



Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District

**Northwest Arkansas  
Workforce Development Area  
Regional and Local Plan**

Program Years 2024-2027



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## Northwest Arkansas PY 2024-2027 Local Plan

### Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

- 1.1. Provide an analysis of the 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. [*WIOA § 108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR 679.560(a)*]

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

#### The Economic Conditions

The economy of Northwest Arkansas is robust and growing. As the fastest growing area of Arkansas, we are experiencing a resurgence of jobs. Infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the growth and construction in Benton and Washington Counties. The diverse region is home base to Fortune 500 companies - Walmart, J.B. Hunt, Tyson and many other corporations including Simmons Food, America's Car Mart and PAM Transportation. The Crystal Bridges Museum, the Amp, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Research Park, Arvest Ballpark which is the home of the Northwest Naturals Baseball Team, Buffalo National River, and the Ozarks National Forest are just a few of the many varied venues that bring tourists into our area. The Northwest Region includes the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers which includes Washington, Benton and Madison Counties in Arkansas. The region also includes the Micropolitan Statistical Areas of Harrison and Mountain Home as well as rural low population and poorer counties.

The Northwest Arkansas Council is a vibrant driver in Benton and Washington Counties. The Council conducts and reports in the NWA Regional Workforce Assessment each year. According to the website [findingnwa.com](http://findingnwa.com), Northwest Arkansas has seven times the U.S. average of headquarters and management employees in its workforce, home to over 1, 400 Walmart Suppliers and neighboring headquarters like J.B. Hunt, Tyson Foods, George's Poultry and Simmons. NWA has built a world-class infrastructure of professional and technical services to support its flagship industries and their employees. Regional employers have attracted a dynamic, culturally diverse workforce. The region has plentiful outdoor lifestyle perks, including 500+ miles of bike trails, a nationally ranked arts, culture and food scene, and per capita incomes that are 18% higher than the national average.

NWA has a consistently low unemployment rate, most recently at 3.1%. ([discover.arkansas.gov](http://discover.arkansas.gov) - January 2024) Our population reflects the demand as well, NWA is adding about 42 new residents every day, making us one of the fastest growing metros in the U.S.

## A. Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data

### Northwest Arkansas LWDA Labor Force/Employment

**Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers** was estimated to have the most employees in Northwest Arkansas with 10,410 employed in 2022 with an average wage of \$43,348. **Fast Food and Counter Workers** was the second largest

occupation with 9,510 employed, earning an average wage of \$26,276. **General and Operations Managers**, with an estimated employment of 7,370, had the highest average wage of the 10 largest occupations, earning \$94,298 annually.



**Radiologists** topped the Occupations Paying the Most list with an annual salary of \$347,345. **Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric**, with an average annual salary of \$271,563, ranked second on the Occupations Paying the Most list.

The entry wage estimate for employers of all sizes was \$27,073 for 2022. The median wage estimate for employers with 250-499 employees was \$38,647, while wages for experienced workers averaged \$64,875 for employers in all size categories.

Of the 296,010 estimated employees in the area with hourly wage data, 82,144 made more than \$27 an hour while 25,537 made less than \$12 an hour. Employees making between \$17 and \$21.99 totaled 58,929.

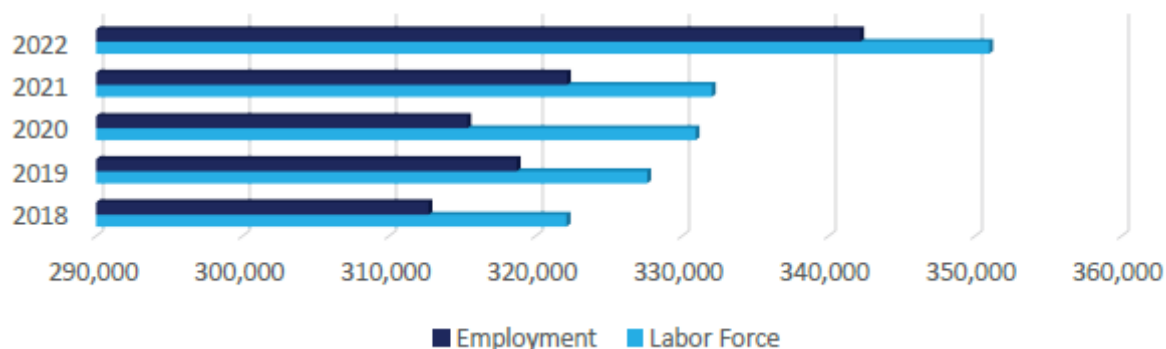
Discover Arkansas

The Northwest Arkansas LWDA labor force and employment increased from 2021 to 2022, with the labor force gaining 18,938 to 350,997 and employment increasing by 20,020 to 342,190. Unemployment decreased by 1,082 to 9,807 in 2022, and has seen a decrease of 623 since 2018. The unemployment rate dropped from 2021 to 2022 by 0.5 percent to 2.5 percent. The area's unemployment rate fluctuated from 2018, but ultimately settled at 2.5 in 2022. The unemployment rate ended July 2023 at 2.5 percent.

**Northwest Arkansas LWDA 2018-2022 Labor Force/Employment**

|                   | 2018    | 2019    | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Labor Force       | 322,131 | 327,641 | 330,952 | 332,059 | 350,997 |
| Employment        | 312,701 | 318,720 | 315,358 | 322,170 | 342,190 |
| Unemployment      | 9,430   | 8,921   | 15,594  | 9,889   | 8,807   |
| Unemployment Rate | 2.9%    | 2.7%    | 4.7%    | 3.0%    | 2.5%    |

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services



Labor Market and Economic Report <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/>

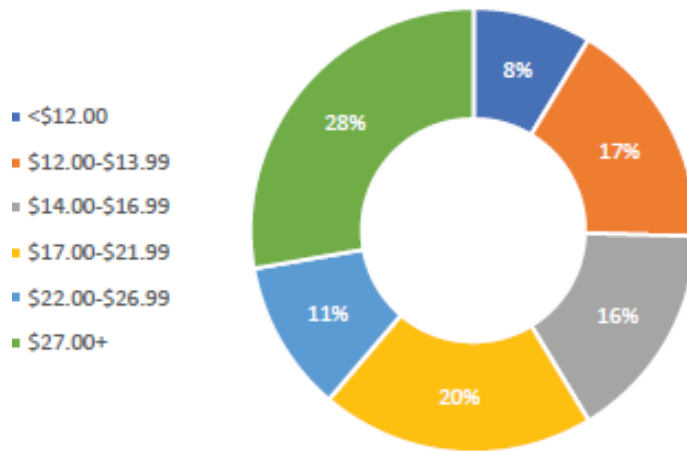
Source: Arkansas Workforce Connections

Sourced from <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

| Area/County | Civilian Labor Force | Number of Employed | Number of Unemployed | Unemployment Rate % |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Baxter      | 17,32                | 16,333             | 699                  | 4.1                 |
| Benton      | 156,382              | 152,509            | 3,873                | 2.5                 |
| Boone       | 15,825               | 15,280             | 545                  | 3.4%                |
| Carroll     | 12,025               | 11,621             | 404                  | 3.4%                |
| Madison     | 7,801                | 7,585              | 216                  | 2.8                 |
| Marion      | 6,007                | 5,727              | 280                  | 4.7                 |
| Newton      | 3,147                | 3,024              | 123                  | 3.9                 |
| Searcy      | 2,803                | 2,677              | 126                  | 4.5                 |
| Washington  | 137,873              | 134,811            | 3,062                | 2.2,                |
| Northwest   | 358,895              | 349,567            | 9,328                | 2.6                 |

