment.

1.4: Regional Service Delivery (Not Applicable)

1.5: Sector Strategy Development

Provide a description of the current regional sector strategy development for in-demand industry sectors.

1.5.a: Describe the partners that are participating in the sector strategy development.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board has engaged numerous area partners to ensure broader representation in the sector strategy development process. A steering committee was created to ensure representation from various partners, industry members, and others in Georgia Mountains Area 2 who will provide insight or resources for the sector strategies development process. Additional workgroups were created based on participating partners’ organization, subject matter expertise, available resources, and other factors. Additionally, industry-representative employer working groups were established to obtain additional insight into new and challenging-to-fill positions, retention issues, and different workforce development needs. The steering committee and working groups assisted in completing a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threads (SWOT) analysis of the community resources necessary for industry growth, talent gap analysis, education pipeline for advanced manufacturing, including k-12, postsecondary education, and alternative education resources. The SWOT analysis results were utilized to establish group priorities and identify areas of greatest need within the education-to-industry pipeline. The steering committees continually refer to the SWOT analysis to gauge progress and determine the next steps in addressing service gaps and priorities for continued growth.

Participating partners include:

Athens Technical College	Gainesville City Schools	Rabun County High School
Banks County Chamber of Commerce	Georgia Department of Economic Development	RikRak
Banks County Economic Development	Goodwill Industries of North Georgia	Stephens County Development Authority
Banks County High School	Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce	Stephens County Schools
Blairsville Chamber of Commerce	Habersham Chamber of Commerce	TCSG/Georgia Department of Labor
City of Hiawassee	Habersham County Schools	Technical College System of Georgia
City of Young Harris	Hart County Chamber of Commerce	Toccoa Chamber of Commerce
Dawson County Development Authority	Hart County Industrial Building Authority	Towns County Development Authority
Dawson County Schools	Lanier Technical College	Towns County Schools
Dawson Development Authority	Lumpkin County Schools	Union County Development Authority
Department of Family and Children Services	Mountain Education High School	Union County Schools
Development Authority of Lumpkin County	North Georgia Technical College	Union County Schools
Development Authority of Rabun County	Partnership Habersham	University of North Georgia

Forsyth County Schools	Gainesville City Schools	White County Chamber of Commerce
Forward Forsyth	Georgia Department of Economic Development	White County Government
Franklin County Chamber	Goodwill Industries of North Georgia	White County Schools
Franklin County Industrial Building Authority	Place of Forsyth	
Franklin County Schools	Rabun County Chamber of Commerce	

1.5 b: Describe the meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains kicked off the formal sector strategies process in September of 2014. During the state-sponsored sector strategy in the fall of 2016, the advanced manufacturing sector was selected as the first sector for strategy development. Since 2019, regular meetings have been held, including steering committee meetings, industry workgroup meetings (with partner participation), and other partner and community meetings. The steering committee meets at least twice a year, with the industry workgroup meeting quarterly. Small workgroups meet based on priorities indicated by employers and are active throughout the year. Additionally, members of the initiative are invited to take part in company tours, attend trainings and mini-conferences based on their indicated priorities, assist with curriculum development for customized training, and participate in Manufacturing and Apprenticeship weeks by offering tours to local school systems. A focus has also been on involving our area CTAE instructors to better link employers and the school system, discuss career paths, and increase work-based learning opportunities throughout the region.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains will leverage the steering committee, industry workgroups, and other workgroups to continue to engage partners and employers in the region. A monthly newsletter detailing current efforts and highlighting participating employers has been sent to all involved in the sector strategy initiative.

Additionally, a website where partners and the public can access sector activities and publications has been created along with social media pages and branding to help employers, parents, and students identify sector activities and resources in communities.

1.5.c: Describe the research and the data that was used to identify the sector that was chosen for the sectors strategies training.

For the initial selection of the advanced manufacturing industry, GMWDB utilized available data from GDOL and Burning Glass Labor Market Insight. In addition, GMWDB and WSGM staff reviewed labor force activity and occupational and industry growth projections. The analysis selected advanced manufacturing as the first sector for sector strategy development and support.

To ensure the appropriateness of continued focus in this sector, GMWDB worked with procured consultants to evaluate industry change since the initial review. These consultants bring valuable sector strategy insight, industry backgrounds, and expertise that ensure WSGM is considering local industry developments and updates as well as

data. Leveraging their relationships and knowledge provides additional networks and support for sector strategy efforts. The industry data review included updated projections from the 2019-2029 period, an analysis of growing and declining sub-clusters within advanced manufacturing, and a review of top occupations as a percentage of industry growth. Much of this data was analyzed at the county level to ensure that there was adequate representation throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2 and that the selected sector represented an array of opportunities. The Sector Strategies Steering Committee also reviewed this data to ensure the data aligned with local understanding and intelligence on industry needs and growth. This additional analysis allowed GMWDB to focus efforts on sub-cluster categories that continue to project strong growth and need additional skilled employees over the coming ten-year period.

1.5.d: Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes the following details: participating employers; target occupations; training programs; and target populations.

Through the initial sector strategies work, Georgia Mountains Area 2 has developed a robust regional partnership committed to leveraging data and available workforce development resources to develop career pathways and opportunities for entry into and growth within the advanced manufacturing industry.

The sector strategies plan was established on a strong, data-driven foundation that can be replicated in other industries. Key components of the sector strategy outline include:

- Initial data, SWOT, inventory, and supply/demand gap analysis to identify a growing industry with variety of occupational opportunities.
- Initial one-on-one meetings with each county official in the region representing economic development, education and employer groups to ensure engagement.
- Convening industry working groups to validate initial data, clarify needs, and drive the decision-making process.
- Identifying industry champions to elevate employer engagement and provide insight to ensure all solutions are responsive to industry needs.
- Engaging education and workforce development partners to provide support and resources needed to meet industry needs.
- Validating four Workgroups: Employability Skills, Career Pathways, Outreach, and Training and updating their focuses as needed based on employer feedback.
- Defining measurable outputs and outcomes that lead to an improved workforce pipeline.

Please find details below on the advanced manufacturing sector strategies partnership.

Participating Employers

American Yazaki	ASI-Southeast	ASI-Southeast
Automation Direct	Dewtex Inc.	Dewtex Inc.
Freudenberg Sealing Technologies	Freudenberg Sealing Technologies	Haering Precision USA LP

Haering Precision USA LP	Harbin Lumber	Harris Products
John Soules Foods	John Soules Foods	JTEKT/ Koyo Bearings
Kings Hawaiian	Linde + Wiemann	Linde + Wiemann
Lumite	Morito Scovill	Murray Plastics
Nifco KTW	Overdrive Logistics	Panel Built
Parkdale Mills Plant #24	Patterson Pump	PFG Performance Food Service
Polystone Creations, LLC	Polystone Creations, LLC	Power Services Group
Ranger Manufacturing	Satellite Industries	Selit North America
Sherwin Williams Distribution	Sherwin Williams Distribution	Specialty Appliances
SteelCell	STRuXure Outdoor	Titan Steel
Universal Servo Group	USA Production Parts	Voyant Beauty
ZF Industries		

Target Occupations

- CNC (Computer Numerical Control) Operators
- Front-Line Supervisors
- Forklift Drivers
- Industrial Maintenance Technicians
- Machining – Precision Metal Working
- Product and Process Engineering Technicians
- Quality Control Technician
- Welding and Fabrication
- Electricians
- Construction
- Logistics

Training Programs

- Technical college certificates
 - Machine Tool/CNC Machinist
 - Welding
 - Industrial Maintenance (Mechatronics)
- Registered Apprenticeship programs (approved)
 - Industrial Maintenance Technician
 - General Machinist
 - CNC Machinist
 - Welder / Fabricator
- Registered Apprenticeship programs (planned)
 - Quality Control Technician
 - Product Engineering Tech
 - Process Engineering Tech
- Workplace Excellence / Soft skills training
- Focused / Bootcamp training
 - Production Technician (60 – 120 hours)

- Maintenance Bootcamp (5 weeks)
- Leadership for 1st line supervisors

Target Populations

- WIOA eligible adults and dislocated workers
- Ex-offenders
- Out-of-school youth
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities

1.5.e: Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains continues to refine the model of sector strategies within the advanced manufacturing sector. The model will be used to replicate the sector strategies process in other industries as data and support is needed.

Healthcare is the 2nd most significant industry in the WorkSource Georgia Mountains region, in terms of employment. A wide variety of skill-level needs and opportunities are present. Continued growth requires targeted solutions, especially for the development of entry and mid-level personnel with the requisite skills. COVID continues to impact this field as the need for healthcare workers has grown, and many entry- and mid-level employees have left the field due to having to navigate the challenges that COVID brought.

GMWDB has also identified the field of information technology as growing within manufacturing, healthcare, and every business. It is also a place for entry and mid-level skill development that can be supported by the efforts of the Sector Strategy (Work-based learning, Dual enrollment, Technical Education, Focused Training, Apprenticeships, etc.)

GMWDB is also following the development of the inland port in Hall County. As this Georgia Ports Authority development is projected to see 150,000 containers annually, it may serve as an economic engine and encourage additional growth in transportation and logistics. GMWDB will continue to monitor industry change and economic development to leverage this important development in future sector strategy decisions, most likely in the area of logistics. WSGM plans to engage the region's logistics companies to define their program requirements to train a new workforce in transportation, distribution, customer relations, and service, and project planning and management to move forward in this sector.

And considering the current economic conditions, WSGM is also reviewing industries that may see sustained growth or demand related to COVID-19. WSGM staff continue to solicit feedback and input from industry partners and other stakeholders to determine the need for sector strategy development for these industries.

The sector steering committee recently identified the need for supporting the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology sectors to be added to the sector focus. This includes construction, electrical, logistics, and

other similar occupations, as they are all crucial in supporting many of the roles of Advanced Manufacturing careers.

All decisions about additional sectors will be made in collaboration with the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board.

1.6: 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:

1.6.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 jobseekers.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board, through the WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff, offers guidance and training to eligible providers to assist with maximizing the effectiveness of the services they provide. WSGM staff regularly offer meetings, training seminars, online tutorials, newsletters, and Facebook updates to service providers. These communication strategies highlight leading practices in service delivery, answer frequently asked questions, provide performance updates, and assist in implementing guidance released by USDOL and the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Workforce Development (TCSG-OWD). Service providers are also encouraged to share their success stories with the WSGM Staff and the One-Stop Operator so that these stories may be highlighted in the One-Stop Centers and in GMWDB meetings.

1.6.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 the use of technology and through other means.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board encourages WorkSource Georgia Mountains and other one-stop providers to embrace technology as a means of effective outreach and service delivery throughout the region. The comprehensive One-Stop Center is in Hall County, a large regional population center. Partners have one-stop affiliates and specialized sites in many of the counties. COVID increased the need for virtual services, and in response, WSGM added and has maintained an updated website with access to online program overviews and the application. Additionally, the staff offers virtual orientation and participant meetings through Zoom, online assessments, and a virtual work experience platform.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains utilizes SARA, a cloud-based communications tool that streamlines communications with participants through texts, email, and other in-app communications. This system allows WSGM staff to send email and text updates to participants and jobseekers working on intake documentation. Individuals can upload their documents from their phones and receive updates about their registration status without physically accessing a one-stop center. This system has streamlined the intake process and improved communication with participants and others seeking services. SARA is also utilized for case management and participant follow-up. The utilization of this system has improved participant responsiveness.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board continues to work with regional partners to identify additional opportunities for expanded service delivery.

1.6.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, if applicable, 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.

GMWDB ensures that all entities within the one-stop delivery system are compliant with WIOA §188, as applicable, and with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) All one-stop centers are reviewed as part of the biennial one-stop center certification process. This review includes ADA compliance as well as other accessibility requirements.

The one-stop also contains notice concerning requirements for compliance. These notices are posted in the entrance lobby and the training room.

Training for partners and staff is regularly provided through one-stop partner meetings, including guidance on using universal design in developing and delivering workforce services.

The One-Stop Operator ensures that interpreters and other assistance are available for all customers who may need additional assistance to access services.

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

WorkSource Georgia Mountains has an active and engaged group of partners who actively collaborate to provide services to participants within the region. Below is a general overview of the services offered by each one-stop system partner as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

- Georgia Mountains Regional Commission – fiscal, administrative, and program management services
- Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board – through the WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff, the GMWDB provides Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth WIOA Title I Services
- Georgia Department of Labor – unemployment insurance
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency – career services
- Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children’s Services – supportive services
- Technical College System of Georgia, represented locally by Lanier Tech, North Georgia Tech, and Athens Tech – career services, Adult Education and Literacy activities, and post-secondary education opportunities, Wagner Peyser program services and career services

The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners are reviewed regularly. As appropriate, MOU updates are made to reflect any changes to roles or resource contributions.

1.6.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.

As of the submission date of this plan, Hopkins Associates is the competitively procured One-Stop Operator. The current contract ends June 30, 2029.

To prepare for the competitive One-Stop Operator procurement process in 2023, Georgia Mountains Regional Commission staff collaborated with the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit several qualified candidates for review. GMRC, at the direction of the GMWDB, conducted market research about the availability of providers and services, sought input from partners about their needs, and reviewed the performance of the current operator to identify updates in the desired scope or performance measures to include in the RFP. GMRC also reached out to other Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in Georgia to conduct an analysis of the services being awarded and the average costs for those services. GMRC drafted an RFP document and created evaluation criteria in compliance with all state and federal requirements.

1.7: 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 Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, as fiscal agent for Georgia Mountains Area 2, is responsible for procuring all sub-grants and contracts on behalf of the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board.

Any services that are not provided by WSGM staff are competitively procured through the release of RFPs. All RFPs are publicized on the GMRC website, through area newspapers, on the Georgia Local Government Access marketplace, and in other locations as appropriate. RFP release announcements are also communicated to the bidder's list for subject matter where bidders' lists have been established. RFPs specify the requirements for the award, including the criteria used to evaluate all responses. GMRC and WSGM staff are bound by conflict-of-interest policies to ensure that no staff with a potential or perceived conflict participates in any part of the RFP process.

RFP review processes ensure that all responsive submissions are reviewed consistently and allow GMRC to select the respondent who will be the most advantageous for the scope being procured. The review includes the experience and capability of the bidder to perform the work. The review also evaluates the bidder's demonstrated understanding of the program and activity objectives, the reasonableness and appropriateness of the outcomes proposed by the bidder, the financial capacity of the bidder, innovative program design, cost advantage, and geographic area where the services will be provided. The final award determination is not based solely on price, although it may be a determining factor.

For youth proposals, WSGM staff conduct an initial review for responsiveness and technical consideration. This review determines which proposals are brought before the full GMWDB for discussion and approval.

Agency-wide and other contracts, such as the One-Stop Operator contract, are also brought before the GMRC Council for approval. Once the GMWDB and GMRC Council have approved it, an award letter will be issued to the selected bidder. GMRC then executed a contract with the awarded service provider.

GMRC also enters agreements with Individual Training Account (ITA) providers on the GMWDB Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Participants who desire to attend a provider on the State ETPL but not yet on the GMWDB ETPL speak with a WSGM staff member to initiate the process for including a State-approved provider on the GMWDB Eligible Training Provider List.

1.8: EEO and Grievance Procedures

Provide a description of local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.

GMWDB ensures that jobseekers, participants, employers, providers, and sub-recipients can access Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and grievance information in various ways. WSGM's Rights Statement, including the Babel Notice, is available in orientation sessions, intake applications, the WSGM website, and the Georgia Mountains Area 2 One-Stop website. EEO and Rights Statement information is available in provider applications, sub-recipient contracts, and work-based learning agreements with employers.

The GMRC Equal Opportunity Officer documents and reviews all complaints for resolution. GMRC's procedures for resolving complaints and grievances are included in the Rights Statement as Attachment 5.

2.0: Local Boards and Plan Development

2.1: Local Boards

Provide a description of the local board that includes the components listed below.

2.1.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))

Georgia Mountains Area 2's Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) is responsible for all GMWDB appointments. GMWDB bylaws require the GMWDB or WSGM staff to notify the CLEO within 10 days of the GMWDB's notification of the vacancy.

GMWDB members will be appointed or replaced in accordance with the GMWDB bylaws for board member vacancies. After missing three consecutive meetings, GMWDB members will be automatically removed from the board without cause. GMWDB members may also choose to resign. GMWDB requires dated emails or letters from the GMWDB member indicating intent to resign from the board. Vacancies shall be filled within a reasonable timeframe, not to exceed 90 days from the date of notice. If a vacancy is created by local policy or GMWDB bylaws, the vacancy begins at the date of the final action dictated by local policy or GMWDB bylaws. GMWDB must receive TCSG-OWD preapproval through a waiver request on any board action taken outside of the ninety-day limit.

The CLEO selects private sector representatives to the board from individuals nominated by business organizations and business trade organizations after consulting with and receiving recommendations from other business groups within Georgia Mountains Area 2.

Adult Education provider nominations are sought from the Adult Education providers within Georgia Mountains Area 2. North Georgia Technical College staff currently serves as the GMWDB Adult Education representative.

Recognized state and local labor federations offer recommendations for GMWDB members. The CLEO selects from among the recommendations and nominates recommended individuals to serve on the GMWDB.

Community-based organizations are selected from non-profit organizations within Georgia Mountains Area 2. An eligible non-profit must have a formal structure with officers, bylaws, and recognition within the community it represents.

Upon appointment, each GMWDB member is required to sign and date a copy of the GMWDB bylaws and the Conflict-of-Interest provisions. These are submitted to TCSG-OWD and GMWDB retains a copy for review.

GMWDB membership currently includes more than twenty-three (23) members representing the Georgia Mountains Area 2 counties. Membership must be comprised of a minimum of 51% private sector industry representation. All members serve on a two or three-year rotating basis.

GMWDB currently elects a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary. The Chair and the Vice-Chair must be representatives from the private sector. The GMWDB must elect all three officers. Terms of office shall be no more than three years, subject to the member's reappointment by the CLEO.

GMWDB membership as of the submission of this plan is included in Attachment 1.

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

All new GMWDB members undergo a multi-step orientation process. All newly appointed members have an initial meeting with the WSGM Director to review general board member responsibilities and the basic structure and purpose of the local workforce system. The new member orientation session covers local workforce system structure, local workforce system funding, general workforce and labor market data, the GMWDB role and responsibilities, and performance and accountability measures.

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

GMWDB continues collaborating with local economic development partners on workforce and industry needs within Georgia Mountains Area 2. GMWDB and WSGM staff regularly partner with state and regional entities such as: universities and technical colleges; the Georgia Department of Economic Development; the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Committee; GMRC's Economic Development Department; Georgia Power, Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) economic development staff, the Technical College System, and the U.S. Department of Commerce CEDs Committee.

WSGM staff regularly attend local and regional business meetings in each of the Georgia Mountains Area 2 counties and have developed strong relationships with county and city economic development staff. GMWDB also invites and encourages economic development staff to participate in sector strategies, partnership programs, and planning sessions.

GMWDB staff regularly review the region's economic development data and incorporate that data and insight from economic development partners into the Georgia Mountains Area 2 strategic planning process. As a result, GMWDB has developed a truly collaborative process that ensures that all stakeholders work together to create solutions that utilize the workforce system's capacity and resources to ensure the region's economic health.