[www.discover.arkansas.gov](http://www.discover.arkansas.gov)

## Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate



### Northwest Arkansas Number of Employees by Hourly Wage Rate

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>296,010</b> |
| <\$12.00        | 25,537         |
| \$12.00-\$13.99 | 49,717         |
| \$14.00-\$16.99 | 47,105         |
| \$17.00-\$21.99 | 58,929         |
| \$22.00-\$26.99 | 32,578         |
| \$27.00+        | 82,144         |

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, May 2022 Wage Survey

Discover Arkansas 223 Labor Market and Economic Report <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/>

#### B. Information on Labor Market Trends

##### Top 10 Growth Industries, Ranked by Net Growth 2018-2028

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

#### Top Growing Industry Supersectors

| NAICS Code | NAICS Title                          | 2022 Estimated Employment | 2024 Projected Employment | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 102400     | Professional and Business Services   | 52,235                    | 54,822                    | 2,587          | 4.95%          |
| 102700     | Other Services (except Government)   | 18,470                    | 20,769                    | 2,299          | 12.45%         |
| 102100     | Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 66,056                    | 68,343                    | 2,287          | 3.46%          |
| 102500     | Education and Health Services        | 65,117                    | 67,030                    | 1,913          | 2.94%          |
| 102600     | Leisure and Hospitality              | 31,355                    | 33,124                    | 1,769          | 5.64%          |

### Top Growing Industry Supersectors

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| 102600     | Leisure and Hospitality              | 31,355                    | 33,124                    | 1,769          | 5.64%          |

### Top Industries - Top 10 Growth

| NAICS Code | NAICS Title  | 2022 Estimated Employment | 2024 Projected Employment | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 813000     | Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations | 12,461                    | 14,428                    | 1,967          | 15.79%         |
| 551000     | Management of Companies and Enterprises                                | 23,718                    | 25,310                    | 1,592          | 6.71%          |
| 722000     | Food Services and Drinking Places                                      | 25,246                    | 26,807                    | 1,561          | 6.18%          |
| 611000     | Educational Services   | 29,121                    | 30,269                    | 1,148          | 3.94%          |
| 238000     | Specialty Trade Contractors  | 10,477                    | 11,192                    | 715            | 6.82%          |
| 541000     | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services                       | 15,039                    | 15,687                    | 648            | 4.31%          |
| 484000     | Truck Transportation   | 13,229                    | 13,708                    | 479            | 3.62%          |
| 524000     | Insurance Carriers and Related Activities                              | 2,919                     | 3,398                     | 479            | 16.41%         |
| 621000     | Ambulatory Health Care Services  | 13,302                    | 13,718                    | 416            | 3.13%          |
| 561000     | Administrative and Support Services                                    | 12,749                    | 13,077                    | 328            | 2.57%          |

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

### Top 10 Fastest Growth

| NAICS Code | NAICS Title  | 2022 Estimated Employment | 2024 Projected Employment | Numeric Change | Percent Change |
|------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 454000     | Nonstore Retailers   | 457                       | 641                       | 184            | 40.26%         |
| 111000     | Crop Production  | 337                       | 422                       | 85             | 25.22%         |
| 518000     | Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services                          | 472                       | 588                       | 116            | 24.58%         |
| 325000     | Chemical Manufacturing   | 227                       | 274                       | 47             | 20.70%         |
| 524000     | Insurance Carriers and Related Activities                              | 2,919                     | 3,398                     | 479            | 16.41%         |
| 813000     | Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations | 12,461                    | 14,428                    | 1,967          | 15.79%         |
| 814000     | Private Households   | 1,523                     | 1,749                     | 226            | 14.84%         |
| 453000     | Miscellaneous Store Retailers  | 2,212                     | 2,452                     | 240            | 10.85%         |
| 321000     | Wood Product Manufacturing   | 1,338                     | 1,456                     | 118            | 8.82%          |
| 236000     | Construction of Buildings  | 2,922                     | 3,167                     | 245            | 8.38%          |

### Top 10 Decline

|        |   |       |       |     |         |
|--------|---|-------|-------|-----|---------|
| 425000 | Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers | 1,289 | 1,194 | -95 | -7.37%  |
| 451000 | Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores       | 1,162 | 1,075 | -87 | -7.49%  |
| 446000 | Health and Personal Care Stores                     | 1,440 | 1,370 | -70 | -4.86%  |
| 999200 | State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals | 2,131 | 2,061 | -70 | -3.28%  |
| 331000 | Primary Metal Manufacturing                         | 666   | 614   | -52 | -7.81%  |
| 999100 | Federal Government, Excluding Post Office           | 2,163 | 2,112 | -51 | -2.36%  |
| 115000 | Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry     | 304   | 258   | -46 | -15.13% |
| 517000 | Telecommunications                                  | 706   | 667   | -39 | -5.52%  |
| 515000 | Broadcasting (except Internet)                      | 294   | 263   | -31 | -10.54% |
| 623000 | Nursing and Residential Care Facilities             | 4,953 | 4,924 | -29 | -0.59%  |

### Top 10 Fastest Decline

|        |  |       |       |     |         |
|--------|--|-------|-------|-----|---------|
| 533000 | Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyrighted Works) | 26    | 21    | -5  | -19.23% |
| 115000 | Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry                      | 304   | 258   | -46 | -15.13% |
| 515000 | Broadcasting (except Internet)                                       | 294   | 263   | -31 | -10.54% |
| 331000 | Primary Metal Manufacturing  | 666   | 614   | -52 | -7.81%  |
| 451000 | Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores                        | 1,162 | 1,075 | -87 | -7.49%  |
| 425000 | Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers                  | 1,289 | 1,194 | -95 | -7.37%  |
| 517000 | Telecommunications   | 706   | 667   | -39 | -5.52%  |
| 446000 | Health and Personal Care Stores                                      | 1,440 | 1,370 | -70 | -4.86%  |
| 999200 | State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals                  | 2,131 | 2,061 | -70 | -3.28%  |
| 337000 | Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing                          | 906   | 879   | -27 | -2.98%  |

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Projections Suite Software

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers is slated to be the top growing occupation in Northwest Arkansas between 2022 and 2024, increasing its workforce to 14,539. Fundraisers is projected to be the fastest growing occupation, driving up employment 50.28 percent to 819 jobs. On the negative side of the local economy, Tellers is expected to lose 15 jobs, or 1.65 percent of its workforce between 2022 and 2024. Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys could lose 11.43 percent of its workforce, becoming the fastest declining occupation in the area, dropping employment to 31. **Business and Financial Operations Occupations** is predicted to be the top growing major group adding 1,630 new jobs during the projection period to a total employment of 21,934.

### Top Growing Major Occupational Groups

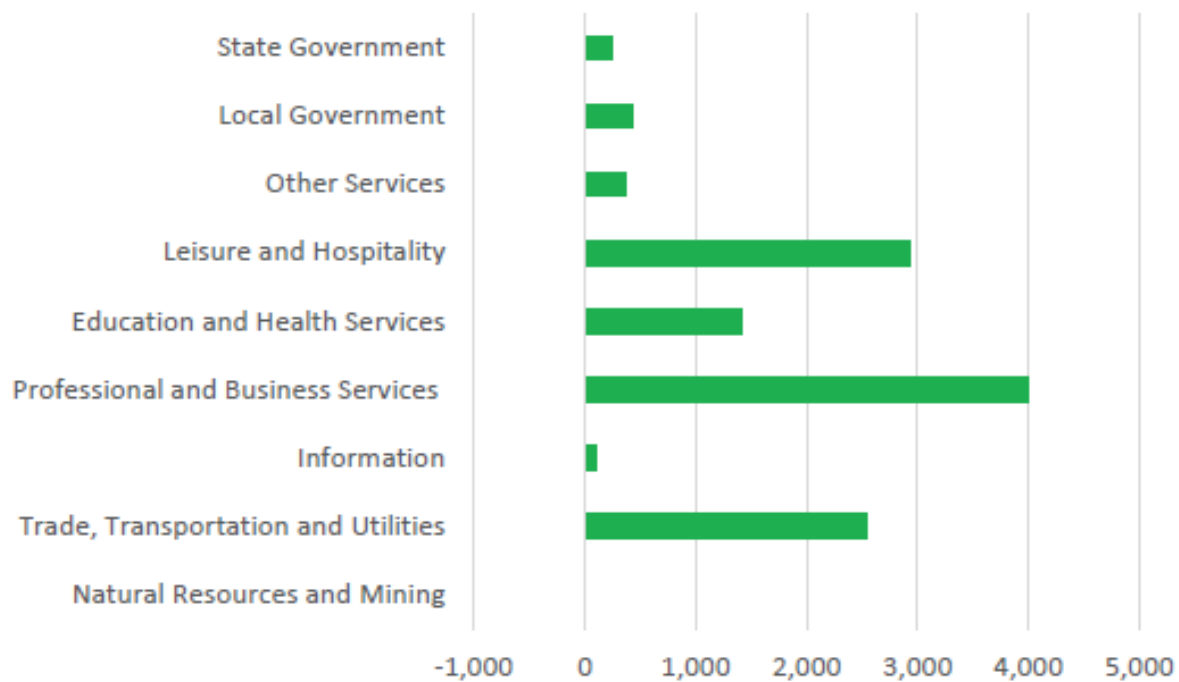
| SOC Code | SOC Title  | Employment |            | Change  |         | Annual Openings |           |        |       |
|----------|--|------------|------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|
|          |  | 2022 Est.  | 2024 Proj. | Numeric | Percent | Exits           | Transfers | Change | Total |
| 13-0000  | Business and Financial Operations Occupations    | 20,304     | 21,934     | 1,630   | 8.03%   | 656             | 1,233     | 815    | 2,704 |
| 11-0000  | Management Occupations                           | 33,291     | 34,876     | 1,585   | 4.76%   | 1,345           | 1,704     | 792    | 3,841 |
| 35-0000  | Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 26,897     | 28,470     | 1,573   | 5.85%   | 2,392           | 2,804     | 786    | 5,982 |
| 53-0000  | Transportation and Material Moving Occupations   | 40,060     | 41,445     | 1,385   | 3.46%   | 2,069           | 3,313     | 692    | 6,074 |
| 41-0000  | Sales and Related Occupations                    | 31,892     | 33,050     | 1,158   | 3.63%   | 1,885           | 2,431     | 579    | 4,895 |

### Top Occupations - Top 10 Growth

| SOC Code | SOC Title                               | Employment |            | Change  |         | Annual Openings |           |        |       |
|----------|---|------------|------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|
|          |   | 2022 Est.  | 2024 Proj. | Numeric | Percent | Exits           | Transfers | Change | Total |
| 53-3032  | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 14,004     | 14,539     | 535     | 3.82%   | 663             | 1,010     | 268    | 1,941 |
| 35-3023  | Fast Food and Counter Workers           | 9,065      | 9,584      | 519     | 5.73%   | 1,011           | 1,004     | 260    | 2,275 |
| 11-1021  | General and Operations Managers         | 7,011      | 7,466      | 455     | 6.49%   | 166             | 461       | 228    | 855   |
| 35-2014  | Cooks, Restaurant                       | 3,009      | 3,329      | 320     | 10.63%  | 218             | 268       | 160    | 646   |
| 41-2031  | Retail Salespersons                     | 8,704      | 9,021      | 317     | 3.64%   | 570             | 718       | 158    | 1,446 |
| 13-1131  | Fundraisers                             | 545        | 819        | 274     | 50.28%  | 24              | 38        | 137    | 199   |
| 35-3031  | Waiters and Waitresses                  | 4,470      | 4,716      | 246     | 5.50%   | 388             | 542       | 123    | 1,053 |
| 41-3021  | Insurance Sales Agents                  | 1,274      | 1,505      | 231     | 18.13%  | 55              | 72        | 116    | 243   |
| 53-7065  | Stockers and Order Fillers              | 5,142      | 5,359      | 217     | 4.22%   | 336             | 558       | 108    | 1,002 |
| 11-3031  | Financial Managers                      | 1,946      | 2,161      | 215     | 11.05%  | 50              | 102       | 108    | 260   |

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| NAICS Industry                      | 2021 Annual Average Covered Employment | 2022 Annual Average Covered Employment | 2021-2022 Numeric Change | 2021-2022 Percent Change | 2022 Average Weekly Earnings |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>284,422</b>                         | <b>298,461</b>                         | <b>14,039</b>            | <b>4.9%</b>              | <b>\$1,169</b>               |
| Natural Resources and Mining        | 1,539                                  | 1,531                                  | -8                       | -0.5%                    | \$1,226                      |
| Construction                        | N/A                                    | 15,143                                 | N/A                      | N/A                      | \$1,118                      |
| Manufacturing                       | N/A                                    | 38,473                                 | N/A                      | N/A                      | \$993                        |
| Trade, Transportation and Utilities | 64,014                                 | 66,551                                 | 2,537                    | 4.0%                     | \$1,067                      |
| Information                         | 2,318                                  | 2,424                                  | 106                      | 4.6%                     | \$1,312                      |
| Financial Activities                | N/A                                    | 10,413                                 | N/A                      | N/A                      | \$1,329                      |
| Professional and Business Services  | 50,393                                 | 54,387                                 | 3,994                    | 7.9%                     | \$2,074                      |
| Education and Health Services       | 36,126                                 | 37,538                                 | 1,412                    | 3.9%                     | \$1,031                      |
| Leisure and Hospitality             | 30,726                                 | 33,649                                 | 2,923                    | 9.5%                     | \$436                        |
| Other Services                      | 5,460                                  | 5,834                                  | 374                      | 6.8%                     | \$835                        |
| Local Government                    | 22,693                                 | 23,118                                 | 425                      | 1.9%                     | \$944                        |
| State Government                    | 9,148                                  | 9,401                                  | 253                      | 2.8%                     | \$1,163                      |

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

**Top 10 Fastest Growth**

| SOC Code | SOC Title   | Employment |            | Change  |         | Annual Openings |           |        |       |
|----------|---|------------|------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|
|          |   | 2022 Est.  | 2024 Proj. | Numeric | Percent | Exits           | Transfers | Change | Total |
| 13-1131  | Fundraisers   | 545        | 819        | 274     | 50.28%  | 24              | 38        | 137    | 199   |
| 11-2033  | Fundraising Managers  | 26         | 35         | 9       | 34.62%  | 1               | 2         | 4      | 7     |
| 21-1093  | Social and Human Service Assistants                         | 663        | 805        | 142     | 21.42%  | 34              | 49        | 71     | 154   |
| 41-3021  | Insurance Sales Agents                                      | 1,274      | 1,505      | 231     | 18.13%  | 55              | 72        | 116    | 243   |
| 13-2053  | Insurance Underwriters                                      | 66         | 77         | 11      | 16.67%  | 2               | 4         | 6      | 12    |
| 11-9451  | Social and Community Service Managers                       | 344        | 399        | 55      | 15.99%  | 12              | 20        | 28     | 60    |
| 43-9041  | Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks               | 630        | 729        | 99      | 15.71%  | 28              | 42        | 50     | 120   |
| 49-9091  | Coin, Vending, and Amusement Machine Services and Repairers | 45         | 52         | 7       | 15.56%  | 2               | 4         | 4      | 10    |
| 15-1254  | Web Developers  | 67         | 77         | 10      | 14.93%  | 2               | 4         | 5      | 11    |
| 13-1121  | Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners                     | 213        | 239        | 26      | 12.21%  | 8               | 15        | 13     | 36    |