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

GMWDB meets at least four times a year. Each meeting includes updates on performance, one-stop center activities, business outreach, and service delivery, sector partnership progress, and other relevant workforce activity updates. Member input and engagement is solicited at all board meetings.

GMWDB members are invited to participate in regional and state training activities and conferences. GMWDB members are also encouraged to attend local WIOA functions, such as sector partnership meetings, local youth and transitioning citizen graduation ceremonies, and other acknowledgments of participant success.

GMWDB may also utilize board committees to allow members deeper information and engagement in areas where they may have additional interest or subject matter expertise.

2.2: Local Board Committees

Provide a description of board committees and their functions.

GMWDB has two full-time permanent committees – the GMWDB Executive Committee and the GMWDB Youth Committee.

GMWDB's Executive Committee includes the GMWDB Chair, the GMWDB Vice-Chair, the GMWDB Secretary/Treasurer, and a non-board member appointed to serve. The Executive Committee may act on behalf of the full board when a quorum is not present at a called meeting or when the full GMWDB is unable to convene, and a decision is needed quickly.

GMWDB also has a standing Youth Committee. The GMWDB Youth Committee may include local board members, members of community-based organizations with demonstrated success in serving youth, employees of state or local government agencies who provide youth services, youth parents or youth participants, and other community representatives. The GMWDB Youth Committee oversees the youth program budget, makes youth program policy recommendations, reviews youth program RFPS and makes award recommendations to the GMWDB, identifies goals and objectives for the youth program, and works to create a broader alignment of youth resources throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2.

GMWDB Bylaws authorize the GMWDB Chair to establish other ad-hoc committees to perform short-term work and provide insight to the full board. One such ad-hoc committee is the Board Officer Nominating Committee, established for a short period to collect input and make recommendations on the nomination of new GMWDB Officers.

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

Not applicable

2.3: 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 30-day public comment period prior to the submission of the plan to solicit input into the development of the plan, including comment by representatives of businesses, representatives of labor organizations, and representatives of education.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board discussed the local plan updates with the WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff. The updated Plan was sent to the Board and is scheduled to be on the agenda for the July 30, 2026, meeting. WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff completed an initial review of updated labor market information. Information was collected from GDOL, Burning Glass Labor Market Insights, the Georgia Department of Education, and the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). Insight was sought from industry partners, economic development partners, and one-stop partners to update GMWDB’s understanding of economic conditions, industry needs, and partner resources within the local area. WSGM Staff also reviewed the State of Georgia’s Unified State Plan draft for PY24-PY27 to understand the state’s mission, priorities, and goals for the upcoming four-year planning period.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains gathered insight from industry partners, one-stop system partners, and economic development partners on workforce skills needs, industry growth within the region, strengths of the one-stop system, and other information relevant to the GMWDB strategic planning process.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains reached out to one-stop partners and other local partners to learn more about their priorities and objectives for the next four years. As a result, WSGM staff and partners collaborated to update the sections on service integration and partnership to ensure these sections reflected the progress made over the last four years and recognized new benchmarks and objectives for the next four years.

Staff also held meetings and calls to finalize the WorkSource Georgia Mountains strategy for providing outreach and in-demand services to employers and participants based on the direction of the GMWDB.

The local plan was sent to the GMWDB for review on May 29th, 2026. It was posted on the GMRC website for a 30-day public comment period. WSGM staff also sent email notices about plan publication

to business and industry partners, one-stop partners, education partners, representatives of labor organizations, and other interested parties within the region. These emails requested review and solicited feedback about the contents of the plan.

WSGM staff and GMWDB reviewed all comments, recommendations, or other feedback received during the public comment period and made corrections and revisions as appropriate. Copies of all public comments that expressed disagreement with the plan are included in Attachment 3. The revisions were presented to the GMWDB for final review and approval of the plan for submission. Once the GMWDB votes to approve the plan, it will be finalized and submitted to TCSG-OWD.

3.0: Service and Delivery Training

3.1: Serving Disconnected and Underemployed Workers

Identify the populations in the local area who are most disconnected from the labor force (e.g., individuals not in education, employment, or training, long-term unemployed, etc.) or face barriers to meaningful access and participation in the workforce system. Describe specific strategies the LWDB has in place – or plans to implement – to engage, serve, and connect these individuals to employment, educational, and/or training opportunities? How does the local plan address the structural and/or systemic barriers these populations face?

Georgia Mountains Area 2 recognizes that several populations across the region experience significant disconnection from the labor force or face barriers to meaningful participation in workforce services. These populations include individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, low-income adults, English language learners, individuals with limited transportation access, youth disconnected from education or employment, and residents of rural mountain communities with limited access to services and training opportunities. WSGM covers a broad geographic region of the 13-county region, ranging from metropolitan areas such as Hall and Forsyth Counties to rural communities in Union, Towns, and surrounding mountain counties, creating varying challenges related to transportation, broadband access, childcare availability, and awareness of workforce resources.

GMWDB works collaboratively with regional partners to identify and implement strategies that improve access to workforce, education, and training opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment. Outreach efforts are targeted toward underserved communities and populations identified through labor market information and economic data as experiencing higher unemployment, lower labor force participation, or lower earnings. GMWDB partners with community organizations, Family Connection collaboratives, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, human service agencies, and local leaders to connect individuals to workforce services through trusted community networks and referral partnerships.

The local workforce system provides integrated and customer-centered services designed to reduce barriers to participation and improve employment outcomes. Individuals are connected to career services, training opportunities, supportive services, and work-based learning opportunities that align with regional in-demand industries and career pathways. Supportive services may include transportation assistance, childcare support, work-related supplies, and referrals to additional community resources that help individuals successfully participate in training and employment activities. Language assistance and accommodations are also available to ensure access for individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

The local plan also addresses structural and systemic barriers by emphasizing coordination among workforce, education, economic development, and community service partners to create a more seamless and accessible workforce system. GMWDB continues to strengthen partnerships and referral processes that reduce duplication of services and improve customer navigation across programs. The area also promotes flexible training models, including short-term and industry-recognized credential programs, work-based learning, and career pathway development that support entry into employment and long-term career advancement. These strategies are intended to expand access to opportunity, improve economic mobility, and ensure that individuals with barriers to employment can successfully connect to meaningful education, training, and employment opportunities throughout the region.

3.2: Expanding Services 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 post-secondary, academic, or industry-recognized credential.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board works closely with all entities carrying out core programs to ensure that partners operate as a team to provide all eligible individuals access to employment, training, education, and supportive service resources. Special consideration is given to ensuring that outreach, intake, referral, and service delivery methods accommodate individuals with barriers to employment. WIOA Services Program Overviews are provided regularly throughout the WorkSource Georgia Mountains region. In addition, there are virtual overviews and application assistance provided weekly or as scheduled. WSGM also schedules regular overviews in all GDOL Career Centers and technical colleges. Program Overviews are available on the WSGM website and regularly promoted on various social media platforms. Local libraries are also utilized whenever possible to connect with potential participants.

Partner locations also have signage explaining WIOA and application information. WSGM also maintains a customized one-stop website that provides outreach and application materials. Access to interpreters and other resources are made available through the one-stops. One-stop partner meetings have focused on accessibility, universal design, and other topics relevant to service expansion and consideration of barrier mitigation.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains also utilizes SARA, a cloud-based communications tool that streamlines communications with participants through texts, email, and other in-app communications. SARA also allows jobseekers to upload documentation from their phones, reducing the need for office visits to collect intake paperwork, supportive service documentation, or other eligibility paperwork. SARA is used for intake to review the submission of supporting documentation for eligibility purposes. It is also used for case management and participant follow-up. The addition of text communications has improved response rates from participants and reduced the time necessary for intake documentation collection and eligibility review.

In addition to the comprehensive One-Stop location, the Georgia Department of Labor provides two formalized access points for WIOA services. As the provider of Unemployment Insurance, GDOL is a natural entry point for many jobseekers. The One-Stop and GDOL house TCSG Wagner-Peyser staff who are also available to aid with job search and placement for participants. If training services are needed, referrals are made to providers for WIOA Title I, adult education, or vocational rehabilitation.

WSGM encourages co-enrollments for all eligible participants. This coordinated approach ensures the most efficient utilization of non-duplicated program resources and assures that the participant receives the broadest array of eligible services.

Updates and information about Program Overviews, training services, and other resources are provided through the WorkSource Georgia Mountains One-Stop website. This website houses information for the partner programs, links to learn more about their specific program services and requirements, a calendar of workforce development

events with the WSGM region, information about additional available resources, WIOA services applications, and other information relevant to participants and jobseekers.

Additional information about how GMWDB seeks to promote career pathways and training services may be found in Sections 3.2 through 3.10.

WSGM works with all eligible participants to identify training programs of study that are in demand and lead to recognized credentials. Where applicable, WSGM staff work to ensure participants understand stackable credential options available within their program of study. WSGM staff review supportive service eligibility with all participants and coordinate resources amongst partners to ensure participants are receiving the wrap-around services necessary for training success.

3.3: Description of Services 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 are foundational to the success of the workforce system. WSGM offers various career and training services to adult and dislocated worker jobseekers.

Adults and Dislocated Workers can receive self-service resources, career, training, supportive, and follow-up services through WSGM. Participants may receive services in any order that is deemed appropriate.

Career Services

At a minimum, the following career services are made available to all participants who need them:

- Determination of eligibility to receive assistance
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the workforce system
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitude, abilities, and supportive service needs
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance as well as career counseling
- Referral to and coordination with other workforce system resources
- Workforce and labor market information
- Performance information and program cost information on eligible training providers
- Information on WSGM and the workforce system's performance
- Information on and referral to supportive services or assistance
- Meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for programs not funded through WIOA
- Individualized career services necessary for an individual to obtain or retain employment, including comprehensive and specialized assessments, diagnostic testing, and/or in-depth interviews and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan
- Group counseling

- Individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs

Training Services

Training services may be made available for participants who have been determined to need additional assistance to obtain or retain employment. Individuals must be unable to obtain or retain employment, be determined in need of training services, and be able to successfully participate in the selected training services program and meet the training service's qualification requirements. WSGM also applies service priority as part of the training service eligibility process. There are a variety of training services funded by WIOA. Training services may include adult education and literacy services, occupational skills training for nontraditional employment, training programs operated by the private sector, work-based learning training, and other services provided on the ETPL or through state and local policy.

Educational training opportunities are predominantly provided through Individual Training Accounts. An ITA allows individuals to select a training institution from the Eligible Training Provider List. Additionally, WSGM staff consults with each participant to choose a training program in a demand industry occupation.

GMWDB assists with the cost of training, including but not limited to books, tuition, and fees, general supplies, tools, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for entry into training, as well as supportive services for eligible participants.

Work-based training services are also available. More information about these services and how they are utilized in Georgia Mountains Area 2 are found in other plan sections.

Follow-Up Services

All participants receive follow-up services for at least twelve months from the first day of unsubsidized employment. Each participant will be contacted a minimum of four times (once per quarter) after exit. Contact includes employment assistance, counseling, and supportive services when necessary.

3.4: 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 Technical College System of Georgia oversees the State's Rapid Response Dislocated Worker program. GMWDB and WSGM collaborate with TCSG to provide local Rapid Response services. Following the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) guidelines, Georgia's Rapid Response team responds to layoffs with 50 or more impacted workers from eligible employers. Georgia also seeks to respond to all layoffs of 25 or more

employees. Georgia's approach to Rapid Response leverages the relationships and the knowledge of TCSG and the LWDAs to help provide services to dislocated workers. This integrated approach ensures a timely localized response that is available during and after the layoff event.

Rapid Response teams include TCSG Rapid Response staff, WSGM staff, GDOL local career center staff, and other economic development and community partners as appropriate for each event. WSGM staff assists impacted workers in accessing community resource services, including WIOA Title I funding. These resources are designed to support workers' transition to a new job or career. WSGM regularly works with Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance staff from TCSG, GDOL, and TANF staff from the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide all needed resources without duplicating services.

Rapid Response services are designed to provide customized on-site services at an impacted company. These services are designed to accommodate different work schedules to assist the employer as well as all impacted workers through the transition associated with job loss. Available services frequently include, but are not limited to:

- Employee information sessions
- Employee orientations on unemployment insurance and other GDOL Employment Services
- Employer assistance with filing Unemployment Compensation and Trade petitions
- Shared work/short-term compensation options
- Job fairs
- Development of OJT and customized training programs for transitioning workers
- Onsite transition centers and onsite training services
- Workshops on a variety of topics, such as:
 - Job search techniques
 - Career explorations
 - Career assessments
 - Labor market information
 - Resume writing
 - Interview skills
 - Money management
 - Community resource exploration
 - Basic computer skills
- Educational opportunities through programs include:
 - WIOA Title I
 - HOPE and Pell grants and scholarships
 - Adult Education and GED assistance
 - Postsecondary school growth and demand programs
 - TAA, as eligible

The Rapid Response team looks for opportunities to work with employers on layoff aversion efforts where possible. Leveraging GDOL and WSGM partnerships and local employer relationships, the Rapid Response team gathers information and looks for opportunities for intervention in the workforce system. Through conversations with local

employers and appropriate Rapid Response partners, the Rapid Response team identifies strategies such as IWT to help businesses upskill workers to become more productive or to learn new technologies.

3.5: 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 with 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.

Youth Services are a key part of the dynamic workforce system in Georgia Mountains Area 2. There are a variety of training options and resources available to area youth. The WorkSource Georgia Mountains staff actively seek out service providers and partners who can provide additional services to assist area youth in gaining needed skills and employment. Youth staff work closely with AEFLA programs to ensure participant referrals are being made and students are co-enrolled to maximize resources and opportunities. All workforce opportunities are made available to youth with disabilities. WSGM partners with GVRA to ensure that the broadest available resources and opportunities are available to youth with disabilities. WSGM and GVRA co-enroll participants where possible and participate in quarterly partner meetings to discuss better integration of services and resources. Job Core is not based in the Georgia Mountains region; however, we do make and accept referrals and maintain contact with the closest representative.

WSGM ensures that all fourteen basic elements are available to youth requiring those services. The following is a description of how the basic youth elements are provided:

Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Evidence-Based Dropout Prevention and Recovery Strategies: Currently, this service is provided on an individual, case-by-case basis. When a participant is not performing well in school, the case manager will recommend tutoring through partner agencies. If other services are needed, funding may be provided to support those services.

WSGM staff also provide workshops with strategies for dropout prevention and future planning. WSGM offers incentives to participants who achieve credits towards a high school diploma, GED, and other progress and skills attainment benchmarks.

Alternative Secondary School Services or Drop-out Recovery Services: Credit recovery programs are designed to assist youth participants who have dropped out of high school or who have been withdrawn from high school. Credit recovery programs assist those participants with retrieving the credits necessary for diploma completion.

WSGM works with the Mountain Education Charter High School, the Lanier Career Academy, and other alternative schools in Georgia Mountains Area 2. For students returning through the alternative school system, incentives and supportive services are offered to help them recover credits and work towards a secondary diploma. WSGM staff partners directly with alternative school staff to refer and recruit students.

WSGM also offers workshops for career planning, including post-secondary and work-based opportunities such as internships and work experience.

Paid and Unpaid Work Experience: Through work experience and internships, WSGM provides youth participants with exposure to the workforce, career professionals, and work practices and expectations. Work experiences can help clarify career interests, enhance occupational skills, prevent learning loss over the summer, help youth develop a sense of providing, and help develop workplace-appropriate social skills. Youths must complete a work ethic workshop to be eligible for work-based learning opportunities.

WSGM partners with employers and partner agencies to identify work-based learning opportunities for participants. The most common opportunity is work experience, but depending on the participant's needs and interests, other options such as on-the-job training, Registered Apprenticeship, and internships may also be appropriate.

WSGM has also partnered with Atlanta Career Rise to incorporate Virtual Work Experiences for participants who are new to the workforce or having difficulty maintaining employment. Participants gain exposure to different career paths, acquire soft skills, and are able to learn how to function in the workplace.

Occupational Skills Training: WSGM offers assistance to eligible youth for post-secondary education and partners with eligible training providers to provide occupational skills training for in-demand fields in Georgia Mountains Area 2. Participants in this service may receive funding assistance to pay tuition costs, book costs, and other required materials and tools necessary for program participation. Supportive services are also offered to participants, including childcare assistance and transportation assistance. Occupational skills training participants are awarded funding for up to six semesters with a maximum training cost of \$10,000.

Education Offered Concurrently with and in the same context as Workforce Preparation: WSGM youth staff offer workshops to participants that include work ethic training, resume building, interview skills, "dress for success," character-building, and team building.

Leadership Development: Leadership development opportunities include community service and peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility and other positive social and civic engagement.

WSGM staff offer workshops that encourage team building with other WIOA participants. WSGM also partners with other agencies and regional partners to offer volunteer work with the hospital and other entities. Workshop topics include:

- Future planning, including post-secondary exploration
- Character-building
- Organized team-building activities
- Living a healthy life, including developing healthy relationships and drug and alcohol awareness
- College Knowledge
- Work ethic and worksite behavior
- Interviewing skills& Resume building

- Dress for Success
- Financial Literacy
- Time & Stress management

Supportive Services: WSGM offers supportive services, including transportation assistance and childcare assistance. Other support and needs-related payments may be offered on a case-by-case basis. Youth participants may also be eligible for incentives for completing workshops, work-training assignments, benchmark achievement, and credential completion. (Should we add something about the stipends, or is that covered in other support?)

Adult Mentoring: WSGM contracts with an Independent Living Mentor who provides one-on-one and group mentoring sessions, as appropriate. Participants in specific services may also receive program design-specific mentoring. For example, Project SEARCH participants receive worksite and life mentors for the duration of their program enrollment. Mentors connect with participants by phone and meet face-to-face to offer guidance and support to participants. Mentors also encourage good character and social behavior.

WSGM also offers mentors for youth who are participating in work experience services. The mentor visits the worksite and may act as a liaison when necessary. Work experience mentors encourage and prepare the mentee to become a mentor to other youth.

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: WSGM contracts with a counselor to provide mental health counseling in both one-on-one and group sessions. These sessions may be for preventative counseling or for managing mental health. Referrals are made for drug and alcohol abuse counseling.

Financial Literacy Education: Financial literacy education is provided for participants in a variety of methods. Financial education may be included in the participant's program design and may be administered through a series of workshops with guest speakers from local banks or one-on-one sessions as appropriate for each participant.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training: WSGM provides workshops on entrepreneurial skills. Georgia Mountains partners with local businesses, the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation, Junior Achievement, and other local resources to provide options for entrepreneurial skills training.

Labor Market and Employment Information Services: Services such as career counseling and career exploration are made available to all participants to provide information about the local labor market and in-demand industry employment opportunities. Participants may also utilize the WorkSource Georgia Portal and EmployGeorgia for independent resource review.

Participants attend a workshop that presents labor market information in an accessible and easy-to-understand format. Workshop curriculum typically includes growth and demand industry careers and their education requirements, entry-level wages and possible growth in demand career pathways, awareness of "unusual" careers or careers that may not be as popular or well-known, and career exploration to match participants' assessed skills and interests with in-demand career pathways.