**Top 10 Decline**

|         |   |       |       |     |         |     |     |    |     |
|---------|---|-------|-------|-----|---------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 43-3071 | Tellers   | 910   | 895   | -15 | -1.65%  | 42  | 58  | -8 | 92  |
| 51-9198 | Helpers—Production Workers  | 1,967 | 1,957 | -10 | -0.51%  | 123 | 177 | -5 | 295 |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers and Jailers   | 553   | 545   | -8  | -1.45%  | 20  | 32  | -4 | 48  |
| 51-4033 | Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic | 133   | 126   | -7  | -5.26%  | 6   | 10  | -4 | 12  |
| 27-4012 | Broadcast Technicians   | 84    | 77    | -7  | -8.33%  | 2   | 6   | -4 | 4   |
| 43-5052 | Postal Service Mail Carriers  | 662   | 656   | -6  | -0.91%  | 26  | 26  | -3 | 49  |
| 45-2041 | Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products  | 563   | 558   | -5  | -0.89%  | 28  | 56  | -2 | 82  |
| 43-6012 | Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants   | 220   | 216   | -4  | -1.82%  | 12  | 14  | -2 | 24  |
| 21-1092 | Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists   | 180   | 176   | -4  | -2.22%  | 5   | 10  | -2 | 13  |
| 27-3011 | Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys   | 35    | 31    | -4  | -11.43% | 2   | 2   | -2 | 2   |

**Top 10 Fastest Decline**

|         |   |     |     |     |         |    |    |    |    |
|---------|---|-----|-----|-----|---------|----|----|----|----|
| 27-3011 | Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys   | 35  | 31  | -4  | -11.43% | 2  | 2  | -2 | 2  |
| 27-4012 | Broadcast Technicians   | 84  | 77  | -7  | -8.33%  | 2  | 6  | -4 | 4  |
| 27-3023 | News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists   | 61  | 57  | -4  | -6.56%  | 2  | 4  | -2 | 4  |
| 51-4033 | Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic | 133 | 126 | -7  | -5.26%  | 6  | 10 | -4 | 12 |
| 31-9094 | Medical Transcriptionists   | 81  | 78  | -3  | -3.70%  | 4  | 9  | -2 | 11 |
| 43-4071 | File Clerks   | 99  | 96  | -3  | -3.03%  | 6  | 6  | -2 | 10 |
| 21-1092 | Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists   | 180 | 176 | -4  | -2.22%  | 5  | 10 | -2 | 13 |
| 43-6012 | Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants   | 220 | 216 | -4  | -1.82%  | 12 | 14 | -2 | 24 |
| 43-3071 | Tellers   | 910 | 895 | -15 | -1.65%  | 42 | 58 | -8 | 92 |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers and Jailers   | 553 | 545 | -8  | -1.45%  | 20 | 32 | -4 | 48 |

Source: Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Projections Suite Software

Discover Arkansas 2023 Labor Market and Economic Report <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/>

## Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area 2018-2028 Industry Projections by Major Division

| NAICS Code    | NAICS Title  | 2018<br>Estimated<br>Employment | 2028<br>Projected<br>Employment | Numeric<br>Change | Percent<br>Change |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>000000</b> | <b>TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES</b>  | <b>319,509</b>                  | <b>355,829</b>                  | <b>36,320</b>     | <b>11.37%</b>     |
| <b>000671</b> | <b>Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs</b>           | <b>29,567</b>                   | <b>31,553</b>                   | <b>1,983</b>      | <b>6.72%</b>      |
| 006010        | Self Employed Workers, All Jobs  | 27,818                          | 29,473                          | 1,655             | 5.95%             |
| 007010        | Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs  | 1,749                           | 2,080                           | 331               | 18.93%            |
| 101000        | Goods Producing  | 51,659                          | 55,808                          | 4,149             | 8.03%             |
| <b>101100</b> | <b>NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINING</b>                                      | <b>3,054</b>                    | <b>3,436</b>                    | <b>382</b>        | <b>12.51%</b>     |
| 110000        | Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting                               | 2,925                           | 3,343                           | 418               | 14.29%            |
| 210000        | Mining   | 129                             | 93                              | -36               | -27.91%           |
| <b>101200</b> | <b>CONSTRUCTION</b>  | <b>11,961</b>                   | <b>13,965</b>                   | <b>2,004</b>      | <b>16.75%</b>     |
| <b>101300</b> | <b>MANUFACTURING</b>   | <b>36,644</b>                   | <b>38,407</b>                   | <b>1,763</b>      | <b>4.81%</b>      |
|               | <i>Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>                                   | <b>23,376</b>                   | <b>24,655</b>                   | <b>1,279</b>      | <b>5.47%</b>      |
|               | <i>Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>                                       | <b>13,268</b>                   | <b>13,752</b>                   | <b>484</b>        | <b>3.65%</b>      |
| 102000        | Services Providing   | 238,283                         | 268,468                         | 30,185            | 12.67%            |
| <b>102100</b> | <b>TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES</b>                              | <b>61,289</b>                   | <b>67,038</b>                   | <b>5,749</b>      | <b>9.38%</b>      |
| 420000        | Wholesale Trade  | 10,643                          | 11,913                          | 1,270             | 11.93%            |
| 440000        | Retail Trade   | 31,595                          | 34,987                          | 3,392             | 10.74%            |
| 480000        | Transportation and Warehousing   | 17,911                          | 18,995                          | 1,084             | 6.05%             |
| 220000        | Utilities  | 1,140                           | 1,143                           | 3                 | 0.26%             |
| <b>102200</b> | <b>INFORMATION</b>   | <b>2,546</b>                    | <b>2,445</b>                    | <b>-101</b>       | <b>-3.97%</b>     |
| <b>102300</b> | <b>FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES</b>  | <b>10,040</b>                   | <b>11,147</b>                   | <b>1,107</b>      | <b>11.03%</b>     |
| 520000        | Finance and Insurance  | 7,026                           | 7,696                           | 670               | 9.54%             |
| 530000        | Real Estate and Rental and Leasing                                       | 3,014                           | 3,451                           | 437               | 14.50%            |
| <b>102400</b> | <b>PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES</b>                                | <b>48,086</b>                   | <b>54,488</b>                   | <b>6,402</b>      | <b>13.31%</b>     |
| 540000        | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services                         | 12,940                          | 14,910                          | 1,970             | 15.22%            |
| 550000        | Management of Companies and Enterprises                                  | 23,608                          | 27,137                          | 3,529             | 14.95%            |
| 560000        | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 11,538                          | 12,441                          | 903               | 7.83%             |
| <b>102500</b> | <b>EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES</b>                                     | <b>60,561</b>                   | <b>68,631</b>                   | <b>8,070</b>      | <b>13.33%</b>     |
| <b>610000</b> | <i>Educational Services</i>  | <b>26,220</b>                   | <b>27,175</b>                   | <b>955</b>        | <b>3.64%</b>      |
| <b>620000</b> | <i>Health Care and Social Assistance</i>                                 | <b>34,341</b>                   | <b>41,456</b>                   | <b>7,115</b>      | <b>20.72%</b>     |
| <b>102600</b> | <b>LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY</b>   | <b>30,915</b>                   | <b>36,026</b>                   | <b>5,111</b>      | <b>16.53%</b>     |
| 710000        | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation                                      | 3,238                           | 3,544                           | 306               | 9.45%             |
| 720000        | Accommodation and Food Services  | 27,677                          | 32,482                          | 4,805             | 17.36%            |
| <b>102700</b> | <b>OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT)</b>                                | <b>12,516</b>                   | <b>14,395</b>                   | <b>1,879</b>      | <b>15.01%</b>     |
| <b>102800</b> | <b>GOVERNMENT</b>  | <b>12,330</b>                   | <b>14,298</b>                   | <b>1,968</b>      | <b>15.96%</b>     |