Activities that Prepare for Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training: WSGM staff utilize one-on-one sessions, group workshops, and individual assessments to assist participants in preparing to transition to post-secondary education and training. Participants are invited to career fairs, technical colleges, and other schools, as well as tours of campuses. WSGM staff will also review career assessments to further assist participants in identifying growth and demand career fields that may be best for the participants. Participants may also be advised on the program credential lengths and stackable credential options within the selected career pathway. In some cases, services and/or assistance may be provided by partners to support college entrance testing preparation.

Follow-Up Services: Each participant will be contacted no less than four times (a minimum of once per quarter) after exit. Contact includes employment assistance and supportive services when necessary.

WSGM has also worked to develop integrated programming designed to provide youth with seamless access to various services in a setting that fully supports participants and encourages success. Below, we have highlighted several innovative programs we are implementing to support youth in the area.

Project SEARCH Program

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business-led, one-year school-to-work program that occurs entirely at the workplace. This program is specifically designed to meet the needs of youth with disabilities. Youth must have had an Individualized Education Plan or 504 plan while in secondary school to qualify for program participation. The program emphasizes total workplace immersion, facilitating a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. Project SEARCH has been active in Hall County for more than ten years. WSGM plays a vital role in preparing youth for the assigned rotation at the local hospital. WSGM utilizes WIOA funding to provide necessary work items such as school and work uniforms for eligible youth. WSGM also provides supplies needed for classroom instruction, including laptops, printers, and copy paper. During the Project SEARCH training period, eligible youth also receive transportation supportive service assistance.

WSGM also plays a role in helping Project SEARCH youth develop skills to help them transition from high school to adult life. Youth attend weekly workshops prepared and presented by WSGM staff. These workshops teach skills in character-building, independent living, work ethics, interviewing, resume building, and budgeting. These topics complement the instruction presented by Project SEARCH instructors.

WSGM works with business partners to assist with subsidizing work experience for youth to provide them with valuable experience that assists in the hiring process.

WSGM youth staff participates in monthly evaluation and employment planning meetings, including future planning to assist students in setting goals and identifying resources for further education or employment opportunities. Funding is available for WIOA-eligible youth to assist with approved post-secondary education or occupational skills training.

Transition to Success Program

The Transition to Success program is a collaborative initiative between GMWDB and Lanier Technical College Adult Basic Education programs. The program is designed to provide a structured pathway to

employment and self-sufficiency for youth in Georgia Mountains Area 2 by equipping them with education, training, and workforce-ready skills in a supportive environment. For those pursuing further education, WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) assists participants in identifying eligible training providers and may cover the cost of tuition and required supplies.

Through this partnership, Lanier Technical College provides a GED instructor to prepare eligible youth for the GED test. Once participants successfully pass the GED practice test, the instructor schedules official. Youth who complete and pass all portions of the GED are encouraged to explore postsecondary opportunities, and the instructor will assist interested participants in applying for college programs.

In addition to academic instruction, participants receive access to a wide range of supportive services and skill-building opportunities. These include tutoring, career planning, work-based training, financial literacy, entrepreneurship development, life skills training, certification opportunities, and peer group engagement. Together, these services help prepare youth for long-term success in both education and employment.

Youth who obtain their GED are encouraged to give back by supporting peers who may be struggling. By mentoring and motivating others, participants build confidence, strengthen leadership abilities, and contribute to a positive peer learning environment.

WSGM staff also provide workshops and mentoring to incarcerated youth participating in the program, helping them successfully transition back into the community. An Independent Living Mentor delivers workshops and one-on-one guidance focused on personal development, employability, and reentry planning. Workshop topics include:

- Character-building
- “So I have my GED – now what?”
- Mapping Your Future
- Soft skills training
- Employability skills
- Interviewing skills
- Dressing for success
- “How to Get a Job and Keep It”

Mentoring services also include resume development, job search and placement assistance, individualized interview preparation, and coordination with social workers, probation officers, parents, and counselors to create a comprehensive transition plan.

3.6: 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 services strategy. If these services are not utilized, provide a description of why.

As part of a broader business services strategy, GMWDB has developed and implemented robust work-based learning programs to meet the needs of area employers. The insight gained from the sector strategies initiatives has led to the development of robust career pathway programs and awareness opportunities for jobseekers and participants. Additional sector strategy successes are discussed in Section 1.5.

One part of the business services strategy is developing and expanding an array of services such as OJT, Incumbent Worker Training, Apprenticeships, Customized Training, and Internships. Employers can share their concerns and hiring issues through business services staff and contractors and learn more about available WSGM options. Many of the business services staff and contractors have business and economic development backgrounds, helping them to speak the employer's language and help employers understand the value of the program offerings. GMWDB also works closely with local Economic Developers and Chambers as intermediaries to help ensure increased awareness of the array of employer services available through the workforce system.

GMWDB is working to ensure workforce services are accessible to employers of all sizes and industries. Outreach and public awareness are critical components of GMWDB's mission and strategic goals. GMWDB continues to build relationships with employers throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2 to secure GMWDB's place as a partner in developing and growing local businesses.

GMWDB is also working to identify additional technological enhancements and other ways to streamline the work-based learning development and onboarding process.

On-the-Job Training

OJT programs assist participants by placing them in employment opportunities to help them gain knowledge, hands-on experience, and skills needed for long-term success in-demand industry sectors. OJT programs also benefit employers by offsetting the costs of hiring and training an employee who may not have been selected through their traditional hiring process.

GMWDB continues to expand its OJT program in-demand industry sectors. GMWDB continues to develop and strengthen the pipeline from occupational skills training to OJT opportunities.

Incumbent Worker Training

GMWDB utilizes IWT to assist employers with financial assistance for expenses associated with new skills or skills upgrades for permanent full-time employees. IWT may be used as a layoff aversion strategy or to support growth and advancement. GMWDB works with the employer to backfill positions with other WIOA participants where possible. GMWDB continues to align IWT opportunities with the GMWDB strategic goals and performance objectives.

Apprenticeships

Through the support of the local technical colleges and the state's American Apprenticeship Initiative grant, Georgia Mountains Area 2 has seen increased interest in Registered Apprenticeship programs for training workers in critical, skilled, hard-to-fill positions.

WSGM supports apprenticeships through funding ITA, OJT, and IWT costs as appropriate for each apprentice.

Pre-Apprenticeships

Georgia Mountains Area 2 recognizes pre-apprenticeship programs as a valuable strategy for preparing individuals for Registered Apprenticeship and other career pathway opportunities in high-demand industries. In partnership with local technical colleges, employers, school systems, and community organizations, WSGM supports pre-apprenticeship opportunities that provide foundational workplace skills, career exploration, and industry-specific training.

Customized Training

GMWDB continues to research the need for and interest in Customized Training. However, many technical colleges have robust training opportunities through credit and non-credit educational courses, so GMWDB has not seen much demand for Customized Training programming.

Internships

GMWDB utilizes short-term internships to provide an opportunity for adults with minimal work experience to gain hands-on experience and exposure to soft skills to assist them in identifying industries or career pathways that may interest them.

GMWDB is committed to developing internships as a pipeline to long-term employment. GMWDB is working to find ways for internships to serve as a bridge to employment for current training participants who may not have work-based learning as part of their training curriculum.

3.7: 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 determined eligible for WIOA-funded training services may select an eligible training provider from the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board-approved provider list. Individuals may also request to attend training at a provider on the TCSG-OWD approved provider list.

WIOA funds may be utilized for training in occupations that GMWDB has identified as growth or demand occupations or in occupations where the participant has documented local employment prospects.

GMWDB has established a two-year time limit for completion of the ITA program. For the majority of programs, GMWDB limits ITA vouchers to \$6,000 in the first year and \$10,000 in total costs. Certain exceptions may be made for medical programs, Registered Apprenticeship training, and other programs as identified in WSGM policy.

3.8: 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.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains has access to a variety of resources to offer participants who want entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

The Manufacturing Development Center (MDC) serves as an incubator and accelerator for small businesses in an integrated environment at the Featherbone Community center. Brenau University oversees the MDC and provides participants access to rental space, assistance with business financials, and potential partnerships with several education institutions.

Access may also be available to the Appalachian Regional Commission's entrepreneurship and business development program, which supports the expansion of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and for start-up and small businesses within the Appalachian Region. Georgia also has the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation. The Center serves as an information and resource hub for rural best practices, including assistance and planning for small businesses and industries. The Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation recently opened a North Georgia office, enabling more accessible access to resources and support.

The University of Georgia and the Georgia Department of Economic Development also offer small business development support that may be available to participants who want to open their own small businesses.

After conversations with interested participants, WSGM staff identify which resources and opportunities will be a best fit for participant success and make recommendations and referrals as appropriate.

For youth participants, in addition to the services mentioned above, workshops on entrepreneurial skills are offered on a regular basis.

3.9: 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.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board works closely with TCSG, the University System of Georgia (USG), non-public postsecondary providers, and Registered Apprenticeship program providers to ensure customer choice through a broad array of educational offerings.

Participants are encouraged to enter for-credit programs with postsecondary credentials such as diplomas, certificates, and degrees. Both TCSG and UNG also offer continuing education offerings that provide access to non-credit industry credentials and help create stackable credentials and short-term training opportunities.

GMWDB, one-stop partners, and eligible training providers coordinate to ensure adequate training funds are available to support students without duplicating funding support. GMWDB ensures that Pell Grant, HOPE Scholarships, Zell Miller Scholarships, and other resources are utilized before WIOA funds are applied

to the costs of training services. All participants must apply for financial aid, as applicable, through their training provider.

GMWDB also works closely with the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Adult Education to provide adult education services. TCSG-OAE local providers are actively engaged in the one-stop system, including serving as affiliate sites. GMWDB has also awarded sub-recipient grants to local adult education providers for holistic services for Out-of-School Youth. Where appropriate, WSGM staff also refer participants in need of a high school diploma to the Mountain Education Charter System, where students can participate in night classes and other alternative education options to earn their high school diploma.

3.10: 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, as applicable.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 has many fairly rural areas with minimal access to public transportation. Currently, the only direct access to public transportation is in Hall County. Due to limited routes, very few participants take advantage of public transportation. Given the distances to employment, education, and other needed services, WSGM offers transportation supportive services to eligible participants. Supportive service amounts depend on the miles between the participant's residence and the location of training and/or employment services.

GMWDB also offers childcare supportive services to eligible participants. All participants must first apply for assistance through the Childcare and Parents Services (CAPS) program available through the DECAL. Those who do not receive assistance through the CAPS program may be eligible for childcare support services. WSGM pays for childcare supportive services when participants actively attend educational or occupational training programs.

WSGM's current supportive services policies are included in Attachment 7.

3.11: Coordination with Social Services 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.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains continues to grow its partnership with DHS through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). TANF and SNAP representatives are invited to all bi-monthly one-stop partner meetings, which include a variety of one-stop partners as well as other community partners providing social services with Georgia Mountains Area 2. All attendees have an opportunity to share a brief update about their organization's services, and time is dedicated to collaboration and referrals between one-stop partners and other social service partners. Some meetings specifically feature a focus on different programs and the services offered. One-stop

partner meetings regularly discuss leading practices for service integration, non-duplication of effort and resources, streamlined referral processes, and universal design principles.

WSGM staff and the One-Stop Operator also regularly participate on community boards, committees, and organizations to present information about One-stop services. Examples include United Way of Hall County's One Hall Committee on Economic Stability, Gainesville Salvation Army Advisory Board, Boy and Girls Club of Lanier, Rehabilitation Industries of Northeast Georgia (RING), and Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia.

TANF and SNAP staff are aware of the services available through the one-stop system. They have received cross-training to refer job seekers to the one-stop for additional assessment and determination of eligibility. WSGM and other one-stop partners also refer partners to TANF and SNAP and log all referrals to keep track of all referrals made.

When participants are co-enrolled, WorkSource Georgia Mountains continues to work with DHS staff to share information about resources available through each program and participant outcomes. WSGM also utilizes the SNAP system of supportive services to supplement the supportive services available through WIOA to ensure no duplication of services. This communication also ensures that participants can take advantage of program differences, such as the TANF supportive service Work Support Payments (WSP), which provides supportive services for up to a year after transitioning to employment.

4.0: Coordination with Core Partners

4.1: 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 USC 2301 et. seq.).

Through the Georgia Mountains Area 2 one-stop system, GMWDB can offer various services tailored to meet the needs of local businesses and job seekers. These services may include:

- WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services
- WIOA Title I Youth Services
- WIOA Title I Job Corps and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
- WIOA Title I Veterans' workforce programs
- Wagner-Peyser Act programs
- WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy activities
- Programs funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act
- Programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act
- Postsecondary vocational education activities funded under Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Carl Perkins Act)
- TAA and NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance activities

- Local veteran’s employment representatives (LVERs) and disabled veterans outreach programs (DVOPs)
- Employment and training activities under Community Services Block Grants and the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Programs authorized under State employment compensation laws

All the above partners present within Georgia Mountains Area 2 are part of the one-stop MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement that details the services and cost-sharing present in the region.

As noted in the plan, GMWDB continues to grow and expand relationships with the partners providing these vital services within the region. Through GMWDB membership, one-stop system engagement, one-stop partner meetings, and other opportunities for collaboration and communication, the Georgia Mountains Area 2 one-stop system is more vital than ever and continues to grow. WSGM staff regularly participate in meetings with one-stop partners and participate in the Carl Perkins annual planning process for the majority of local Carl Perkins Act supported program in the region (Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education programs in the local public school systems and occupational training programs at Athens Technical College, Lanier Technical College, and North Georgia Technical College). In addition, WSGM provided feedback about local growth and demand career pathways, updated information about resources and services available to bolster the services offered by Perkins Act recipients and sub-recipients, and learned more about the vocational education strategy and direction each local program is taking.

GMWDB provides WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services and WIOA Title I Youth Services. These programs offer many career services through the physical one-stop centers and WorkSource portal. Career services include individualized job search, resume and cover letter writing assistance, workforce skills and typing training, computer skills training, Microsoft Office training, and skills assessments for OJT, GED, and career aptitude. Eligible participants may also receive more intensive services, including assistance with training, such as funding for tuition, books, and the cost of program supplies; supportive services and needs-related payments; and work-based learning programs such as apprenticeships, internships, OJT, IWT, and layoff aversion. Through WIOA Title I and coordination with the partner programs listed above, Georgia Mountains Area 2 can meet many of the needs of local job seekers and employers. GMWDB will continue to develop strategic relationships and partnerships to expand access to the resources and services available throughout the region.

More information about coordination with specific programs is found below.

4.2: 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 USC 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.

The Georgia Department of Labor has three Career Center offices serving the residents of Georgia Mountains Area 2. They are Gainesville Career Center (serving Dawson, Forsyth, Hall, Lumpkin, and White

Counties); Toccoa Career Center (serving Banks, Franklin, Hart, Habersham, Rabun, and Stephens Counties); Blue Ridge Career Center (serving Towns and Union Counties).

WorkSource Georgia Career Services offers services including, but not limited to:

- WorkSource Georgia portal access and assistance
- Job placement assistance
- DVOP and LVER representatives and monthly workshops
- Specialized ex-offender workshops
- Specialized assistance for migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Resource center and computer programs, including resume development, TapDance, typing tutorials, labor market information, in-demand field information, training and education resources, and financial aid options
- Information on GED, educational training, and occupational training offerings
- Job fairs
- TAA services
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services including language line, bilingual staff, technology, and written materials in a variety of languages
- Vocational assessments
- Referrals to partner programs and services such as WIOA, GVRA, Adult Education, HomeSafe, and other community and faith-based resources as appropriate
- Job clubs

GDOL also has TOPPSTEP (The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program) available to transitioning citizens. TOPPSTEP is a joint effort of the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Department of Corrections, Georgia Department of Community Supervision, and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles. TOPPSTEP's mission is to help every returning citizen become gainfully employed and self-sufficient. This program provides a variety of resources, including access to job openings, federal bonding and WOTC, community resource access for clothing, food banks, housing assistance, etc., retraining and OJT resources, specialized job search workshops, online resume tutorials, and other resources available through the DVOP and LVER program. Workshops are regularly held at corrections centers throughout Georgia Mountains Area 2, and GDOL career center staff members regularly collaborate with local Probation Office staff.

GMWDB continues close coordination with all TCSG-OWD services available within Georgia Mountains Area 2. These collaborative efforts will make a greater spectrum of workforce development resources available to area customers.

4.3: 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 in the local area, 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.

GMWDB coordinates workforce development activities in Georgia Mountains Area 2 with the eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II. Adult education and literacy activities include academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- Read, write, and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent
- Transition to post-secondary education and training
- Obtain employment

In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- Adult education
- Literacy
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities
- English language and acquisition activities
- Integrated English literacy and civics education
- Workforce preparation activities
- Integrated education and training

Adult education and literacy activities may also be combined, concurrently and contextually, with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Local adult education providers regularly coordinate with WSGM and other one-stop partners to develop collaborative training and resource provision for eligible participants.

Currently, three technical colleges provide adult education and literacy activities under Title II in Georgia Mountains Area 2. As part of the one-stop system in Georgia Mountains Area 2, each technical college has designated a staff member to speak with job seekers and direct them to the appropriate learning center for support.

Adult education programs from all three technical colleges provide quality instruction to residents of all counties to ensure eligible individuals receive their High School Equivalency Diploma (GED, HiSET, or Career Plus HSE as appropriate). Quality soft skills training and effective study skills are emphasized in the classroom. Faculty members and peer tutors at each of the three colleges can also provide free tutoring once a student is enrolled in the credit program. All three colleges also provide evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies and are involved in the entire process, from orientation all the way through student follow-up. Instructors design lessons aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards (Or English Language Proficiency Standards for students in English Language Acquisition classes) and use resources based on the latest revisions.

In addition to basic skills training, the Adult Education program at Athens Technical College offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and Civics/Citizenship classes to students in an eleven-county service area. Athens Tech also offers Digital Literacy Certification pathways, GeorgiaBEST Certification, and short-term Integrated Education and Training (IET) pathways, including ManufactuREADY, Welding to Work, and

Home Health Aide. These pathways prepare students for internships and/or direct job placement with local employer partners.

Athens Technical College was also one of eight technical colleges selected to implement a High School Equivalency Career Plus program. This program allows students who have not obtained their high school diploma or GED to simultaneously earn two technical certificates of credit and a high school equivalency credential. This integrated program reduces the time to complete college and enter employment, making it an appealing option for many job seekers. Program pathways include HOPE Career Grant approved Technical College Certificates in high-demand career fields such as computers and engineering, construction, manufacturing, logistics, public safety, and more.

In accordance with WIOA § 232 and § 107(d)(11)(B), GMWDB also reviews and makes recommendations on all local applications to provide adult education and literacy activities under Title II. This review confirms that the services and activities in the proposer's application are aligned with the GMWDB Local Plan. GMWDB also provides recommendations to promote further alignment between local adult education providers and the local plan where appropriate.

4.4: 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.

GVRA collaborates with WIOA partners to provide a wide variety of workforce development services for individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, to offer them multiple opportunities to be empowered to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion. GVRA will continue to work collaboratively with all the core programs and other state agencies to integrate and embed vocational rehabilitation services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

To facilitate expanding programmatic accessibility at the local Comprehensive One-Stop Center, GVRA provides assistive work technology-related services for eligible individuals with disabilities. Additional supports delivered, as requested, to the One-Stop locations may include assistive technology assessments and training that focuses on disability awareness for staff, providing services using the universal design model, and basic information on how to use assistive technology equipment. These supports are intended to remove programmatic barriers, increase accessibility, and maximize resources.