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Statistics/Northwest-Arkansas-Excel-Version>

Northwest has developed sector initiatives for existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region. Several sectors have been identified including health care, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and construction. Much work has been done by the Northwest Arkansas Council to address initiatives/industry sector initiatives. Two-year colleges participating in the Regional Workforce Grants have been moving forward in these areas. North Arkansas College targeted health care and advanced manufacturing; Northwest Arkansas Community College focused on construction technology; University of Arkansas Global Campus concentrated on information technology; Arkansas State University at Mountain Home pinpointed advanced manufacturing. All these schools are working with secondary (one even primary) schools to work to create the talent pipeline of future workers. Partnerships with the Education Service Cooperatives in our area have proven to provide great dialogue and results.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services continues to work with employers to place people with disabilities in high demand and high wage jobs, such as medical, IT, and management positions. The remaining sectors employed people with disabilities in entry level jobs who have little or no experience. By meeting employers through outreach avenues such as chambers of commerce, civic leadership, career fairs and visiting job locations Arkansas Rehabilitation Services has continued to show that people with disabilities are excellent long-term employees. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services ensures that people

with disabilities have access to quality training programs and are given the supports they need until substantially gainful employment is achieved.

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Survey of community needs. The results of this survey are on nwaedd.org.

Northwest has participated with Chambers throughout the district in their strategic planning processes.

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

Most employers need their employees to have basic knowledge and skills of literacy and math, problem solving, computing, communication, work readiness and other skills. In addition, skills that are particular to each job are varied. Advanced manufacturing employers are seeking individuals who have more technical skills such as Computerized Numerical Controller (CNC), robotics, industrial maintenance; Construction needs individuals who are skilled in construction trades including plumbing, electrical, commercial and residential builders. Hospitals needs include the entire range of skills necessary for all the jobs in the facility – from food service, maintenance, and laboratory to all levels of nursing care and ancillary services. The need for Elder Care services including home health aides, personal care assistants, registered nurses, and nursing assistants is growing at an exponential rate. Northwest collaborates with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Arkansas Services for the Blind to ensure that our workforce development system is inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Northwest works with education, workforce development and other related agencies to provide comprehensive services to individuals with disabilities, including training, job placement and support services. These collaborative efforts aim to create a more cohesive and effective workforce development system that supports the employment goals of individuals with disabilities and promotes their full participation in the labor market.

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

| Area/County | Civilian Labor Force | Number of Employed | Number of Unemployed | Unemployment Rate % |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Baxter      | 17,32                | 16,333             | 699                  | 4.1                 |
| Benton      | 156,382              | 152,509            | 3,873                | 2.5                 |
| Boone       | 15,825               | 15,280             | 545                  | 3.4%                |
| Carroll     | 12,025               | 11,621             | 404                  | 3.4%                |
| Madison     | 7,801                | 7,585              | 216                  | 2.8                 |
| Marion      | 6,007                | 5,727              | 280                  | 4.7                 |
| Newton      | 3,147                | 3,024              | 123                  | 3.9                 |
| Searcy      | 2,803                | 2,677              | 126                  | 4.5                 |
| Washington  | 137,873              | 134,811            | 3,062                | 2.2,                |
| Northwest   | 358,895              | 349,567            | 9,328                | 2.6                 |

**1.4 Provide an analysis and description of workforce development activities, including type and availability of education, training and employment activities. Include analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, in order to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)] and [ 20 CFR 679.560(a)]**

Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Arkansas's version of the American Job Centers. There are two workforce centers located throughout the nine-county region to ensure access to all Arkansans residing therein. The Harrison center is a comprehensive center. The Fayetteville center is an affiliate center.

Northwest Arkansas Workforce System Services-Unemployed and Underemployed

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a full array of career services which are outlined in WIOA 134(c)(2) for unemployed and underemployed. The workforce centers have computers, printers, copiers, and resources along with staff to help jobseekers. In addition, digital services are offered as well as Arkansas Job Link and Discover Arkansas's Labor Market Information portal. These two tools allow for jobseekers to search for jobs 24/7 and make data informed decisions about which path is best for them.

Jobseeker Services

Career services, found throughout the Northwest Arkansas region, offer a full line of services to help prepare jobseekers for the regional workforce. Soft skills and technical training are two examples which are provided, and which employers look for in a good candidate for a position.

Labor Market Information is updated regularly to ensure accuracy is provided to individuals seeking services. This data includes information pertaining to job vacancies, skills needed to obtain said jobs, in-demand occupations and related earning potential. In addition, information on career ladders which exist within those occupations is provided to help participants.

Other career services provided through our one-stop centers are outreach, intake, and orientation. Upon the completion of the initial assessment, eligibility will be determined, and the career coaches will begin to provide recommendations for various programs along with financial aid information. Services are also provided to individuals to assist them in obtaining and retaining employment. These types of services include:

- Career Planning and Counseling
- Occupational Skills Assessment
- Short-term prevocational services
- Internships and work experience
- English language acquisition
- Financial literacy
- Individual Service Strategy
- Individual Employment Plan

Individualized career services within the Arkansas Workforce Centers vary across the region, but all the offices offer a full line of activities to prepare jobseekers for the modern workforce. They address many of the soft skills and technical skills training Arkansas employers require.

- Workforce Centers provide the following career services including outreach, intake and

orientation; initial assessment; labor exchange services; eligibility determination; referrals to programs; performance and cost information; information on unemployment insurance; financial aid information and follow-up services.

- Labor exchange services must also provide labor market information to the individuals seeking services. The information must be accurate and include information on local, regional and national labor markets, such as job vacancies; the skills necessary to obtain jobs within in-demand occupations and related earning potential and opportunities for advancement in those occupations. Workforce Centers and partners must provide appropriate services for individuals to obtain or retain employment. These services include but are not limited to preparation of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP); career planning and counseling; comprehensive assessment; occupational skills assessment; short-term prevocational services; internship and work experience, including transitional jobs and industry partnerships; workforce preparation; out-of-area job search; English language acquisition and financial literacy.

### Training Services

Career services help to equip a jobseeker with the skills needed to find sustainable employment, however such skills may not be enough to obtain sustainable employment. In those circumstances formal training may be required. Many training opportunities exist through the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers, such as occupational skills training which can be obtained from numerous educational partners at post-secondary schools and universities, as well as on-the-job training. Registered Apprenticeships are also available in a wide variety of traditional sectors and are in the process of being expanded into non-traditional sectors such as information technology and nursing.

These training services are funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and by other local and state partners. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board has established policies for the determination of eligibility, Individual Training Account Limits (ITAs) and training aimed at in-demand industry sectors throughout the region such as transportation, logistics and healthcare. Sector strategies have taken on a new role in the region, with the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board using data-driven decision-making to enhance the likelihood of employment of participants.