WSGM's One-Stop system engages youth in customized career pathways through collaborative partnerships. GVRA provides transition services to out-of-school youth with the timely development and approval of an Individualized Plan for Employment, intending to increase the number of students who achieve competitive integrated employment.

GVRA's Employment Services team also collaborates with core partner programs to support individuals with disabilities in securing competitive integrated employment. GVRA Employment Specialists interact with businesses to identify specific employer workforce needs and to provide employers with qualified

candidates to meet those needs. They also interface with employers to create experiential opportunities for individuals with disabilities, such as on-the-job training and work-based learning. Additionally, educational opportunities are available to businesses, such as information about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities, job accommodations, disability awareness, and federal contractor requirements. The goal is to increase employer interest and for more businesses to hire individuals with disabilities.

To complement the utilization of the technical college system, GVRA will further leverage relationships with educational institutions to enhance GVRA services in post-secondary schools. GVRA supports eligible students in their pursuit of post-secondary academic and training goals, including those thriving in a post-secondary education program.

5.0: Performance, ETPL, and Use of Technology

5.1: 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.

PY24-25 performance measures are included in Attachment 2. PY26 performance negotiations had not been completed at the time of local submission. Once PY26 performance is finalized the plan will be updated to include those performance measures.

5.2: One-Stop System Performance and Assessment

Provide a listing of locally 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.

GMWDB continues to utilize WIOA performance measures to assess the performance of the one-stop system. By utilizing data available in FutureWork Systems, an online tool that provides LWDA-level performance indicator reporting, WSGM staff report on the WIOA Performance Measures at every called board meeting, keeping GMWDB members updated on the progress of all performance goals. To ensure accountability, GMWDB will utilize the tools mentioned above, and through data gathering, maintain consistent and transparent performance measures to evaluate workforce system effectiveness, including employment outcomes, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, median earnings, employer engagement, work-based learning participation, and participant retention. Data will be reviewed regularly to support continuous improvement, ensure accountability, and guide strategic investments

GMWDB has also identified additional criteria that assist in presenting a comprehensive look at system performance. At each GMWDB meeting, the One-Stop Operator reports on many applicable one-stop metrics.

Each of WSGM's partners also has its own goals, objective, and performance measures that demonstrate its success in serving the citizens of Georgia Mountains Area 2. All partners share best practices, innovative ideas, and other ways to assist with performance achievement during the partner meetings.

GMWDB is also responsible for reviewing and certifying the one-stop system and all centers at least once every three years.

5.3: ETPL System

Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.

5.3.a: Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board accepts new training providers and new training program applications on an ongoing basis. Application forms are available on GMRC's website. Submitted applications are reviewed by WSGM staff and presented at the next called board meeting.

5.3.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.

WSGM staff review the application and complete the pre-award application checklist. This checklist reviews applications for responsiveness criteria to determine if the application is responsive and eligible for a full review. For non-responsive applications, the submitter is notified in writing that their application was non-responsive and the reason(s) for the determination.

WSGM staff complete the Evaluation Criteria for Provider Agreements for applications determined responsive. A copy of the Evaluation Criteria is included in Attachment 8.

For new providers or programs, WSGM staff conduct an on-site pre-operational review of the training institution and its programs. WSGM staff may waive the on-site pre-operational review if WIOA-funded training was provided within the last two years and there was no change in the facility, program, equipment, or other elements material to the program of study.

For organizations not physically located within the WorkSource Georgia Mountains geographic area, WSGM staff will determine whether the local WDB has conducted on-site reviews or evaluations. Results will be documented as part of the application review.

WSGM staff present all responsive applications to the GMWDB during regularly scheduled meetings. The presentation will include summaries of provider information, program(s) of study information, performance measures, costs, and other information relevant to the review process. Applicants not currently listed on the State ETPL are presented to the GMWDB, where they may choose to approve, not approve, conditionally approve, or delay a decision and request additional provider information. All applicants are notified of the GMWDB's action within five business days of the board meeting.

Provider applications from those currently on the State ETPL are reviewed by staff for approval, with all information shared with the Board at the next scheduled meeting.

WSGM staff submit provider applications to TCSG-OWD for all approved and conditionally approved providers. TCSG-OWD reviews, evaluates, and certifies that the provider meets statewide eligibility criteria. These criteria include application adherence to local policy; minimum state performance standards; review of State and Federal debarment, suspension, or voluntary exclusion status; and other eligibility factors established by the state.

TCSG-OWD notifies Local Workforce Development Boards of provider eligibility determination electronically. The State is responsible for maintaining the State-wide Eligible Training Provider List.

After receiving notification from TCSG-OWD, WSGM reaches out to approved providers to establish provider agreements. These agreements must be signed prior to the enrollment of any participant.

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

ITA customers and providers of unapproved and ineligible training programs who are aggrieved may use formal appeals processes outlined in the ITA agreement and the provider application. The Rights Statement (included as Attachment 5) processes are also available on the WSGM website.

5.3.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).

WSGM staff regularly update the local ETPL to reflect program additions, revisions, and other changes. WSGM also conducts periodic reviews to ensure that all programs on the local ETPL continue to offer eligible programs and remain in good standing.

Program performance is monitored annually for all providers with WIOA participants currently enrolled. Institutions may be removed from the approved provider list if monitoring reveals non-compliance with the act. Non-compliance may include the following situations:

- If inaccurate information regarding a program or provider is intentionally supplied to the GMWDB, eligibility will be terminated. This termination of eligibility will remain in effect for a minimum of two years.
- If the GMWDB or the state agency monitoring the ETPL determines that an eligible provider has substantially violated any requirements under the Act, the provider must commence corrective action as deemed appropriate or risk program approval. Substantial violations include the failure to submit timely and accurate information for the ETP and for initial and continued eligibility. If a provider files to take appropriate corrective action for a substantial violation, termination of eligibility will occur and will remain in effect for a minimum of two years.
- If a provider's program fails to meet minimum established local and State performance levels, the provider's eligibility to receive funds for that program may be suspended for a period of one year. The program may reapply under the initial eligibility criteria if they can provide documentation of

successful performance attainment with all students prior to the next program year. Reapplication procedures may begin no earlier than 90 days before the one-year exclusion period begins.

A provider may also be removed if it loses its license or the accreditation of its accrediting body, or if it is inactive for a period of three program years.

5.3.e: Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains' policies and procedures for ITAs and training providers are included as Attachment 9.

5.3.f: Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.

GMWDB utilizes the services of a GMRC Billing Specialist to monitor ITA obligations and associated supportive service activity. The GMRC Billing Specialist is also responsible for receiving and reviewing invoices from providers and sub-recipients.

GMWDB tracks all ITAs in the WorkSource Georgia Portal, the statewide case management system. GMWDB also utilizes customized spreadsheets to track all participants' ITAs, supportive service costs, and other participant information.

5.3.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.).

GMWDB maintains a comprehensive training provision policy that includes the recognition of the statewide eligible training provider list, financial caps, duration limits, out-of-area training eligibility, and service to out-of-area customers. This policy is included in Attachment 9.

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

GMWDB has established a policy that specifically addresses registered apprenticeship program eligibility, including automatic inclusion in the state ETPL and local ETPL upon notification from the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor. The financial caps and duration modifications are included in the WSGM training provision policy, found in Attachment 9. GMWDB has also modified provider agreements to address the automatic ETPL inclusion and the waiver of the performance requirements and eligibility review process.

5.4: 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.

GMWDB has embraced various technology-advancement initiatives to ensure enhanced access and customer support.

WSGM, in partnership with the GMRC, recently launched an updated website. The website offers updated program information along with resources from additional community partners. Virtual overview sessions and application materials are also made available online. Staff are encouraged to use Zoom and other meeting platforms to stay connected with customers and provide services.

WSGM utilizes SARA, a cloud-based communications tool that streamlines communications with participants through texts and emails. SARA also allows jobseekers to upload documentation from their phones, reducing the need for office visits to collect intake paperwork, supportive service documentation, or other eligibility paperwork. SARA is used for intake eligibility review and submission of supporting documentation. It is also used for case management and participant follow-up. The addition of text communications has improved response rates from participants and reduced the number of office visits necessary for intake documentation collection and eligibility review.

As part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy established by the GMRC Economic Development Division, several benchmarks were established to better track local and regional economic development performance. These measures also serve as strong indicators of the region's communities' and citizens' overall economic health. In the Workforce Development performance category, GMRC CEDS has identified the following measurable benchmarks: job growth in non-manufacturing industries, average wage growth, unemployment rate, educational attainment, and drop-out rates. GMWDB works with GMRC to continue tracking and reviewing regional performance against these measures.

6.0: State Initiatives and Vision

6.1: State Branding

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

The Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board and WorkSource Georgia Mountains have embraced the adoption of the WorkSource Georgia brand. The WorkSource Georgia brand is prominently displayed throughout the Comprehensive One-Stop, including wayfinding signs and building identification signs. WSGM has also updated the branding of all outreach material, including a comprehensive business services outreach guide. WorkSource Georgia also utilizes the brand through the One Stop website.

6.2: Priority of Service

Describe how the area 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.

All persons eligible for priority of service will be identified at the point of entry to one-stop programs and/or services to take advantage of the priority of service. Points of entry include the WSGM Comprehensive One-Stop, WSGM affiliate one-stops, and the WSGM and One-Stop websites. All persons will be informed of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of programs and services available to them, and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

More details about GMWDB's priority of service requirements are found in the WSGM priority of service policy in Attachment 10.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 has not added any target populations in addition to those specified by state and federal policy.

6.3: Alignment with State Goals

Describe how the area will align with each of the goals listed in the State Unified Plan.

6.3.a: Utilize sector partnerships to inform and guide strategic workforce development strategies and enhance partnership coordination.

GMWDB's sector partnership strategy and related workforce development initiatives are fully aligned with the goals of the State Unified Plan and reinforce a coordinated, employer-driven workforce system across Georgia Mountains Area 2.

GMWDB has made significant progress in implementing TCSG-OWD's sector partnership program to support advanced manufacturing and other in-demand industries across the region. Details of this work are outlined in Section 1.5. The Board is actively developing comprehensive career pipelines that connect education, training, and employment services to meet both immediate and long-term employer workforce needs. Ongoing collaboration with local K–12 systems, post-secondary institutions, and workforce partners ensure that training and program design remain aligned with industry demand and regional economic priorities.

Regular updates on sector partnership initiatives are provided at Board meetings to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous alignment with regional and state workforce priorities. The Board has fully embraced the sector partnerships framework and intends to expand this model into additional industry sectors to further strengthen employer engagement and talent pipeline development.

In alignment with the State Combined Plan goals and by leveraging WIOA flexibilities to strengthen system performance and improve service delivery across the region. Specifically, it advances USDOL's five strategic pillars as follows:

- **Industry-Driven Strategies:** Align workforce investments with employer demand through expanded work experiences, occupational skills training, and Registered Apprenticeships connected to in-demand occupations.
- **Worker Mobility:** Strengthen career pathways by supporting youth in attaining industry-recognized credentials and advancing toward sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- **Integrated Systems:** Improve coordination across workforce partners by streamlining service delivery, reducing duplication, and ensuring seamless access to required program elements.
- **Accountability:** Enhance performance outcomes through focused investment in high-impact services, transparent reporting, and consistent monitoring of participant and employer results.
- **Flexibility and Innovation:** Enable responsive service delivery by allowing local areas to prioritize high-impact program elements and adapt strategies to changing labor market conditions.

Overall, this alignment ensures Georgia Mountains Area 2 is effectively implementing the State Unified Plan by strengthening employer-led workforce strategies, improving system integration, and enhancing outcomes for both job seekers and employers.

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

While Georgia Mountains Area 2 is only comprised of one Local Workforce Development Area, WSGM regularly works with LWDA's in bordering regions on issues such as business services, eligible training provider review, and other inter-region collaboration issues, enhancing the services GMWDB can offer participants. GMWDB has also embraced the "no wrong door" approach advocated by USDOL and TCSG-OWD. Through this approach, WSGM ensures seamless service delivery throughout the region. One-stop partners are represented on the GMWDB and are engaged and active participants.

6.3.c: Capitalize on the workforce system's strengths to create opportunities for all Georgia communities to prosper.

Georgia Mountains Area 2 is comprised of both urban centers and rural communities. This mix of community size and needs has led GMWDB to a multi-pronged approach to ensuring workforce system resources are available to meet all needs. WSGM Outreach staff visit each county served at least two times a year. Additionally, WIOA Services Program Overviews are available virtually at any time.

GMWDB strategically focuses on business services as a method for increasing statewide prosperity. The business services available through WIOA and WSGM one-stop partner programs meet Georgia's employers' needs while providing job seekers opportunities to enter growing and demand industry sectors with jobs that allow growth and advancement. An emphasis on sector strategies enable us to connect with industry partners of all sizes to learn of needs common to the industry. GMWDB can develop system-level responses and solutions to meet industry needs by understanding common needs regardless of business size or sub-industry specification. Sector strategies also bring secondary and post-secondary education partners to the table, allowing the workforce system to create a pipeline of workers to meet the industry's long-term needs.

WSGM has also partnered with local technical colleges to promote Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, with the technical colleges often serving as the program sponsor. Registered Apprenticeship allows businesses of all sizes to access specialized training and educational opportunities while also assisting job seekers who may not be able to attend traditional full-time educational opportunities.

WSGM regularly partners with the technical colleges on creating and promoting economic development resources and solutions to regional employers. Technical college economic development staff regularly attend WSGM Business Services meetings to share information about employer needs and ensure there is no duplication of services or resource delivery.

GMWDB also has a variety of entrepreneurial resources to offer participants, as outlined in Section 3.7.

6.3.d: Continuously align workforce and education system objectives to current and future occupational skill requirements.

GMWDB has a robust relationship with both secondary and post-secondary education providers in Georgia Mountains Area 2, including public and private secondary school systems, adult education providers, TCSG, USG, and DECAL as appropriate. GMWDB membership includes both a technical college and an adult education representative. Through WSGM's sector strategies development, Georgia Mountains Area 2 has created a robust

group of community partners committed to linking secondary and post-secondary education offerings with the needs of local business and industry partners.

WSGM's business services team regularly works with local secondary school systems to provide insight and connections on growth and demand industry sectors. WSGM has, for several years, implemented short-term training options for students immediately after high school graduation to provide them with exposure to demand occupations as well as an initial credential to assist them with finding employment or continuing their post-secondary education. WSGM's youth team also works with local high schools to identify students who may need additional assistance and support to succeed in a post-secondary environment.

WSGM works with local adult education providers and the Mountain Education Charter School system to identify resources and opportunities for job seekers to obtain their GED or high school diploma and continue their career development.

GMWDB regularly advertises the opportunity for education providers to be included in the local ETPL and has developed streamlined processes for currently approved providers to request approval for additional programs of study. GMWDB will continue to engage local education providers to ensure a wide variety of institutions and programs are represented on the local ETPL.

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

GMWDB is committed to mitigating barriers for all job seekers who need assistance entering or staying in the labor market. WSGM's Comprehensive One-Stop regularly hosts partner meetings to discuss common barriers and the resources available to assist jobseekers in overcoming those barriers. The one-stop system also emphasizes universal design to ensure the greatest possible level of accessibility for all job seekers and individuals who may seek assistance from the one-stop system.

GMWDB has developed programs focusing on returning citizens in both juvenile and adult detention centers. These programs include assistance with obtaining a GED as well as occupational training in growth and demand industries that provide returning citizens with career pathway opportunities.

GMWDB works with GVRA to integrate programs and provide resources for individuals with disabilities. WSGM's Youth department regularly works with the local foster care system to identify and support youth who may need assistance with career search and occupational training.

WorkSource Georgia Mountains also utilizes SARA, a cloud-based communications tool that streamlines communication with participants via text, email, and other in-app channels. SARA reduces the number of office visits required for paperwork submission and other administrative tasks. SARA streamlines the intake process and allows for adaptive case management, allowing for more flexible and responsive assistance for individuals with barriers to entry into the workforce.

For transitioning service members and veterans, WSGM has a priority of service policy. WSGM also works closely with GDOL's DVOPs and LVERs to understand the needs of this population and how to align their needs with the workforce needs of local demand industries. This policy can be found as Attachment 10.



Attachment 1: Membership Roster

Name	Title	Entity	Board Category
Aurand-Hosey, Lee	Recruiter	Boilermakers Southeastern Area	Workforce/Labor
Bennett, Tim, A	Academy Group Manager/Senior Tech Recruiter	Haering Precision	Business
Carter, Ricky	Owner	J & R Builders	Business
Cole, Shannon	Dean of Adult Education	Lanier Technical College	Workforce/Youth
Edmondson, Amanda	Business Owner	Edmondson Commercial Interiors	Business
Gaddis, Amber	Workforce Dev. Director	Forsyth County Chamber	Business
Boling Jones, Vicki	Operations Manager	Data Survival & Document Destruction	Business
Mack, Deborah	Community Volunteer	Hall County Family Connection	Workforce/Community-Based Organization
McDonald, Timothy	Lanier Technical College President	Lanier Technical College	Education & Training
McGraw, Mike	Owner	PrideStaff/Ranger Manufacturing	Business
McLean, Rhonda,	Human Resource Manager	Medmix	Workforce /Apprenticeship
Murray, Michelle	HR/Safety Manager Corporate	Panel Built	Business
Hamby, Lisa	SCSEP Assistant Director	Legacy Link	Govt & Education/Community-Based Organization
Overholt, Mary	Sr. Human Resources Manager	Kubota Industrial Equipment	Business
Partain, Terri,	Director of Economic Development	Hart County Industrial Building Authority	Econ. Dev
Poole, Amy,	Workforce Dev. Coordinator	Northeast Georgia Health Systems	Business
Powers, Tonya	Economic Development Director	Franklin County Industrial Business Authority	Business
Rauch, Tammy	Business Services Recruiter	TCSG Business Services Recruiter	Govt & Educ/Wagner Peyser
Skelton, Dana	Supervisor	Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Govt & Education/Rehab Services
Truelove, Beth	President	White County Chamber of Commerce	Business
Ward, Shelby	Dean of Adult Education	North Georgia Technical College	Education & Training
Feldman, Heather	Executive Director	Georgia Mountains Regional Commission	Non-Member
Vacant- Current Waiver			
Vacant- Current Waiver			
Vacant- Current Waiver			
Vacant- Current Waiver			



Attachment 2: WSGM Performance Measures

Performance Goals for PY24 & PY25 – Area 2

Performance Measures	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment (2 nd Quarter After Exit)	84.4%	84.9%
Employment (4 th Quarter After Exit)	84.5%	85.0%
Median Earnings	\$8,800	\$8,900
Credential Attainment	82.0%	82.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.0%	71.5%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment (2 nd Quarter After Exit)	89.0%	89.5%
Employment (4 th Quarter After Exit)	86.0%	86.5%
Median Earnings	\$10,250	\$10,500
Credential Attainment	83.3%	83.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	55.0%	55.5%
WIOA Title I Youth		
Employment (2 nd Quarter After Exit)	80.0%	81.0%
Employment (4 th Quarter After Exit)	82.0%	82.5%
Median Earnings	\$5,000	\$5,125
Credential Attainment	71.5%	72.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	42.0%	43.0%



Attachment 3: GMWDB Local Plan Public Comments

Comment 1

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 2

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 3

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 4

Originating Entity:

Comment:



Attachment 4: 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 to under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Name: Whitney Blair

Title: Local Workforce Area Director

Entity Representing: WorkSource Georgia Mountains

Signature: _____

Name: Greg James

Title: Chief Local Elected Official

Entity Representing: Chief Local Elected Official Board

Signature: _____

Name: Tonya Powers

Title: Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Entity Representing: Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board

Signature: _____



Attachment 5: Rights Statement

WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS
GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 2278, GAINESVILLE, GA 30503
(770) 538-2727 PHONE ((770) 538-2729 FAX

RIGHTS STATEMENT

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS THE LAW

It is against the law for WorkSource Georgia Mountains/Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (WSGM/GMRC) (as the recipient of federal financial assistance) to discriminate on the following bases: Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of 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, 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: Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity; providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or 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. People with hearing impairments may contact the Georgia Relay Center by calling TTY 1-800-255-0056, Voice 1-800-255-0135 or dialing 711.

DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

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

WorkSource Georgia Mountains
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Equal Opportunity Officer: Alicia Page
P.O. Box 1720
Gainesville, GA 30503
770-538-2626
apage@gmrc.ga.gov

Application for a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded program **does not create an entitlement to services, and nothing in the Act shall be construed to establish a right of action for an individual to obtain services under WIOA.**

Technical College System of Georgia (TSCG) Office of Workforce Development (OWD)
Equal Opportunity Officer/Compliance Director
1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
404-679-1371

<file:///gmrc-win-02/Adult/INTAKE>

[ITEMS/Intake](#)

Documents/wioacompliance@tcs.edu
wioacompliance@tcs.edu

The Complainant may file their discrimination based complaint with the United States Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center at

<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/external-enforc-complaints.htm>. Or by contacting:

Director of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)
200 Constitution Ave, NW Room – N4123
Washington, DC 20210

Use form at: <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/DL1-2014A-Rev-April-2011.pdf>

People with hearing impairments may contact the Georgia Relay Center at 1-800-255-0056 or by dialing 711.

1. If the Complainant chooses to file the discrimination complaint with the WSGM/GMRC or with TCSG, the Complainant must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until ninety (90) days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center (see address above).
2. The Complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process by an attorney or other representative.
3. If the recipient does not give the Complainant a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, the Complainant may file a complaint with CRC before receiving that Notice. However, you must file your CRC complaint within thirty (30) days of the 90-day deadline (or within one hundred and twenty (120) days after the day on which the Complainant filed the complaint with the recipient).
4. If the recipient does give the Complainant a written Notice of Final Action on the complaint, but the Complainant is dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, the Complainant may file a complaint with CRC. The Complainant must file the CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which the Complainant received the Notice of Final Action.
5. Further, WSGM/GMRC shall fully cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigation in accordance with the aforementioned proceedings or with any criminal investigation.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and the WIOA of 2014, as amended, guarantees the right to file a complaint or alleged action concerning discrimination as stated above.

FRAUD, ABUSE, WASTE, MISCONDUCT OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

In the event that a complaint involves allegations of fraud, abuse, waste, misconduct or illegal activity stemming from a WIOA-funded program, the Complainant shall immediately contact one of the entities listed below:

Technical College System of Georgia Office of Workforce Development
 Equal Opportunity Officer/Compliance Director
 1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150
 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
 404-679-1371
wioacompliance@tcsge.edu

Georgia Office of Inspector General
 2 M.L.K. Jr. Dr., SW
 1102 West Tower
 Atlanta, GA 30334
 1-866-435-7644 (1-866-HELPOIG)
 Complaint form may be found at <http://oig.georgia.gov/file-Complaint>

Office of Inspector General, USDOL
 US Department of Labor
 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room S-5506,
 Washington, DC 20210
 1-800-347-3756
 Complaint form may be found at <https://www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm>

GENERAL OR NON-DISCRIMINATORY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

1. Complaints arising at the WorkSource Georgia Mountains office level must be in writing, signed by the Complainant, dated within 120 days of the alleged incident, and must include the following information:
 - a. the full name, telephone number (if any) and address of the person making the complaint (Complainant);
 - b. the full name and address of the Respondent against whom the complaint is made;
 - c. a clear and concise statement of fact, including pertinent dates, and witnesses (if any) constituting the alleged violation, and
 - d. the type of relief requested.

A complaint will be considered to have been filed when the reviewing authority receives from the Complainant a written statement, including information specified on the complaint form which contains sufficient facts and arguments to evaluate the complaint.

2. Complaints must be submitted to the Director, WorkSource Georgia Mountains, and P.O. Box 2278, Gainesville, GA 30503.
3. A log of all complaints received by WSGM/GMRC will be filed on-site. The log will include the name of the Complainant, the name and/or organization of the Respondent, the date of the complaint, and the resolution of the complaint (if rendered).
4. The Director shall investigate the complaints and attempt to resolve the matter through mediation within ten (10) business days of receipt of the complaint.
5. If the complaint cannot be resolved within ten (10) business days, a hearing shall be conducted within sixty (60) days of receipt of the initial complaint. When a hearing is necessary, the Complainant and the Respondent will be given reasonable notification by certified mail of the following information:
 - a. A statement of the date, time and place of hearing, including the name of the impartial hearing officer;
 - b. A statement of the authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held;
 - c. A reference to the particular section of the Act, regulations, grant or other agreements under the Act involved;
 - d. A statement of the alleged violations of WIOA (This may include clarification of the original complaint, but must accurately reflect the content of the submitted documentation of the Complainant);
 - e. The right of both parties to be represented by legal counsel;
 - f. The right of each party to present evidence, both written and through witnesses;
 - g. The right of each party to cross-examine; and
 - h. The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.
6. A hearing can be rescheduled at the request of either party for just cause.
7. The hearing shall be conducted by the Executive Committee of the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board (GMWDB). The committee may designate staff and/or other parties to serve as the impartial hearing officer. However, no GMWDB or staff member who has been directly involved in the events from which the complaint arose shall serve as a decision-maker in such complaint. If the complaint is against WorkSource Georgia Mountains itself, an impartial person will be secured by WorkSource Georgia Mountains to serve as the hearing officer. Impartial hearing officers shall be chosen from qualified individuals with expertise in the area from which the complaint arises. When an impartial hearing officer is necessary, the WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director will be notified to provide a qualified person. The right to an impartial decision-maker shall not be abrogated by the GMWDB or WorkSource Georgia Mountains. In the age of advanced communication options and to encourage timely responses to all complaints, the GMWDB may utilize e-mail, internet-based meeting facilities, in-person or any other mutually acceptable formats to conduct a hearing.
8. The Executive Committee of the GMWDB, or, its designee acting as a hearing officer, shall have the authority to regulate the course of the hearing, set the time and place for continued hearings, fix the time for filing briefs, and dispose of motions. A final decision must be rendered by the GMWDB Executive Committee or its designee within sixty (60) days of the completed hearing unless all parties are notified by certified mail of the need for additional time. The hearing officer shall issue a written decision which shall serve as the WSGM/GMRC's official resolution of the Complaint. The decision shall include the following information, at a minimum: The date, time and place of hearing, a recitation of the issues alleged in the Complaint, a summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the Complainant and the respondent; an analysis of the issues as they relate to the facts; and a decision addressing each issue alleged in the Complaint.
9. A complete record of the hearing shall be made and maintained for three (3) years and include the following:
 - a. All pleadings, motions, and intermediate ruling;
 - b. Detailed minutes or mechanical recording of the oral testimony and all other evidence presented;
 - c. A statement of matters officially noted;
 - d. All staff memoranda or data submitted to the GMWDB Executive Committee or its designee in connection with their consideration of the case;
 - e. Findings of facts based on the evidence submitted at the hearing;
 - f. Notification of both parties of further appeal procedures, if applicable; and
 - g. Final decision of the hearing officer.
10. The Complainant shall be informed of the right to request a review of his/her complaint by the TCSG if:
 - a. The Complainant does not receive a decision from WSGM/GMRC within (60) sixty days of the filing the complaint, or

b. The Complainant receives a decision unsatisfactory to the complainant
The request for review should be submitted to:

Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development
Attn: Compliance Director
1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
404-679-1371
wioacompliance@tcsg.edu

Once TSCG has received the Complaint form and the local resolution, TSCG shall issue its own resolution on the issue within sixty (60) days of receipt. Any resolution reached by TSCG may be appealed to the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

OTHER GRIEVANCES

1. Complaints arising from contracts or vendor agreements with Georgia public schools such as those which pertain to disciplinary actions of teachers or students, grading policy or teacher employment contracts will be handled by the grievance procedure outlined in OCGA §20-2-1160.
2. Complaints which pertain to terms of the contract between the school and the WSGM/GMRC, which may include curriculum and course content, provision of teaching materials and equipment, eligibility, customer selection, or other terms made part of the contract, should be handled by the grievance procedure as presented by the General or Non-Discriminatory Grievance Procedure section.
3. Complaints against the Georgia Department of Labor Career Centers should be filed with the Complaint Specialist or Career Center Manager in accordance with their policies and procedures.
4. Complaints alleging labor standards violations may be filed using the established local and State Grievance Procedures or submitted to a binding arbitration procedure, if a collective bargaining agreement covering the parties to the grievance so provides.
5. Applicants, customers, service providers, bidders, WIOA funded staff or other interested parties alleging violations of the Acts, regulations, sub grants, or other contracts under WIOA (other than discrimination complaints) shall utilize the General or Non-Discriminatory Grievance Procedures in filing a complaint. Individuals shall be informed of this right by the WSGM.

Definitions:

- *Days* – Days are consecutive calendar days, including weekends and holidays. If a deadline imposed under the provisions of this section falls on a holiday or weekend, then the deadline shall be the next business day.
- *Complainant* – A Complainant is the person or entity filing the Complaint.
- *Complaint* – A Complaint is the written document which contains the alleged violation.
- *General Complaint* – A Complaint involving a general, non-discriminatory WIOA violation.
- *Participant* – A Participant is an individual who has been determined eligible to participate in, and who is currently receiving services under a program authorized by WIOA.
- *Respondent* – A Respondent is the person or entity against whom the Complaint is made.
- *Subrecipient* – A Subrecipient is a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass through entity (generally from a recipient) to carry out part of a Federal program. This term does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such a program. A Subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

Babel Notice

IMPORTANT: This document contains important information about WIOA training guidelines including eligibility, application procedures, benefits and your rights. It is critical that you understand the information in this document. Translation assistance is available for WIOA services at <http://onestopworkgamtns.org/>. Scroll to the bottom right side of the page and click on the language dropdown. Telephone translation of this vital document is available at the WorkSource Georgia Mountains One Stop Center. Please contact (770)-538-2727 if you are in need of telephone translation assistance.

Background: 29 CFR 38.9(g)(3): "Recipients must include a "Babel notice," indicating in appropriate languages that language assistance is available, in all communications of vital information, such as hard copy letters or decisions or those communications posted on websites."

Spanish

¡IMPORTANTE! Este documento contiene **información importante** sobre sus derechos, responsabilidades y/o beneficios. Es importante que usted entienda la información en este documento. Nosotros le podemos ofrecer la información en el idioma de su preferencia sin costo alguno para usted. Llame al (770)-538-2727 para pedir asistencia en traducir y entender la información en este documento.

Chinese - Traditional

重要須知! 本文件包含**重要資訊**，事關您的權利、責任，和／或福利。請您務必理解本文件所含資訊，而我們也將使用您偏好的語言，無償為您提供資訊。請致電 (770) 538-2727 洽詢翻譯及理解本文件資訊方面的協助。

Vietnamese

LƯU Ý QUAN TRỌNG! Tài liệu này chứa **thông tin quan trọng** về quyền hạn, trách nhiệm và/hoặc quyền lợi của quý vị. Việc hiểu rõ thông tin trong tài liệu này là rất quan trọng, và chúng tôi sẽ cung cấp miễn phí cho quý vị thông tin này bằng ngôn ngữ mà quý vị ưa dùng. **Hãy gọi (770) 538-2727** để được hỗ trợ về việc thông dịch và hiểu thông tin trong tài liệu này.

Tagalog

MAHALAGA! Naglalaman ang dokumentong ito ng **mahalagang impormasyon** tungkol sa iyong mga karapatan, responsibilidad at/o benepisyo. Napakahalaga na nauunawaan mo ang impormasyong nakapaloob sa dokumentong ito, at ibibigay namin nang libre ang impormasyon sa pinili mong wika. **Tumawag sa (770) 538-2727** upang humingi ng tulong sa pagsasalang-wika at pag-unawa sa impormasyong nasa dokumentong ito.

French

IMPORTANT! Le présent document contient **des informations importantes** sur vos droits, vos responsabilités et/ou vos avantages. Il est essentiel que vous compreniez les informations figurant dans ce document, et nous vous fournirons gratuitement les informations dans la langue de votre choix. **Appelez au (770) 538-2727** pour obtenir de l'aide pour la traduction et la compréhension des informations contenues dans le présent document.

Haitian Creole

ENPÒTAN! Dokiman sa a gen **enfòmasyon enpòtan** ladan konsènan dwa, responsablite ak/oswa avantaj ou yo. Li ap vrèman enpòtan pou ou konprann enfòmasyon yo ki nan dokiman sa a, epi n ap ba ou enfòmasyon sa yo nan lang ou prefere a gratis. **Rele (770) 538-2727** pou jwenn asistans pou tradui ak pou konprann enfòmasyon ki nan dokiman sa a.

Portuguese

IMPORTANTE! Este documento contém **informações importantes** sobre os seus direitos, responsabilidades e/ou benefícios. É essencial que compreenda as informações constantes neste documento, as quais disponibilizaremos, gratuitamente, na língua à sua escolha. **Contacte o número (770) 538-2727** para solicitar ajuda para traduzir e compreender as informações contidas neste documento.

Arabic

مهم! يحتوي هذا المستند على معلومات مهمة حول حقوقك ومسؤولياتك و/أو فوائده. من الأهمية بمكان فهم المعلومات الواردة في هذا المستند، وسنوفر المعلومات بلغتك المفضلة دون تحمّل أي تكلفة. اتصل على الرقم (770) 538-2727 للحصول على مساعدة في ترجمة المعلومات الواردة في هذا المستند وفهمها.

Russian

ВАЖНО! В настоящем документе содержится **важная информация** о ваших правах, обязанностях и/или преимуществах. Крайне важно, чтобы вы поняли информацию, содержащуюся в данном документе, а мы бесплатно предоставим вам эту информацию на выбранном вами языке. **Позвоните по телефону (770) 538-2727** для получения помощи в переводе и понимании информации, содержащейся в данном документе.

Korean

중요! 본 문서는 귀하의 권리, 책임 및/또는 이익에 관한 **중요한 정보**를 포함하고 있습니다. 귀하가 본 문서에 있는 정보를 이해하는 것은 대단히 중요하며, 귀하가 원하는 언어로 정보를 제공받을 수 있습니다. **(770) 538-2727 로 전화**하여 본 문서에 있는 정보의 번역 및 이해를 위해 도움받으시길 바랍니다



Attachment 6: Area 2 Occupation Listing

WSGM Demand Occupations List

WorkSource Georgia Mountains provides occupational specific skills training for industries that are stable or have projected growth in the 13-county Georgia Mountains Region comprised of the following counties: Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union and White.

This list is intended as a guide to in-demand occupations and should not be considered a comprehensive list of eligible WIOA-funded occupational skills training programs. There may be additional occupations in which demand occurs based on the job market or specific opportunities within the broad spectrum of occupations. This list includes occupations that show a favorable mix of projected long-term job growth, projected annual job openings, and median wages. WIOA customers seeking training in an occupation not on this Demand Occupations List may discuss the appropriateness and relevance of the proposed training with their case manager for additional consideration. WIOA customers can learn more about additional occupations at www.onetonline.org. *Notes occupations/training targeted to youth or special populations.

SOC Code (ONET-8)	Occupation Title	Total Jobs	Average Hourly Wage	10-Year Total New Demand	Typical Education Needed for Entry	Typical On-the-Job Training Needed	Median Wage
Business & Financial Operations Occupations							
11-3071.00	Transportation, Storage and Distribution Managers	900	\$46.34	10,000	Bachelor's degree	None	\$37.27
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	826	\$25.85	990	Bachelor's degree	None	\$24.17
13-1111	Management Analysts	1,121	\$37.07	1,389	Bachelor's degree	None	\$32.62
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	1,697	\$31.72	2,060	Bachelor's degree	None	\$28.92
13-2051	Business Operations Specialists, All other	1,049	\$32.59	1,291	Bachelor's degree	None	\$29.62
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	241	\$50.89	302	Bachelor's degree	None	\$42.81
Computer & Mathematical Occupations							
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	541	\$40.43	668	Bachelor's degree	None	\$38.49
15-1131	Computer Programmers	330	\$34.77	351	Bachelor's degree	None	\$31.31
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	902	\$46.28	1,265	Bachelor's degree	None	\$43.32
15-1133	Software Developers, Systems Software	486	\$45.67	597	Bachelor's degree	None	\$44.47
15-1142	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	407	\$38.31	497	Bachelor's degree	None	\$36.71
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	989	\$23.76	1,229	Some college, no degree	None	\$22.54
Architecture and Engineering Occupations							
17-2051	Civil Engineers	691	\$38.08	889	Bachelor's degree	None	\$31.54
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	338	\$39.11	446	Bachelor's degree	None	\$36.99
17-2141	Mechanical Engineer	394	\$34.33	528	Bachelor's degree	None	\$32.86
Community and Social Service Occupations							
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	344	\$17.94	401	Bachelor's degree	None	\$16.47
Education, Training, & Library Occupations							
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	1,063	\$13.78	1,155	Associate degree	None	\$12.66
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education	413	\$25.62	455	Bachelor's degree	None	\$26.15
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	3,953	\$25.42	4,393	Bachelor's degree	None	\$25.87
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special Education and CTAE	1,709	\$28.20	1,908	Bachelor's degree	None	\$28.04
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special Education and CTAE	1,977	\$28.67	2,255	Bachelor's degree	None	\$28.23
25-9041	*Teacher Assistants	2,511	\$10.19	2,812	Some college, no degree	None	\$9.47