### Supportive Services

To assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. The Northwest Arkansas Board is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Northwest Arkansas has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

### Business Services

The focal point of all workforce system activities are business and industry. These activities are taking place statewide and include a broad array of services to employers. Business Services assistance is broad; however, this assistance is tailored to the individual needs of each employer. The services provided to businesses can be identified into three broad categories:

- Assessments and Information

Through the Arkansas Workforce Centers, businesses can utilize assessments and tests to measure the skills, interests, or personality traits of job seekers or current employees. Businesses can also receive a variety of information pertaining to incentive programs such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Labor Market Information is available to businesses on market conditions, industries, occupations, and

workforce characteristics as well. Also, short- and long-term industry trends and occupational projections are available.

- Direct Assistance

Businesses have access to Workforce Center locations for the purposes of meetings, trainings, orientations, and interviews. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Area can also host hiring events which are customized to the specific needs of businesses. Job orders which have been approved by staff can be placed through the workforce areas in Arkansas Job Link, along with job placement assistance and information on unemployment benefits. Businesses can also receive assistance with applicant screening which involves the initial evaluation of applicants.

- Response and Training

The Northwest Workforce Area partners provide rapid response measures in the event of a business downsizing or restructuring. These include a variety of workshops to assist employees who are in transition. Training and retraining services are also available for both current and future employees. The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force is the lead program.

- Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), Division of Services for the Blind, provides vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for people with disabilities in relation to attaining employment. According to the 2019 report on Disability Employment Statistics on individuals ages 16 and over from the Department of Labor Statistics, (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>) nationwide there is a 19.3% labor force participation for persons with disabilities and a 66.3% participation rate of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is 7.3%, while the unemployment rate of people without disabilities is 3.5%. Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS, in partnership with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities to enable them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area capacity to provide services:

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area is equipped with the resource and staffing needed to provide workforce development activities throughout the region. The region has benefited significantly from the State Workforce Board's continued strides for improvement and innovation. The NAWDA's capacity is further amplified by its broad array of partners, both those that co-locate in the workforce centers and those that do not. Some of those partnerships include:

- Adult Education services include ABE/ASE, GED and WAGE; a career development facilitator to assist students with the transition from adult education to employment and/or post-secondary education; providing workplace training to employers; digital literacy; financial literacy; and referrals.
- Department of Human Services for Medicaid, childcare, Transitional Employment Assistance eligibility, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Post-secondary colleges and technical institutes for education.
- Arkansas Economic Development Commission for employer services.

Out of school youth is an area in which the region has struggled, partly due to the lack of staffing capacity

to target and conduct outreach activities aimed specifically at this logistically challenging demographic. This is a priority of the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Youth Program to better serve out of school disconnected youth.

## Section 2: Strategic Vision & Goals

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

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

Northwest has adopted the State's Vision and Goals and adapted them to the local area. The local board will strive to prepare an educated and skilled workforce through partnerships with all core partners through various means including adult education, apprenticeship, institutional training, literacy training, on-the-job training and work experience.

### Vision

Northwest Arkansas will have a flexible world-class workforce that is educated/ skilled and working to keep Arkansas' economy competitive in the global marketplace.

### Goals

The local board will work to prepare and educate a skilled workforce through partnerships with all core and other partners.

**Strategic Goal 1:** Develop and strengthen partnerships with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community-based organizations to deliver a platform that prepares a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.

#### *Goal 1 Objectives:*

1. Expand employer partnerships through the Business Services Team, chambers of commerce, economic development partners and other opportunities.
  - Measure: Track the number of new partnerships established.
2. Increase the use of all work-based learning programs as viable talent development opportunities by continuing the education and communication between partners, employers, and trainers.
  - Measure: Monitor the number of individuals enrolled in work-based learning programs.
3. Continue to partner with K-12 education, higher education, adult education, disability service providers, community-based organizations, and non-profits to understand barriers and resources available to individuals, so individuals can succeed in training programs in our region.
  - Measure: Conduct regular assessments to identify barriers and implements strategies to overcome them.
4. Analyze and address barriers to collaboration between state, regional, and local business



services teams.

- Measure: identify key barriers through stakeholder feedback.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Enhance services provided to employers and jobseekers.

*Goal 2 Objectives:*

1. Promote and fund training that leads to industry recognized credentials and certification in demand occupations through scholarships, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work experiences.
  - Measure: track the number of individuals receiving credentials and their placement in related occupations.
2. Support career pathways development and sector strategy initiatives to meet business and industry needs.
  - Measure: Monitor the development and implementation of new career pathways.
3. Develop a common business outreach strategy with a common message that will be utilized by Northwest Workforce system partners.
  - Measure: Assess the outreach strategy through feedback from partners and employers.
4. Support the development of functional teams to enhance services.
  - Measure: Track the formation of functional teams.
5. Ensure a comprehensive array of services are provided to employers to meet unmet workforce needs.
  - Measure: Monitor the adoption of new services by employers
6. Outline business solutions and provide training to LWDB staff and stakeholders on mobilizing resources, including peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
  - Measure: Track the number of training sessions conducted.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Increase awareness of the State's Talent Development System (one-stop system)

*Goal 3 Objectives:*

1. Increase access throughout the workforce development system through one-stop services.
  - Measure: Track the number of visitors to one-stop centers.
2. Participate in an image-building outreach campaign to educate Arkansans about the services and the career development opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas.
  - Measure: Conduct surveys to assess changes in public perception and awareness.
3. Utilize technology, including social media, to better connect jobseekers and employers with the talent development system in Northwest Arkansas. Develop partnerships with libraries and other community organizations to provide access to the workforce system via computers and mobile technology.
  - Measure: Monitor website traffic, social media metrics.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Address skills, education, and training needs in present and future workforce participants.

*Goal 4 Objectives:*

1. Participate in a skills and asset analysis to determine the skills gaps present and

resources available to solve the skill deficiencies in Northwest Arkansas.

- Measure: Track the progress of the analysis project.
2. Work with partners in education at all levels to help implement a plan to close skills gaps in Northwest Arkansas. Review current job readiness standards and evaluations being used within the workforce system to find best practices that could be replicated.
    - Measure: Monitor the implementation of initiatives.
  3. Use labor market information provided by the Division of Workforce Services and contract with a vendor that will provide detailed labor and skills analysis as well as evaluation of post-secondary education performance to determine effectiveness of training to bridge the skills gaps.
    - Measure: Track the procurement of vendors.
  4. Seek grants available to education and employers to fund training programs that address skills gaps.
    - Measure: Monitor grant application submissions and track the success rate in securing funding.
  5. Receive input from employers to address the skills shortages and identify alternative methods of recruiting and training workers, such as exploring nontraditional labor pools and methods of training and upskilling.
    - Measure: Conduct surveys or interviews with employers to collect feedback.

**2.2** Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision and goals for the State's workforce development system as established by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

The Northwest Workforce Development Board's vision and goals align with the State's and will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled and working to keep Northwest Arkansas competitive in the global marketplace.

Both the state and the Northwest region emphasize the importance of building partnerships with employers, educational institutions, workforce development entities, and community-based organizations.

Both strategic goals aim to prepare a skilled workforce that meets the needs of existing and new employers.

Both strategic goals highlight the objective of creating a platform or framework to facilitate skill development among job seekers and incumbent workers.

The alignment between the state's goal of enhancing service delivery to employers and jobseekers and the Northwest's goal of enhancing services provided to employers and jobseekers suggests a shared focus on improving the quality and accessibility of workforce development services.