SOC Code (ONET-8)	Occupation Title	Total Jobs	Average Hourly Wage	10-Year Total New Demand	Typical Education Needed for Entry	Typical On-the-Job Training Needed	Median Wage
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media Occupations							
27-1024	Graphic Designers	405	\$22.52	471	Bachelor's degree	None	\$20.48
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations							
29-1122	Occupational Therapist	146	\$25.73	195	Master's Degree	None	\$22.47
29-1123	Physical Therapist	200	\$57.91	7,270	Master's Degree	None	\$42.27
29-1141	Registered Nurses	3,509	\$31.48	4,692	Bachelor's degree	None	\$29.97
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	372	\$48.82	530	Master's Degree	None	\$46.97
29-2018	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	584	\$30.84	767	Associate degree	None	\$26.47
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	446	\$33.62	594	Associate degree	None	\$34.45
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	410	\$39.49	518	Associate degree	None	\$33.51
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	1,389	\$14.77	2,177	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$14.31
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	817	\$13.74	928	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$13.06
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	784	\$25.32	899	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$22.09
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,340	\$19.73	1,544	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$19.73
29-2071	Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	364	\$26.10	450	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$21.67
Healthcare Support Occupations							
31-1011	Home Health Aides	628	\$12.39	901	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$12.22
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	1,843	\$11.97	2,272	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$11.66
31-9091	Dental Assistants	649	\$18.72	878	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$18.74
31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,691	\$15.19	2,278	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$14.88
31-9097	Phlebotomists	267	\$15.49	368	Postsecondary non degree award	None	\$15.82
Protective Service Occupations							
33-2011	Firefighters	896	\$16.47	997	Postsecondary nondegree award	Long-Term	\$16.30
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,292	\$18.80	1,469	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$18.18
33-9032	*Security Guards	1,1114	\$11.59	1,338	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$10.10
Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations							
35-2014	*Cooks, Restaurant	2,460	\$10.73	2935	No formal educational credential	Moderate-term	\$10.23
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations							
37-2011	*Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	3,362	\$11.71	4,094	No formal educational credential	None	\$11.32
37-2012	*Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,980	\$9.74	2,328	No formal educational credential	None	\$9.76
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	2,585	\$12.75	2952	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$11.72
Personal Care & Service Occupations							
39-9011.00	Childcare Workers	1,419	\$9.23	1,503	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$8.49
39-9021.00	Personal Care Aides	1,595	\$11.17	2,207	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$10.85
Sales and Related Occupations							
41-2011	*Cashiers	6,962	\$9.24	7,740	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$8.81
41-2031	*Retail Salespersons	8,625	\$11.24	10,218	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$9.87

SOC Code (ONET-8)	Occupation Title	Total Jobs	Average Hourly Wage	10-Year Total New Demand	Typical Education Needed for Entry	Typical On-the-Job Training Needed	Median Wage
Office & Administrative Support Occupations							
43-3011	Bill and Account Collectors	478	\$17.02	554	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate term	\$16.76
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	765	\$16.39	971	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate term	\$16.39
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	2,341	\$17.66	2,628	Some college, no degree	Moderate- term	\$17.34
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	543	\$20.06	649	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate term	\$18.66
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1301	\$15.43	1482	High school equivalent diploma or	Short-term	\$14.77
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	1,339	\$15.91	1,745	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate- term	\$15.21
43-6014	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	4,200	\$16.02	4,534	High school equivalent diploma or	Short-term	\$15.63
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	5,473	\$13.23	6132	High school equivalent diploma or	Short-term	\$11.76
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations							
45-2041	Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products	576	\$10.09	583	No formal credential educational	Short-term	\$10.10
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	1,244	\$11.70	1,410	No formal credential educational	Short-term	\$10.94
45-2099	Agricultural Workers, All Other	1,800	\$14.49	1,800	Some college, no degree	Moderate term	\$13.49
Construction & Extraction Occupations							
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,182	\$26.37	1,269	High school equivalent diploma or	5 years or more	None
47-2031	Carpenters	2,452	\$17.78	2,523	High school equivalent diploma or	Apprenticeship	\$15.30
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	356	\$17.15	370	No formal credential educational	Moderate term	\$16.56
47-2061	Construction Laborers	3,526	\$15.23	3,794	No formal credential educational	Short-term	\$14.17
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	791	\$18.38	889	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate term	\$16.57
47-2111	Electricians	1,032	\$21.03	1,116	High school equivalent diploma or	Apprenticeship	\$19.51
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	897	\$19.15	1,041	High school equivalent diploma or	Apprenticeship	\$17.77
Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occupations							
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	370	\$23.71	451	Postsecondary nondegree award	Moderate term	\$22.32
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	1,493	\$16.83	1,704	Postsecondary non degree award	Short-term	\$14.62
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists, including Marine	457	\$20.20	541	High school equivalent diploma or	Long-term	\$19.08
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	710	\$19.69	823	Postsecondary non degree award	Long-term	\$18.23
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,045	\$21.40	1,202	High school equivalent diploma or	Long-term	\$20.10
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	439	\$27.12	509	High school equivalent diploma or	Long-term	\$27.27
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	2,767	\$16.17	3,216	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate- term	\$15.60
49-9099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	341	\$18.64	399	High school equivalent diploma or	Moderate-term	\$16.73

SOC Code (ONET-8)	Occupation Title	Total Jobs	Average Hourly Wage	10-Year Total New Demand	Typical Education Needed for Entry	Typical On-the-Job Training Needed	Median Wage
Production Occupations							
51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	319	\$17.12	334	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate term	\$16.44
51-2098	Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	4,722	\$14.11	4,829	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate	\$13.09
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	408	\$17.67	496	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate	\$17.43
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	1,388	\$16.09	1,627	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$15.66
51-4031	Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	329	\$14.54	398	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate term	\$14.19
51-4041	Machinists	689	\$19.91	862	High school diploma or equivalent	Long-term	\$18.61
51-8031	Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	319	\$18.17	336	High school diploma or equivalent	Long-term	\$17.73
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1526	\$16.16	1579	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$14.49
Production Occupations (continued)							
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1,372	\$13.59	1,503	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$12.61
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	1256	\$12.08	1486	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$11.53
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	470	\$13.54	572	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term	\$11.73
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations							
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	980	\$11.34	1029	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$8.99
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	693	\$13.90	751	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$11.18
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,780	\$20.91	4383	Postsecondary non degree award	Short-term	\$19.94
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	1,531	\$17.53	1787	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term	\$15.34
53-7051	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	1,457	\$15.72	1667	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$13.22
53-7062	Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	7,433	\$12.39	8,467	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$11.49
53-7064	*Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,576	\$11.15	1,785	No formal educational credential	Short-term	\$10.84
Source: EMSI, Burning Glass, Onet		Apr-21					



Attachment 7: WSGM Supportive Services Policy

WSGM SUPPORTIVE SERVICE POLICY

Summary of Changes:

Previous Policy Effective June 2017

10/25/18- Determination of need was based entirely on a determination of household income less than 250% of poverty levels. Determination of need has been revised to include the language from the State Policy and Procedures Manual Section 3.4.4.

10/24/19- State removed 35% cap on support funding. Revised to reflect this change.

07/30/20- Adjustments to supportive service amounts

08/25/2022-Supportive service before participation

1/26/2023- Added Process of Providing Supportive Services; removed noted amounts and added to procedures

07/28/2023- Added note re: FU services & Services for Co-Enrolled Participants

7/17/2024- updated allowable support and documentation of provision to reflect changes in State Policy

WSGM has developed a process by which participants who are determined eligible and in need of supportive services may participate in Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) activities. Federal Law states that supportive service costs should be necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I. Eligibility and determination of need for supportive services should be conducted by a case manager, on a case-by-case basis and may be provided to individuals receiving Basic Career Services. Such individuals must be registered as WIOA participants and are subject to performance outcomes. Exemptions for limited supportive services to individuals before they are enrolled as participants will be approved by WIOA Director on a case-by-case basis and must be noted in the case file.

NOTE: 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 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).

The following policy applies to participants enrolled under the adult and dislocated worker programs under WIOA which include career services and Individual Training Account (ITA)-based training.

Documentation of Eligibility and Determination of Need for Supportive Services

All supportive services must be approved and recorded in Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) before the participant receives or obtains 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. The documentation required to determine eligibility for supportive services must be submitted during the intake process and the request for supportive services made before WIOA registration. An exception may be made for customers whose circumstances have changed after enrollment and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by their case manager.

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

eligible and:

1. Be participating in career services and/or training services.
2. Be unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services; and
3. Must comply with program regulations and policies during the period of training and/or enrollment to continue to receive support service payments.

Determination of Need

- A. Financial/Physical Need: There must be documentation in the participant's case file and/or the GWROPP system that participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves.

Documentation may consist of:

1. Low-income verification
2. Receipt of federal or state public assistance
3. Receipt of UI benefits
4. Documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in-demand occupation
5. Documentation of lack of employment or underemployment
6. Separation from employment notice
7. Transportation distance to attend training
8. Birth certificates of children receiving childcare

- B. Resource Coordination: There must be documentation that supportive services are not available from other state or federal grant programs. There must be analysis of all federal/state/local resources available and how they are being coordinated. For example, WSGM will document the total basis of need considering UI, Pell, Hope etc., or other instances of federal/state/local resources available, to determine how resources are being coordinated. Examples of acceptable documentation:

1. Participant time sheets
2. Income determination
3. UI records
4. Supportive Services Request Form

Process of Providing Supportive Services

WSGM will reimburse participants for transportation, dependent, and childcare costs to the participant at specified limits through check issuance bi-weekly. Proper authorization and documentation must be submitted by the participant to the Case Manager. All other support costs will be paid by check to the vendor providing the support service. Proper documentation must be provided by the vendor prior to issuance of checks. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate payment to the participant. This will be done upon recommendation by the Case Manager. The amount of support provided for transportation, dependent, and childcare costs will be reviewed yearly by WSGM and adjusted based on funding levels and economic conditions.

Documentation of the Provision for Supportive Services

- a) All supportive service information for participants must be entered in the WorkSource Portal (type of supportive service, amount, date of service etc.). All supporting documentation for a participant's supportive services must be scanned

into the WorkSource Portal (Examples of this supporting documentation include but are not limited to, participant time sheets, income determination, UI records, supportive service request form, etc.).

- b) All participant's supportive service information is required to be accurate in the WorkSource Portal. The budgeted amount, type of service and timeframe in which the supportive service was given must be accurate. No payment can be made to the participant until that amount has been updated in the WorkSource Portal. Supporting documentation of the participant's qualifying WIOA activity, for which the participant is receiving supportive services, must be scanned into the participant's WorkSource Portal profile. Examples of this supporting documentation include, but are not limited to, in-training participant time sheets signed by the instructor/supervisor and documents proving participation in other types of individualized career and/or training services.

Allowable Supportive Service

Allowable supportive services provided during training include, but are not limited to:

- a) Assistance with transportation;
- b) Assistance with childcare and dependent care;
- c) Assistance with housing;
- d) Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- e) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
- f) Emergency auto repair (LWDA policy must ensure that the repair is necessary for the participants to attend training and the most economical option for the participant's transportation needs);
- g) Emergency healthcare and medical services (LWDA policy must ensure that these types of payments are only provided when necessary for the participant to participate in training).

Support Service Request Form: Each participant requesting supportive services will complete a request for support service form. The WIOA career advisor will determine the basis of need and sign off on the justification for the amount of support that is necessary and reasonable to complete WIOA activities. This documentation should be collected and included in the participant's case file.

All participants' Supportive Service expenditures must be submitted, utilizing the attendance forms; dependent care forms; or other methods required by WSGM to the WSGM Case Manager for approval and for processing.

- a. Customers must attend class or clinical placement to receive any transportation support payment for that day. Attendance forms are completed by the customer and signed by the instructor(s). The attendance form is submitted to the Case Manager on a bi-weekly basis and maintained in the customer file.

- b. The Case Manager verifies the actual costs that are being submitted for payment and reviews previous authorizations in the participant record to avoid duplication of services or double billing of the item.
- c. Payments will be made directly to the participant as a reimbursement. Payments will not be made for sick days, holidays, days when no class is scheduled, days when class has been cancelled, or for internet classes. Customers must be making satisfactory progress (a minimum of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale each semester or a minimum of a C on an A, B, C, D, F scale or 70% on a 100% scale) and cooperating with instructional process to continue to receive support payments. Support payments will not be made for classes taken for the second time when support was paid during the first attempt.

Dependent Care

If dependent care is not otherwise available from Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), or other funding sources, WSGM may reimburse the cost of care for dependent children up to a maximum amount per week per family, excluding late fees, as noted in the WSGM Procedure Guidelines.

Dependent care is classified as one or more of the following: child or dependent under age 14 who is receiving 50% or more of their daily living needs from the participant; or dependent, regardless of age, which requires assistance due to disability or medical condition or documented care need.

This assistance is available while the participant is enrolled in basic career services or an ITA training service. Assistance is available when the individual is scheduled and/or commuting to training activities. Assistance may also be available for children during times when school is not in session. Funds from other sources, such as TANF, may be combined with WIOA funds with written approval by the WSGM Case Manager. In those instances, WIOA funds may only be used for those expenses not covered by the other funding source. For participants receiving TANF benefits, service providers must document that the participant is not receiving dependent care benefits from TANF before providing dependent care assistance through WIOA.

Participants are encouraged to use licensed dependent care providers whenever possible. If not licensed, the service must be provided by a dependent care provider who cares for children outside of the participant's home. Reimbursement will be per child for both licensed and unlicensed childcare providers per the WSGM Procedure guidelines, reviewed yearly.

Dependent care costs will be reimbursed to the participant. Payments are based on receipts from the dependent care provider and include verification of a child's attendance record and verification of class attendance by the participant. Payments will be made biweekly and will depend on timely receipt of the specified documentation.

No reimbursements will be made for registration or late fees incurred by participants.

Transportation

Eligible participants will receive reimbursement not to exceed daily amount noted in the WSGM Procedure Guidelines, to ensure mobility between home and location of training or practicum/clinical site.

Those traveling over 80 miles round trip may be eligible to receive a higher reimbursement, noted in the WSGM Procedure Guidelines once a need is documented by case manager. Transportation assistance is not available if provided by another agency such as DFCS.

Additional Allowable Support Services:

Allowable limited supportive services provided before training to enable the participant to complete their eligibility and enable their participation in a program, to include but are not limited to:

1. State ID
2. Birth certificate
3. Social security card

Allowable supportive services provided after training in order to obtain employment include, but are not limited to:

- a) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools, including eyeglasses and protective ear gear;
- b) Tools, work clothing, and boots/shoes required for employment;
- c) Drug testing required by employer;
- d) Financial counseling; and
- e) Auxiliary aides and services necessary for persons with disabilities to obtain and retain employment.

For participants enrolled in programs such as HVAC, automotive technology and automotive collision, which require expensive tools for training as well as employment, supportive services may be used to supplement tool purchase costs during training in the event the participant's training ITA funds are exhausted by tuition, books, fees and other training costs. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis by the WSGM Director.

Other Requirements and Policies

A participant continues to be eligible for support services only as long as he/she is active in the program. Failure to participate fully, without good cause, will result in termination of assistance.

During the assessment period individual needs are identified and a plan is developed and documented in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for support provided by WSGM, DFCS or other programs. To maximize the support available, WSGM will actively promote coordination with organizations to provide supportive services at no cost to the program or the participant. These services could include assistance in housing, legal problems, financial planning, dental/medical care, mental health, and other areas.

No supportive service payments can be made until the day after a participant's enrollment / orientation. With the exception of documents needed by WIOA to complete their eligibility and enable participation.

Unallowable Supportive Services

Payments are not allowed for titled or deeded 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
5. Fines

6. Late Fees

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 "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.



Attachment 8: ETPL Provider Application Evaluation Criteria

WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) is accepting applications for Training Provider Agreements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for occupational skills training to eligible adult residents in the area. WSGM area covers thirteen counties in North Georgia, including: Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White.

Training Providers submitting program applications to WSGMs should carefully review the Applicant packet, which includes:

- WIOA Glossary and General Information
- Instructions for completing the application
- Initial Eligibility for new providers
- Provider/Program responsiveness checklist
- Eligible Training Provider/Program Application
- Individual Training Account Policy

Applications will be accepted for a variety of skills training areas. A list of WSGM in demand occupations is attached as [Attachment B](#). Training in areas not listed may be considered if the institution can demonstrate an employer's need for trainees.

WSGM evaluates new training providers/programs quarterly. All responsive new provider applications not currently on the State's Eligible Training Provider List will be approved by WSGM Workforce Development Board. New Providers/Programs currently on the State's ETPL may be approved for the WSGM area on a trial basis serving 10 participants. Once participants have completed, performance information will be obtained and presented to the Board for review. Due to the extensive application review, program evaluation and quarterly scheduled WSGM Board meetings, responses to the submitted application may vary depending on the submission date. Recommended providers/programs will be forwarded to the Technical College System of Georgia Office of Workforce Development (TCSG OWD) for acceptance and inclusion on the State Eligible Training Provider/Program List. If the application is accepted by the TCSG OWD, a completed provider agreement may be submitted to the provider for signature.

Completed applications should be mailed or emailed to:

WorkSource Georgia Mountains
1856 Thompson Bridge Road Suite 3
Gainesville, GA 30502

Questions regarding the application may be addressed to WSGM at 770-538-2727.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ETP APPLICATION

The WorkSource Georgia Mountains (WSGM) Eligible Training Provider application packet includes: General Information, a Proposal Responsiveness Checklist, an Application, and Assurances. WSGM must review all responsive provider applications. If responsive, staff may conduct employer reference checks, program graduate reference checks, on-site reviews, and conduct a training observation to ensure that customers receive quality services. WSGM will input recommended providers/program information into the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) and alert the Technical College System of Georgia Office of Workforce Development (TCSG OWD) that the provider information is ready for review, acceptance and inclusion on the State Eligible Training Provider Listing (ETPL). If the application is accepted by TCSG OWD, a completed provider agreement may be processed and submitted to the provider for signature.

All providers that were not previously approved as eligible training providers under WIOA (except Registered Apprenticeship programs) must submit the required information to be considered for initial eligibility under WIOA. Providers receive initial eligibility for one year for a provider-specific program. Apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act are exempt from initial eligibility procedures.

The application does not include on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, job readiness, life skills training and youth services.

Training programs included in the application must exist at the time of application and be approved by the NPEC; the program(s) must be currently available to the general public and not solely dedicated/availed to WIOA customers.

- To be considered for review, each program must have at least ten (10) students who have completed a program of study and obtained training-related employment, with documentation available on their employment status. Newly formed programs should wait to apply until this has occurred. New programs without documented completion and employment records will not be reviewed. Exception – For currently approved providers, see Requests for Additional NEW programs (without performance history).
- Respond to all questions. If the question does not apply, indicate "not applicable." When referring to a catalog or brochure, indicate, "See attached catalog."
- The name of the training institution is the legal name of the entity.
- The contact person is the individual who may answer questions concerning the application.
- Program descriptions should be completed for each program or course of study. If a provider catalog contains the information requested, please attach.
- If the application is submitted via email, it will be necessary to scan, fax or mail a provider certification and a catalog of courses of study, or reference website, if available online.

Detailed Eligible Training Provider Policies may be found in Section 4.4 of the Workforce Policies and Procedures Manual at <https://tcsgeu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/11.08.18-SWDB-Approved-PP.pdf>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Glossary and General Information

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA): WIOA will help job seekers and workers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The purposes of WIOA include:

- Increasing access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training and support services that individuals need, particularly those with barriers to employment;
- Supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development systems, in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce system;
- Improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts;
- Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services;
- Increasing the prosperity of workers and employers;
- Providing workforce development activities that increase employment, retention and earning of participants and that increase post-secondary credential attainment and as a result, improve the quality of workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers and enhance productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

WIOA Services: A customer may access the array of services and program information available on the statewide ETPL and may choose from a variety of Eligible Training Providers. There is no guarantee that a customer will enroll in a specific course or program of study after referral. It is the responsibility of the customer and the career adviser to develop a career plan. A customer may be determined WIOA eligible during WIOA career services. If it appears that the customer is eligible and suitable for provider training, they will be approved for enrollment by WSGM staff. Once approved for enrollment, WSGM staff will provide written authorization to both the customer and the training organization through an Individual Training Account (ITA).

Glossary

Career Ladder Training Programs: WIOA participants may be allowed to take no more than two approved training programs identified under the approved Career Ladder Training Program. They must fully complete the first program before being considered for advancement to the next program. Completion, for the purposes of the Career Ladder Training program, is completion of training, all tests required (per individual training provider curriculum), and receipt of credential(s) as described below in Credentialing. Also, participants are not required to continue training with the same training provider after completion of the first program. They may elect to continue the additional training at another approved provider. All training programs must be completed within the ITA policy (Attachment B) limits.

Career Services: Career services may include an initial assessment of skill levels, job search and placement assistance, provision of

information on in-demand sectors and occupations, information on nontraditional employment, labor market information, provision of information about the performance and cost of education and training providers in the area, career counseling, information about filing unemployment compensation claims, information relating to the availability of supportive services such as child care and transportation, specialized assessments of individual skill levels and service needs, individual or group counseling and career planning, development of an individual employment plan, short-term job-readiness activities, literacy activities related to basic workforce readiness, etc.

Continued Eligibility: WIOA requires a re-determination of ITA program eligibility through a "continuing eligibility" process. For a program to remain eligible to receive ITA funds for new enrollments, the State shall compare program-level performance outcomes against established minimum standards, covering the preceding program year. The State reserves the right to request sufficient information to complete continuing eligibility on any provider. For additional information, See Attachment E. State Policies and Procedures Manual Excerpts. Newly eligible WIOA training providers that were determined to be initially eligible under WIOA will be subject to the application procedure for continued eligibility after their initial year of eligibility expires.

Coordination of Funds: The Provider understands that funds provided under this Agreement may only be used to pay for services **not** covered by other types of financial aid. The Provider also agrees to provide GMRC with written information identifying the type and amount of other financial aid received by each customer that receives services under WIOA.

Credentialing: WIOA performance standards include the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials received by participants. The Provider's responsibility is to ensure that Credentialing goals are obtained for each student. All training programs must prepare WIOA participants through job training and preparation to sit for testing to achieve attainment of industry-recognized credentials as specified by WIOA. Such nationally recognized industry, association or organizations include:

- A state education body
- An institution of higher education eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs
- A registered apprenticeship
- A public regulatory agency
- A professional, industry, or employer association

Customer Referral, Advertisement, and Recruitment: The Provider understands and agrees that only customers referred by GMRC/GMWDB, WSGM, or its authorized representatives, may be enrolled into approved training under this agreement. The Provider may include statements about WIOA training in its advertisements or recruitment efforts; however, any such advertisement must include a disclaimer stating that WIOA funded training may be provided only to individuals who qualify for the program and only if funds are available. Such advertising must be forwarded to GMRC/GMWDB for approval prior to release. The Provider may not enroll any customer into training without the proper referral by GMRC/GMWDB or its authorized representative. The Provider also understands that potential customers, who are recruited or referred to GMRC/GMWDB or its authorized representative for eligibility, may select other training.

Eligible Training Provider: An organization, entity, or institution, such as a public or private college and university, community-based organization, or proprietary school whose application has been approved by the local workforce Board and submitted to the State for inclusion on the State ETPL to provide training services through the use of an ITA or training provided (WIOA exception) through a contract for services. Reference 20 CFR.680.410

Eligible Training Provider List: A statewide compilation of providers that are approved to provide services through the One-Stop system described by WIOA. These lists contain consumer information, including cost and performance information for each provider, so that customers may make informed choices.

Eligible Training Provider Appeals: Procedures outlined in Attachment E. State Policy and Procedures Excerpts are designed to provide guidelines for filing and resolving Appeals made by an ETP or a prospective ETP. In the event that an ETP seeks to file an Appeal, it must do with the entity whose action the ETP disputes. For example, if an ETP is removed from a Local ETPL, the ETP must file an Appeal with the LWDA in accordance with LWDA's policies. Once an ETP has filed an Appeal with a LWDA, received a written resolution, and is dissatisfied with the LWDA's resolution, the ETP may file a second level appeal with the State. Conversely, if an entity is denied designation on the State ETPL, or if the ETP is removed from the State ETPL, the ETP may file an Appeal directly with TSCG OWD.

Individual Training Account: A training plan obligation and expenditure account established on behalf of a WIOA eligible participant to establish a payment plan for a training services program, which may include tuition, books, and fees. The ITA Voucher will consist of the amount of funds approved and provide instructions for invoices or payment requests. If a customer is attending training for

more than one quarter or semester, an ITA voucher is required for each subsequent quarter/semester. WSGM will not accept responsibility for the costs for any customer who begins training with a provider without an ITA Voucher or for any costs incurred for training prior to WIOA approval and registration.

Initial Eligibility for New Providers: All providers that were not previously approved as eligible training providers under WIA (except Registered Apprenticeship programs) must submit the required information to be considered for initial eligibility under WIOA. Under WIOA, providers may receive initial eligibility for only one year for a provider-specific program. For potential ETP's seeking initial eligibility, verifiable program specific performance information must be provided.

Applicants must provide the following:

1. A detailed description of each training program to be considered
2. Performance information for each training program will include (See Required Performance Information below)
 - a. Q2 entered employment rate
 - b. Q4 entered employment rate
 - c. Median earnings
 - d. Credential rate
 - e. Measurable skills gain
3. Describe in detail provider partnerships with business
4. Describe the recognized post-secondary credential attained after training completion
5. Describe how the training program(s) aligns with in-demand industries and occupations
6. A provider must also comply with the following to be considered for inclusion on the ETPL:
 - a. In business for at least 6 months prior to the initial application and have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division.
 - b. Training must be available to the general public, have published catalog price structures and each program must have completed and placed in training-related employment at least 10 students per program. Training facilities must comply with ADA requirements for accessibility and reasonable accommodation.
 - c. Current of all federal and State taxes (Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and State taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes).
 - d. In statutory compliance with the laws of the State related to the operation as a training or education institution. Proprietary colleges or schools operating in Georgia are required by the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institution Act of 1990 to have a certificate of authorization from the NPEC before beginning operation or advertising in the State.
 - e. Provide documentation of current accreditation/authorization.
 - f. Not be found in fault in a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding related to its training or educational institution performance. Must disclose any pending criminal, civil or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent.
 - g. Disclose any and all conflicts of interest with state or local WSGM staff or Board members, including but not limited to family ties (spouse, child, parent), fiduciary roles, employment or ownerships interests in common.
 - h. Include a current federal tax identification number.
 - i. Be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau and have no outstanding complaints.
7. **Each LWDB may set minimum standards applicable to their local areas. Federal Performance Standards for the State and local areas are negotiated yearly and are subject to change.**

<u>STUDENTS PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – past 12 months period</u>	WSGM Minimum Standard	<u>Definition</u>
<u>Must pass two of five measures</u>		
<u>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit</u>	<u>82%</u>	The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For Youth the indicator includes % of participants in education or training activities the 2 nd quarter after exit.
<u>Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit</u>	<u>84%</u>	The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For

		Youth the indicator includes % of participants in education or training activities the 4th quarter after exit.
<u>Median Earnings – Quarterly earnings/hourly rate</u>	<u>\$16.45</u>	The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
<u>Credential Attainment</u>	<u>77%</u>	The percentage of participants enrolled in education or training program who attained a recognized post-secondary credential or secondary school diploma within 1 year after program exit.
<u>Measurable Skills Gain</u>	<u>68%</u>	Program completion rate for student completing all coursework and exams

Currently approved Eligible Training Providers proposing new training programs (with no performance history)

Approved Training Providers proposing new training programs shall follow the procedure below to qualify for one year of initial eligibility. Approved Training Providers seeking initial eligibility for a new program shall provide the LWBD a narrative application, which must include the following verifiable program-specific performance information:

1. Provide information on a substantially similar training program (in the same industry) indicating whether the program satisfied the following indicators of performance:
 - a. unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit,
 - b. unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit,
 - c. median earnings,
 - d. credential attainment,
 - e. measurable skills gains
2. A descriptive narrative with information on the proposed training program's ability to satisfy the following indicators of performance:
 - a. unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit,
 - b. unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit,
 - c. median earnings,
 - d. credential attainment,
 - e. measurable skills gains
3. Information concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with business. This could include information about the quality and quantity of employer partnerships.
4. Information that addresses alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent possible.
5. LWDA's must re-verify that the Approved Training Provider's proposed new program complies with the following to be considered for one-year inclusion on the State ETPL.
 - a. Approved Training Provider must have been in business for at least six months prior to the initial application and must have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division;
 - b. Training programs must be available to the general public and have published catalog price structures;
 - c. Training facilities must comply with ADA requirements for accessibility and reasonable accommodation;
 - d. Approved Training Providers must be current on all federal and State taxes (must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and State taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes);
 - e. Approved Training Providers must be in statutory compliance with the laws of the State related to operation as a training education institution. Proprietary colleges or schools operating in Georgia are required by the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institution Act of 1990 to have a certificate of authorization from the NPEC before beginning operation or advertising in the State;
 - f. Approved Training Providers must provide documentation of current accreditation/authorization;

- g. Approved Training Providers must not have been found at fault in criminal, civil or administrative proceedings related to its performance as a training or educational institution and must disclose any pending criminal, civil or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent;
- h. Approved Training Providers must disclose any and all conflicts of interest with State or LWDB staff or board members including, but not limited to family ties (spouse, child and parent), fiduciary roles and employment or ownership interests in common, and
- i. All applications must include a current federal tax identification number.

All information detailed above shall be reviewed and verified by the LWDB, in a manner detailed in local policy to determine whether or not the proposed program shall be granted initial one-year eligibility.

At the conclusion of the initial year, the program shall provide such required data as outlined and detailed below for the State to determine whether the program shall remain on the ETPL or be removed. Each required measure's data shall be collected and submitted by the LWDA. The Approved Training Provider may continue enrolling WIOA funded students into the initially approved program until such time as the State issues a determination regarding continued eligibility and subsequent placement on the ETPL.

After receiving the program's data from the LWDA, the State shall perform its review of the program. If the necessary data is not received by the State in a timely manner, the Program shall not receive continued eligibility or be placed on the ETPL. The program must satisfy the following factors in order to be determined eligible for placement on the ETPL:

1. The program must enroll at least ten (10) students during the 12-month initial eligibility period, and;
2. The program must satisfy two or more of the six factors identified in the table below.

If the program fails to satisfy either of the two requirements listed above, the Approved Training Provider's program under review will be removed in accordance with Section 4.4.7 (II)

Job Placement: Training providers are responsible for placement of program trainees. Continued inclusion on the eligible provider listing is contingent upon successful completion and placement of trainees. It is imperative that providers work with WSGM to assure the prompt and accurate recording of placement information. WSGM is available to assist trainees with issues arising during initial placement, such as child care, etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Performance: Providers will be evaluated quarterly by GMRC/GMWDB, WSGM, or its authorized representatives based on meeting or exceeding the above mentioned performance measures. The evaluation may be on-site, desktop, or a combination of methods. The Provider will agree to cooperate in any and all components of the evaluation and will make records available to the monitors in a timely manner.

Notice of Denial of Eligibility or Removal (See Attachment E. State Workforce Policies and Procedures Section 4.4.7)

New ETPL Federal Regulations

In accordance with WIOA section 116(d)(4)(a) and 20 CFR 677.230(a)(5), states and providers must report data on the primary indicators of performance for all individuals in the approved program of study, regardless of WIOA participation. (See [Data & Information Representatives – TCSG | Technical College System of Georgia](#))

Reporting on non-WIOA Program Participants.

In addition to the data that must be provided on the WIOA participants being served by that program, WIOA section 116(d)(4) requires that ETPs provide the necessary information to the State on all individuals being served in the approved program of study so that the State may submit the required information on "All Individuals" in the ETA-9171 report. In the ETA-9171, these requirements are in the section titled "All Individuals" and include the following elements:

- the number of individuals served;
- number exited (includes students who completed, withdrew or transferred out of the program);
- number who completed the program;
- number of exiters employed in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- number of exiters employed in the 4th quarter after exit;
- median earnings of exiters in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- number of exiters who attained a credential during participation or within one year after exit;
- average earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit; and
- average earnings in the 4th quarter after exit.

Out-of-State Training Providers: In order for WIOA students to access training through Out-of-State Training Providers not currently on the ETPL, the training providers must comply with the conditions set forth below before the Local Workforce Development Board may consider contracting with the provider.

The provider shall:

1. Submit an application for Initial Eligibility, including program description attachments;
2. Submit evidence that the provider is accredited by an accreditation agency approved by the US Department of Education (If regulated by government entities such as the Department of Transportation, the provider should include applicable accreditation);
3. Submit evidence that the institution is currently on its state eligible training provider list and in good standing; and,
4. Report student completion data (employment and wage information to the WFD) consistent with WIOA performance information.

Regarding performance information, specific participant numbers shall be included to show satisfactory performance in any of the formats listed below:

- a. A certified report or letter from the State's Title I or WIOA Administration agency, reporting on the provider's satisfactory performance; or
- b. A certified report or letter from a Local Workforce Development Area within the provider's state reporting on the provider's satisfactory performance.

Out-of-State Post-Secondary training providers not operating within the State of Georgia are not required to be licensed by the Non-Public Post-Secondary Commission of Georgia (NPEC). Local Workforce Development Boards will review and approve out-of-state training providers based on the local area's needs and input provider information into the GWROPP for state approval.

Performance: The Provider understands and agrees that it is expected that performance outcomes will meet or exceed the rates as listed in the Initial Eligibility description. The employment rate and wage rates include both customers who are successful completers and those who are non-completers. Please note the requirements for Continued Eligibility for the State Eligible Training Provider Listing. Performance will be monitored quarterly on five of the performance outcomes:

- Credential Attainment Rate
- Employment Rate Q2 (adults and dislocated workers)
- Employment Rate Q4 (adults and dislocated workers)
- Median Earnings (adults and dislocated workers)
- Measurable Skills Gains

Performance Hold Status: A Provider may be placed on a "performance hold" status by GMRC/GMWDB if they do not meet two of the five following measures:

- Completion Rate
- Attainment of Post-Secondary Credential
- Employment Rate (adults and dislocated workers)
- Employment Rate in a training-related occupation (adults and dislocated workers)
- Average Wage at Placement (adults and dislocated workers)
- Median Earnings (adult and dislocated workers)

Providers will be responsible for researching, investigating and submitting verifiable documentation. The "hold" status will continue until a Provider furnishes sufficient (as determined by GMRC/GMWDB) verifiable customer information to bring performance levels above minimum levels. "Hold" status will be reviewed as soon as information is submitted, but no less than quarterly. A Provider may also be placed in "hold" status due to ongoing failure to notify case managers of attendance, academic, or support concerns that are affecting timely completion of training or the gaining of subsequent training-related employment, or for unresolved compliance monitoring findings.

Provider Entry Criteria: Training providers will be held accountable to meet specific performance standards established by the State and WSGM and will qualify for the ETPL on performance. Training Providers have the responsibility for assessing the current skills, education and experience of candidates and providing training and employment for customers. GMRC/GMWDB may require additional assessments to determine suitability for training programs. However, if customers are enrolled in Provider programs that are not appropriate for them, they may not receive the full benefits of the WIOA system. Similarly, this may cause Providers not to meet established State, local, and contractual performance standards. Provider entry requirements will be a critical factor in establishing and attaining successful performance. They should be established to determine whether the customer's current skills, education, experience, etc. will enable them to complete the training program, obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to receive certification, and obtain training-related employment with wages that meet standards and promote self-sufficiency.

Providers should be aware that entry requirements for reading, math and language should match those appearing on the ETPL. The Program Description, submitted by the Provider, contains all information regarding entry criteria. Testing for reading, math, and language should be comparable to the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE).

Letters of acceptance should include a statement that the student has met the entry requirements as stated on the ETPL. Persons not meeting the stated ETPL entry requirements should not attend training until the appropriate levels are achieved.

If customers are eligible for grants and scholarships such as the PELL Grant or HOPE Scholarship, applications must be made for these funds to combine funds to provide for total costs of training expenses.

Program of Training Services: A program of training services is: (a) one or more courses or classes that, upon successful completion, leads to (a) a recognized post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma or its equivalent, (b) training-related employment, or (c) measurable skills gains toward such credential or employment..

Registered Apprenticeship: Apprenticeship Programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (NAA) are exempt from initial eligibility procedures. Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial eligibility procedures as other providers because they are subject to a detailed application and vetting procedure to become a Registered Apprenticeship program with the United States Department of Labor. Registered apprenticeship programs must be included and maintained on the list of eligible providers of training services as long as the corresponding program remains registered. Under WIOA, Registered Apprenticeship programs that request to be ETPs are automatically included on the list and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list.

Time and Attendance Records: Provider responsibilities include the recording of attendance information of WIOA customers and submittal to the WIOA case manager on a bi-weekly basis. If a customer should fail to show for training as scheduled on the approved training plan, the Provider will immediately notify the case manager. The course instructor will verify attendance information. Should a customer drop out of training during the refund period, prompt notification must occur and a refund processed to GMRC. The Provider may submit school attendance forms so long as the applicable information is included.

Training Enrollment: In addition to the letter of acceptance, Providers are to provide a listing of required coursework, including and specifying core courses, prices, and a schedule of courses to be accomplished during the program. This listing should also be forwarded to each case manager and should be attached to the training voucher. Upon enrollment by the WIOA case manager, each customer will sign an Enrollment Agreement, detailing customer obligations for completion of training, testing completion, etc.

Training Activities: Activities during training shall include establishing a joint career advisement relationship with WIOA case managers, and notification to them within three (3) days of any difficulties or problems encountered by WIOA customers, such as no or poor attendance, difficulty in keeping up, other academic problems, apparent social problems, or support needs. A withdrawal from training is to be immediately reported, at a minimum no later than three (3) days subsequent to occurrence. Any changes or amendments to the customer's training plan must be submitted to the case manager. If approved, the case manager will issue an ITA voucher to both the customer and the Provider to reflect the changes.

Sequential Courses: Semester/quarter customers will not be allowed to continue multi-package training programs without proof of completion of prior coursework and testing. In the event that two or more related multi-package courses are required prior to certification testing, the case managers are to be notified with subsequent notice to GMWDB.

Administrative and Financial Processes

Adherence to Applicable Laws and Regulations: The Provider agrees to comply fully with all applicable rules, regulations, policies, guidelines and requirements, including but not limited to the following applicable Federal/State laws: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (P.L. 113-128), 29 USC § 3248(e), 29 CFR § 38, 20 CFR 626-631 and all applicable OMB Circulars.