The alignment between the state's goal of increasing awareness of the State's Talent Development System and the Northwest's goal of increasing awareness of the State's Talent Development System (one-stop system) suggests a shared focus on promoting accessibility and utilization of the available workforce development resources.

The alignment between the state's goal of addressing skills gaps and the Northwest's goal of addressing skills, education, and training needs in present and future workforce participants suggests a shared focus on identifying and closing gaps in workforce readiness and skillsets.

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

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development area shares the Governor’s vision for economic development and the State’s Strategic Plan that defines a stronger partnership between education, economic development, and the State Workforce system to attract, retain and grow Arkansas’ high growth industries.

Northwest Arkansas will focus its workforce development efforts on providing training and resources that directly contribute to the skills needed by local industries. This, in turn, supports the governor's goal of fostering economic growth and increasing employment opportunities for residents.

Northwest Arkansas's WIOA vision and goals emphasize the importance of providing accessible and high-quality education and training programs that align with the needs of employers in the region. This supports the governor's broader goal of enhancing educational attainment and workforce readiness among Arkansas residents.

Northwest Arkansas will ensure that its workforce development efforts are equitable and inclusive, providing opportunities for individuals from all backgrounds to access training and employment opportunities. This aligns with the governor's goal of building a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the state's population.

Northwest Arkansas's WIOA vision and goals emphasizes the importance of regional collaboration, bringing together employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations to collectively address workforce challenges and opportunities. This aligns with the governor's goal of fostering collaboration and partnership to drive positive outcomes for the state's workforce and economy.

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

For participants enrolled in educational and/or skills training, the goal is to have them complete training, obtain their credential and accomplish measurable skills gain. These participants will be directed toward higher paying jobs which have a livable wage to help ensure a higher retention rate well beyond program exit. For participants receiving basic and individualized career services the same goal applies.

For business services, the goal is to improve the Business Services Team’s ability to effectively serve employers as a unified group between all partners. The Business Services Coordinator will develop, implement, and sustain the activities for business services across the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area. This position will focus on the delivery of business services through an integrated, solution-oriented approach by a cross functional team. The incorporation of an integrated and aligned business services strategy among partners presents a unified voice for the workforce center in its communication with employers and shall lead to improved skills, credentials, and employment attainment in areas driven by business demand. The Business Services Coordinator will develop new sector partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships to address local workforce needs and develop and

maintain relationships with local businesses, industry representatives, and training agencies that will lead to participant career placements and stronger business relations. Under direct supervision of the WIOA Title I Administrator, the Business Services Coordinator will develop and execute strategic direction and vision for the Business Services Team in Northwest Arkansas.

### **Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies**

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

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

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

- The Chief Elected Officials Consortium of Northwest Arkansas includes 27 members including county judges and mayors of first-class cities. They have selected Mayor Shawn Lane as their chair and signatory. They reach agreement on negotiated levels of performance, enter into and sign an MOU, appoint local Workforce Development Board members, designate an entity to serve as the fiscal agent, serve as the local grant recipient and are liable for WIOA grant funds.
- The Northwest Local Workforce Development Board is composed of 14 business representatives with a total of 26 members. Standing committees include the executive, youth, one stop, disability and business services committees. They reach agreement on negotiated performance levels, enter into and sign an MOU including Infrastructure costs, select the One Stop Operator, review and update the One Stop/Workforce Certification, develop and implement a four-year local plan, conduct oversight of the Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker activities, approve eligible training providers.
- Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District was selected by the Chief Elected Officials as the Fiscal and Administrative Entity for the Northwest Workforce Development Area.
- The Title IB program operator of the Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth programs is the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District.
- Required program partners include Title II Adult Education providers Northwest Arkansas Community College Adult Education, Northwest Technical Institute/Springdale Adult Education, North Arkansas College Adult Education, Fayetteville Adult Education, Ozark Literacy Council, Arkansas State University Adult Education/Mountain Home; Title III Wagner-Peyser Arkansas Department of Workforce Services; Title IV Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.
- All must enter into a MOU and share in the cost of operating the Workforce Centers.

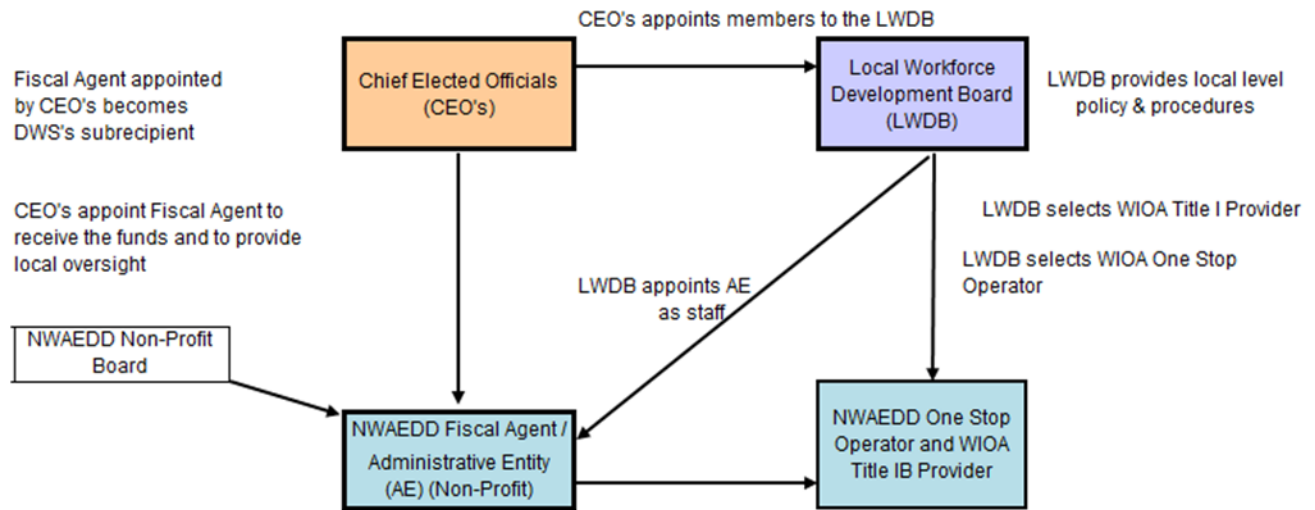
B. A list of all Arkansas Workforce Centers in the local area; include address, phone numbers, and hours of operation; and

Arkansas Workforce Center at Harrison, 818 Highway 62-65-412 N, Harrison, AR 72601, 870-741-8236. The center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Arkansas Workforce Center at Fayetteville, 2153 Suite 201 E. Joyce Blvd., Fayetteville, AR 72703, 479-521-5730. The center is open 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

An attached organization chart depicts the chief elected official(s), local board, administrative and fiscal entities, and service providers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

**Flowchart of the WIOA Governance and Flow of Funds in the Northwest Arkansas LWDA**



Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) is Fiscal Agent/Administrative Entity and provides staff to the Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board. NWAEDD is the One Stop Operator and is the provider of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs.

**3.2 Describe the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et. seq), that supports the strategy identified in the State plan under section 102(b) (1) (E). [WIOA Sec. 108 (b) (2)]**

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

The Northwest Workforce Development system includes the required core and other partners including, at a minimum, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, **Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**, Wagner-Peyser Program, Vocational Rehabilitation providers. The One Stop Operator will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of partners to support alignment of services. The local board will coordinate work with the core programs through a referral process that ensures an individual seeking services is made aware of the available core program services. The Workforce Development Board will work with these entities through development of the MOU to identify services provided by the partners.