Administrative or Financial Hold Status: A Provider may be placed on "administrative or financial hold" status by GMRC, at any time there are unresolved issues or rising concerns of a financial nature. During the period of financial hold no new enrollments will be allowed and any pending payments may be withheld. Reasons that a provider may be placed on financial hold are as follows, but not limited to:

1. Notification to GMRC from an outside agency of a levy placed against the Provider.

2. Failure of the Provider to submit any agreed upon refund
3. Failure of the Provider to provide students with the necessary supplies, books, etc., for the specified training program (as per agreement between GMRC and the Provider)
4. Notification or evidence that the Provider may be committing fraudulent activities
5. Concerns of the status of the Provider's financial stability

In most cases, Providers will be given a thirty (30) day notice of "Pending Hold" action. During this time, providers will be responsible for researching, investigating, and submitting verifiable documentation or an acceptable explanation in response to any findings or allegations. Failure to respond to the notice in the required time will result in the Provider being placed on indefinite hold, and/or termination of agreement between GMRC and the Provider.

In cases where the GMRC has been informed in writing of a levy against the Provider, or the Provider fails to submit any agreed upon refund, or the Provider relocates and/or closes the training location without proper notice to GMRC and/or students, the Provider will be immediately placed on financial hold status and notified in writing within five (5) business days of being placed on hold. The Provider will then have thirty (30) days to remedy or respond to the notice, whichever is required. Failure to respond to or remedy notice in the required time will result in Provider being placed on indefinite hold, and/or termination of agreement between GMRC and the Provider.

Costs and Expenses: The Provider assures that the costs correlate with the price advertised to the general public, less any WIOA discount, if applicable. Limitations are based on invoicing procedures provided in Attachment G and limited to ITA Voucher items and amounts. Customers are required to complete classes/courses prior to billing for the next sequential classes/courses. (See Sequential Training). Sequential payments will be made for classes/courses within a total program of study as they begin. Payments will be denied for any customer attending a sequential training program prior to completion of prior coursework and testing, including credential exams. Exceptions may be granted based on appropriate related multi-package training approved by the WIOA case manager.

All test fees will be paid with prior approval from the WIOA case manager and must have a scheduled date for testing. In addition, confirmation of registration from the testing body and or receipts that clearly identify the participant(s) must be provided prior to reimbursement. Receipts for batch purchases will not be accepted as confirmation. Test retake fees, late fee payments, fines and penalties are not allowable as Costs and Expenses. Exceptions may be granted only if the delay was due to GMRC/GMWDB staff error.

Although test fees are reimbursed based on pre-approved costs between GMRC and the training provider, GMRC will honor and pay increases in test fees that are made by the industry-approved credentialing agencies. This will be effective **AFTER GMRC/GMWDB** receives official notification of those changes and is not retroactive. Any increases made and controlled by the training provider must receive prior approval by GMRC.

Equal Employment Opportunity: The Provider agrees to comply fully with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The Provider also ensures that programmatic and architectural accessibility and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to customers with disabilities and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Invoice/Payment Procedures: GMRC/GMWDB, through its authorized representative, will issue an ITA Obligation Voucher(s) to the Provider authorizing training. Only those Costs or Expenses identified on the voucher will be eligible for payment. The Provider agrees to invoice GMRC for services delivered based on the training program's respective training profile to be determined in advance by GMRC and the Provider. Please note that GMRC will not pay the costs of any customer who begins training with a Provider without an ITA voucher. Costs and expenses are to be documented and itemized on the Provider invoice and will match the approved costs for that training program. Invoices may not exceed authorized voucher expenses. Books, supplies, uniforms, drug testing, tuition, testing fees, and any other costs required for training shall be paid upon GMRC's receipt and acceptance of an invoice, ITA voucher, and acceptable backup documentation. All invoices will be processed within 30 days from the date received, providing there are no errors and/or omissions, and all supporting documents have been submitted. Otherwise, payments may be delayed beyond 30 days.

All invoices must contain the following information: WIOA Customer's name (must match the name on the voucher), course of study, training beginning and ending dates, remittance address, a contact's name, and phone number, an invoice number, and a date. Insufficient information may result in delay or non-payment of invoices. Invoices must be billed to:

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Attn: Finance Department
PO Box 1720
Gainesville, GA 30501.

Invoices that are received by GMRC more than 60 days after the completion of a course or program may not be processed or paid. Please note that in all cases payments are contingent upon the availability of funding.

PROVIDER/PROGRAM APPLICATION RESPONSIVENESS CHECKLIST

IF ORGANIZATION IS UNABLE TO MEET ANY REQUIREMENTS OF THE RESPONSIVENESS CRITERIA LISTED BELOW, THE PROGRAMS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED AND WILL BE CONSIDERED NON-RESPONSIVE.

NAME OF PROVIDER

REQUIREMENTS

- Must be in statutory compliance with Georgia the laws as related to its operation as a training or educational institution
- Training facilities must comply with ADA requirements for accessibility and reasonable accommodation.
- Must have been in business for at least six months prior to initial application and must maintain legal active status to conduct business, evidenced by a current business license and/or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division (attach to application).
- Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding Federal and State taxes, including Unemployment Insurance (UI) taxes.
- Must be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau with no outstanding complaints.
- Must not be found in fault of criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding related to performance as a training or educational institution. Must disclose any pending criminal, civil or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent (sign Debarment Statement, Attachment A).
- Must disclose any and all conflicts of interest with State, or Local WSGM Staff or Board Members, including, but not limited to family ties (spouse, child, parent), fiduciary roles, employment, or ownership interests in common.
- All applications must include the current federal tax identification number (the number used to file employee income taxes with the Internal Revenue Service).
- To be considered for review, each program must have at least ten students who have completed the program and obtained training-related employment, with documentation available on employment status. Newly formed programs should wait to apply until this has occurred. New programs without documented completion and employment records will not be reviewed. (Exception - For currently approved providers, see Requests for the additional new program (without performance history).

TRAINING PROGRAM CRITERIA

- Training skills are specific and in demand in the labor market.
- A recognized post-secondary credential is attained after program completion
- The program/s is/are existent, ongoing and continuous.
- The training programs are open to the general public, have published catalog price structures and are not solely dedicated/availed to WIOA customers.
- Job search and/or placement assistance is provided by the organization.
- The organization does not appear on current federal, State or local debarment and suspension lists.
- The provider assures that the proposed training facility is disabled accessible or are reasonable accommodations made for provision of services to disabled individuals.

NPEC AND/OR OTHER ACCREDITATION/AUTHORIZATION

Proprietary colleges or schools operating in Georgia are required by the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institutions Act of 1990 (NPEIA) to have a certificate of authorization from the Georgia Nonpublic Post-Secondary Education Commission (NPEC) before beginning operation or advertising in the State. This certificate must be renewed annually. The NPECs' primary purpose is to ensure that each authorized college or school is educationally sound and financially stable.

Nonpublic Degree Granting Post-Secondary Educational Institutions in Georgia - The Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institutions Act of 1990 provides that a post-secondary educational institution must apply for and be granted a Certificate of Authorization before beginning operation or advertising in Georgia. NPEC must authorize each degree program. Following initial authorization, the institution's Certificate must be renewed annually. Any institution operating or advertising to begin operation without acquiring the necessary Certificate of Authorization is in violation of Georgia law, and shall be subject to civil penalties.

Nonpublic Non-Degree Granting Post-Secondary Institutions in Georgia – Any instructional program defined as a proprietary school according to the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institutions Act of 1990 must apply for and be granted a Certificate of Authorization before beginning operation or advertising in Georgia. Following initial authorization, the institution's Certificate must be renewed annually. Any institution operation or advertising to begin operation without acquiring the necessary Certificate of Authorization is in violation of Georgia law, and shall be subject to civil penalties.

NPEC allows exemptions when another governmental agency is providing oversight. For example, the Georgia Department of Public Safety provides oversight of Truck Driver Training Programs. Proprietary schools interested in becoming a WIOA ITA provider will need to contact NPEC to begin the authorization process.

For additional information concerning NPEC, please contact:
 Laura S. Wieth, Deputy Director
 Nonpublic Post-Secondary Education Commission
 2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 220
 Tucker, GA 30084
 (770) 414-3300
<http://www.gnpec.georgia.gov>

Check below the agency/agencies providing accreditation/authorization for your organization and attach a copy of the certification document.

- Nonpublic Post-Secondary Education Commission (NPEC)
- Georgia Healthcare Partnership (GHP/GMCF)
- Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- Other(s): _____

- All programs must be currently approved by NPEC or other Accrediting Organization (Include copy of NPEC certification for each program)
- Provide licensure documentation if another governmental agency is providing oversight (i.e., GA Public Safety or GA Medical Care Foundation).
- Attach a copy of the credential and a confirming statement that graduates of the program may sit for the Credential Examination.

ATTACHMENTS TO APPLICATION

The following items have been included as an attachment to the application:

- Accreditation/Authorization Documents (Include authorizing agency description) *
- Catalog or Brochure
- Copies of credential(s) to be received by students
- Current Business License *
- Debarment Form
- NPEC Certification *
- Program Description(s)
- Published Course Price Listing (Copy of catalog or website page, if price included)

- ☐ Schedule of Classes
- ☐ Signed EEO and Conflict of Interest Assurances
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Assurance

*Please attach if applicable to your organization.

PROVIDER APPLICATION

EVALUATION CRITERIA

WSGM

To be Completed by WSGM Staff Only

NAME OF PROVIDER: _____

TRAINING PROPOSED: _____

RATER: _____

DATE: _____

I. APPROPRIATENESS/OUTCOMES

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Is (Are) the proposed training program(s) in a growth occupation identified in the application, or has the provider submitted documentation of a need for proposed training?			
2	Does the provider site indicate a positive learning atmosphere with training curriculum and equipment that are up-to-date and considered state-of-the-art?			
3	Does the tuition include costs for supplies, etc., as part of the total cost?			
4	Job search assistance included?			
5	Do references of both participants and employers indicate that completers attain marketable job skills after training?			
6	Will training lead to a certificate, diploma or degree?			
7	Are training schedules on-going?			
8	Is the cost in line with similar programs provided throughout the local area?			

II. PAST PERFORMANCE

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Does the provider have previous successful completion rate, defined as meeting or exceeding WSGM goals for the previous 12 months?			
2	Does the provider have previous successful experience in placing individuals in training related occupations classified as unsubsidized employment defined as meeting or exceeding WSGM goals for the previous 12 months?			
3	Does the provider have previous successful unsubsidized employment in training related occupations experience, defined as meeting or exceeding WSGM goals for the previous 12 months?			
4	Does the training program(s) result in an employment at a wage necessary to attain self-sufficiency?			
5	Will placement occur in full time positions with potential growth and benefits?			
6	Does the student loan default rate exceed 25%?			
7	Is the provider listed on current Federal, State or local debarment/suspension lists?			

III. CAPABILITY OF TRAINING ORGANIZATION

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Has the organization been in operation for more than 6 months and submitted evidence of financial stability, i.e., sound financial statement, audit report, tax return?			
2	Has the curriculum been certified by an appropriate accrediting agency?			
3	Has the organization's programs been certified by NPEC (if applicable)?			
4	Has the provider submitted a signed debarment statement?			

IV. BONUS

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Does the provider have experience with training special populations, such as disabled, homeless, low income, individuals with language or cultural barriers?			

V. RANKING INFORMATION

(0 = Not Acceptable, 1 = Weak, 2 = Average, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent)		Ranking	Weight	Total
1	Appropriateness/Outcomes		2	
2	Past Performance		2	
3	Capability of Training Organization		1	
4	Point		1	
5	Total			

Maximum Score= 21

Minimum Score Required for Consideration = 12

Comments: _____



Attachment 9: WSGM ITA Policy

Individual Training Accounts

Additions and Revisions highlighted in yellow.

An individual determined eligible for WIOA-funded training services may select an eligible training program/provider from the Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Board/STATE approved ETPL in consultation with a WSGM representative located at WSGM Office located at 1856 Thompson Bridge Rd. Gainesville, GA 30501 Suites 2-4 and 1F.

Policies:

1. Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA plan as growth and/or demand occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the Plan must be provided. Growth and Demand Occupation lists are subject to change at any time due to fluctuating economic conditions.
2. Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to maintain or increase income.
3. ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including but not limited to the following: books, tuition and fees, general supplies, tools, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing 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: Certain WSGM computers and related equipment, computer program software, peripherals, electronic and wireless equipment unless approved on a case-by-case basis by WSGM.
4. Funding limitations will be as follows:
 - a. Up to \$6,000 in training costs, excluding support may be expended for each participant for the first year (three consecutive semesters) of training assistance.
 - b. For training assistance that extends beyond one year, total training costs may not exceed \$10,000 (excluding support.)
 - c. For the following programs: Nurse Practitioner MS, Bachelors of Science Nursing, Associates of Science Nursing, **Licensed Practical Nursing**, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Physical Therapy Assistant AAS, Dental Hygiene AAS, and Health Care Information Technology AAS, funding for the first year of training assistance may be up to \$7,000 and for training that extends beyond one year of assistance, total training costs may not exceed \$14,000. An increase to these limits requires WSGM case manager approval for each participant. (Effective from July 1, 2017 forward with revisions)
 - d. The total cost of training may exceed the available WIOA funding limitations however customers must provide evidence that additional financial support is available to cover the total training cost. In a case where the total cost of training exceeds the available WIOA funding limitations, customer funding will be utilized until the remaining training amount is within local area funding limitations. WIOA supportive services may be paid during the time in which the customer funding is being utilized.
 - e. Up to \$11,000 excluding support for a specialized Welding Program. (Effective 7/1/2014)
WSGM does not assist with training that is outside the contiguous United States of America.
5. 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.
6. In addition: WSGM assists with one (1) program of study with limited exceptions:

- a. Stackable Credential: Part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs (Customers must reapply and be found eligible and suitable; Maximum training dollar limit of \$10,000 per individual for all WSGM training combined will not be exceeded)
 - b. Programs that require a prerequisite, e.g. Air Conditioning Technology with Commercial Refrigeration, Licensed Practical Nurse, and Health Care Assistant Certificates (Total training must fall within the WSGM length and cost of training limits)
 - c. A participant may take no more than two approved training programs identified under the Career Ladder Training Program. They must fully complete the first program before being considered for advancement to the next program. Completion, for the purposes of Career Ladder Training, is completion of training, all tests required per training provider curriculum), and receipt of credential(s). Also, participants are not required to continue training with the same training provider after completion of the first program. They may elect to continue additional training at another approved training program/provider.
7. Customers applying for training services that have recent (within last three years) training and attainment of a recognized credential in a growth and demand occupation may not be considered to be "in need of training" services. (Exceptions require WSGM Director approval)
 8. Changes in Training Provider are not allowed. (Any exceptions, as noted under Career Ladder, require WSGM Director Approval)
 9. An upgrade to a degree program is not permitted due to the length of program guidelines, available funding, and Individual Training Account (ITA) requirements. A downgrade from a degree or diploma credential level program, or lateral change of program within the same credential level, may be allowed based on documented statements or evaluations by the Training Provider, and the WSGM Case Manager; or in case of documented medical condition(s).
 10. A customer cannot change their major, program of study or add/drop a course without prior approval by their WSGM Case Manager. In the event of withdrawal from/failure of a course or program, WSGM will not provide the funds to re-enroll in that course at a later date.
 11. All customers must maintain a full-time training status as determined by the training provider. Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis at the case manager's discretion. Customers who can provide documentation from their employer that they are working 20 or more hours a week may be eligible for a Full-Time status exemption at the case manager's discretion. Exemption will require documentation of hours worked by employer and verification from the training provider that the training program can be completed within the 104 week (two year) time period.
 12. In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute (30-40 miles one way) of the WIOA local area. 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 contiguous United States. Lodging may be provided by some training providers (CDL of GA, LLC, Daly's Truck Driving School or Georgia Driving Academy) either free or at a reasonable cost. WIOA funding may be provided for lodging if the customer lives outside of a reasonable commute (30-40 miles one way) or reliable transportation is not available.
 13. All potential training customers must apply to the potential training site and apply for all applicable sources of financial aid. Upon application to the WSGM for training services, applicants must provide proof of acceptance to the training provider and financial aid award/denial letter, if applicable. All customers who apply for training

services must complete a Customer Financial Summary and provide information that will explore all available sources of financial aid (i.e., Pell, HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, TANF) to avoid duplication. The enrollment agreement should detail all loans or personal funds that are included to cover the total cost of training as a means of cost analysis. If it is determined through the analysis of the cost of attendance that the total cost of training exceeds the amount available through HOPE and WIOA funding, then PELL funds may be utilized by the participant for living and other appropriate personal expenses during the training period. Provision of WIOA funding for training shall be limited to individuals who are unable to obtain other grant assistance for such services, or who require assistance beyond the financial aid available under these grant assistance programs.

14. 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, diploma, or degree program and the course of study must be occupation-specific (i.e. radiology technician, accounting, STEM teacher certification or a customer is a Registered Nurse seeking a graduate degree in Nursing to fill a vacant Nursing instructor position at a university or technical college.) No funds shall be provided for general academic programs (i.e. General Studies, Bachelors of Business Administration, Bachelors 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. Exceptions: Extended critical shortage health care curricula lasting 3 years will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis, i.e. Registered Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, Occupational Therapist.
 - c. The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training.
15. Continuing Education and other similar courses may be approved if the following conditions apply:
 - a. The customer must have a specific occupational goal.
 - b. The customer must have a work history or educational background that relates to the occupational goal.
 - c. The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase his/her employment marketability.
 - d. Training must be solely provided by a training provider that is currently on the State of Georgia Eligible Provider/Program List and with whom we have a signed WIOA Training Provider Agreement/Contract. Training provided through a 3rd party program (i.e. Ed2Go) will not be approved.
16. Customers accepted on a provisional basis may receive assistance, but certain restriction and requirements apply and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If assistance is approved, provisional classes must be taken at the beginning of the training program and completed as soon as possible.
17. 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.

ITAs will be issued for training providers/programs that are currently on the State of Georgia Eligible Provider/Program List and with whom WSGM has a signed WIOA Training Provider Agreement. WSGM office maintains a list of the providers with executed agreements through the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission office in Gainesville. This list is updated as needed.



Attachment 10: WSGM Priority of Service Policy

EXCERPTED

ADULT / DISLOCATED WORKER WORK STATEMENT GEORGIA MOUNTAINS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WORKSOURCE GEORGIA MOUNTAINS

PRIORITY OF SERVICE / SERVICE PRIORITY FOR INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES

Priority for adult services must be given to recipients of public assistance or other low-income individuals, with added priority for individuals who are basic skills deficient. Priority applies regardless of funding levels.

Individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- Public assistance recipients and other low-income adults; and
- individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Veterans under WIOA § 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adult programs must receive the highest priority for services. TEGL 3-15 references TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low-income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not to be included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
- Second, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

NOTE: Individuals with a disability are not automatically included in a priority category solely on the basis of the disability. However, individuals with disabilities are considered a family of one for income determination purposes, which usually (but not always) indicates their status as low-income. Additionally, receipt of SSI would qualify an individual as a recipient of public assistance and meets the definition of low income detailed below, thus placing that individual in a priority category.

While Veterans receive priority through WIOA services, LWDA's and applicable services providers must have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of services.

Referral Procedure:

Information on DVOP/LVER is made available to all staff to identify and refer veterans with significant barriers or other eligible persons. DOL-3404 form is provided to customer for completion and used for referral. Intake staff maintains referral log for all referrals made.

A similar process is followed for all other agencies both inside and outside the workforce system: all staff is provided the tools to identify and refer applicants who cannot be served by WSGM. A referral to the appropriate agency is then made and logged. UniteUs is also being used as a referral resource, if available.