In developing the talent pipeline the Board and system are working closely with Ozarks Unlimited Resource Education Service Cooperative and Northwest Education Service Cooperative, Northwest Arkansas Council, Arkansas Center for Data Sciences as well as post-secondary schools including North Arkansas College, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Arkansas State University at Mountain Home and Northwest Technical Institute.

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

As staff to the local Workforce Board, we have been the leader of convening Core Workforce partners for over 10 years. These meetings have resulted in a broader shared knowledge of programs and services provided by each partner which has resulted in referrals and co-enrollments. These discussions have included ways to help individuals follow a career path.

Northwest collaborates closely with entities carrying out core programs, including educational institutions, vocational training centers, community organizations, and employers. This collaboration ensures a holistic approach to addressing the needs of eligible individuals.

Northwest helps facilitate the development of career pathways that align with the local labor market demand. This involves identifying high-growth industries and occupations, as well as mapping out clear progression routes for individuals to advance in their careers.

Northwest offers customized training and education programs tailored to the needs of individuals with barriers to employment. This may involve flexible scheduling, online learning options, or specialized curriculum designed to accommodate different learning styles and abilities.

Northwest emphasizes the importance of attaining recognized postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates or certifications that are portable and stackable. Provide support and resources to help individuals pursue and obtain these credentials, which enhance their employability and earning potential.

Northwest conducts outreach activities to raise awareness about available resources and opportunities among eligible individuals, including those from underserved communities. This may involve community events, workshops, online campaigns, and partnerships with local media outlets.

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

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

The Northwest Local Workforce Board will actively reach out to employers through outreach efforts including networking events, industry forums, business roundtables and working with area Chambers of Commerce. These outreach efforts provided opportunities to meet with local employers of all sizes to help understand their workforce needs, challenges and priorities.

The Northwest Workforce Board offers tailored assistance to encourage employer participant in workforce development programs including information on available training grants, tax credits, or other financial incentives to offset the costs associated with employee training and development .

The Board also works with employers to offer flexible and customized training solutions to meet the needs of small businesses and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. This may involve development modular training programs. Flexible scheduling options, or on-the-job training opportunities. Designed to minimize disruption to business operation will addressing the specific skill gaps.

The Northwest Board encourages collaboration and partnership between employers and educational institutions, training providers, and other stakeholders. These efforts help promote the development of industry-driven training programs that align with the needs of the employers and equip individuals with the skills and competencies required for success in in-demand occupations.

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

In addition to the information provided in “A” of this section, The Northwest Workforce Board collaborates with economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders to promote business growth and expansion in the Northwest area. The Northwest Local Workforce Board supports a local workforce development system that meets the needs of business by being actively engaged with employers to understand their workforce needs. This includes regular meetings and industry partnerships to gather insights directly from employers. Northwest provides labor market data to identify current and future workforce trends and emerging skill demands. Northwest acts as a liaison between job seekers and local businesses by facilitating job fairs and networking opportunities. Northwest promotes work-based learning opportunities such as internships, externships, and cooperative education programs. These efforts help align workforce development efforts with broader economic development goals to support business growth, and competitiveness in the region.

C. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development  
The Northwest Workforce Board promoted cross-sector collaboration and partnerships between workforce development and economic development organizations to maximize the impact of their respective initiatives.

To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development, the Northwest Workforce Board has several initiatives. Northwest facilitates collaboration between workforce development agencies, educational institutions, economic development organizations, and other stakeholders. Regular communication, joint planning and shared goals help align efforts and maximize impact. Northwest is creating sector-based approaches to

workforce development that focus on key industries driving economic growth in the region. By targeting specific sectors such as healthcare, technology, or advanced manufacturing, Northwest can tailor training programs to meet the needs of employers in those industries. Northwest engages businesses as partners in workforce development efforts, seeking their input on skill requirements, training needs, and recruitment challenges. By implementing these strategies, Northwest can better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development efforts, leading to a more skilled workforce, stronger businesses, and increased prosperity for the region.

D. Strengthen links between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs. This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work-based learning programs, apprenticeship models, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that support the local board's strategy in element 3.1. *[WIOA §108(b)(4)(A) & (B)]*

The Northwest Board works to streamline the integration of unemployment insurance services into the on-stop delivery system, ensuring that individuals seeking unemployment benefits can easily access a comprehensive range of workforce development resources and support services in one location. The board is working to enhance communication and data sharing between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs to facilitate more efficient and coordinated service delivery. The Northwest Workforce board collaborates with state agencies responsible for administering unemployment insurance programs to identify opportunities for process improvements, service enhancements, and policy reforms that promote alignment with workforce development goals and priorities.

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

Entrepreneurial efforts are supported and promoted through the Harrison Regional Chamber of Commerce E-Ship program, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce Teen Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Small Business and Technology Center at the Walton College University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Arkansas Food Innovation Center, Startup Junkie, Young Entrepreneurs Academy in Bentonville, C3 Carroll County Collaborative, Revolving Loan Fund, Forge – Community Loan Fund and more.

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

The local board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities with secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities through input at quarterly partner meetings. The local board proactively establishes partnerships with secondary schools, community colleges, technical schools, and other postsecondary institutions including education cooperatives in the region. These partnerships facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration to ensure that workforce development efforts are



aligned with educational programs. Northwest partners specifically with North Arkansas College, Northwest Arkansas Community College, ASU Mountain Home and Northwest Technical Institute.

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

In order to assist jobseekers in obtaining or retaining employment through career or training services, Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of supportive services. Northwest region is responsible for establishing a supportive service policy that outlines types, eligibility, limits, etc. The Title IB Supportive Services Policy adopted by the Workforce Development Board may be found in the Board Policy Manual. Examples of supportive services include childcare; transportation; needs-related payments; housing; tools and equipment; uniforms; and other clothing. In addition to WIOA-funded supportive services, Northwest has developed relationships with community partners that assist with utility payments, food, shelter, and other basic needs.

**Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)**

Division of Workforce Services provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) that provide childcare, transportation, vehicle repair, emergency rent and utility assistance, and relocation assistance.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Services for the Blind may provide items needed for the individual to participate in employment and training activities such as glasses, rehabilitative technology, personal care attendant services, transportation and other supports as needs are determined.

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

Wagner-Peyser staff and the Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth provider staff are co-located in all the Northwest Workforce Centers which simplifies the process.

Central to WIOA is the integration of service delivery among multiple workforce and talent development programs. Northwest has strong partnerships among state agencies, community colleges, economic development, and community-based organizations. A priority of the local board and central to the implementation of the strategic plan is to align core programs to prevent and eliminate duplication across programs.

Alignment of core and optional programs will be accomplished by the following strategies:

Reflect Robust Partnerships – Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The one-stop operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates the services of the core partners and other workforce center partners. They have regular partners meetings.

Organize Service by Function – Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having workforce center staff that are cross-trained to serve all customers seamlessly (including target populations) by

providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope and requirements of each program.

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

The Local Board received the Requests for Proposals from the Arkansas Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program/Arkansas Workforce Connections. The local Board had a committee appointed by the Board Chair to review proposals and determine if the proposals were consistent with the Northwest local plan. A scoresheet was provided. Scores were tabulated and submitted to the Adult Education Department.

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

Active

- Has a clear coordinator, convener, or convening team;
- Is led by industry as demonstrated by private sector members playing leadership roles;
- Has broad industry engagement as demonstrated by industry members attending meetings, partnering on activities, providing in-kind or financial resources, or similar;
- Includes critical and engaged partners across programs from workforce development;
- Can demonstrate that the partnership is not “just a workforce thing,” “just an economic development thing,” or “just an education thing.”
- Operates in a true labor market region, not within the confines of a workforce area or other geopolitical boundaries;
- Operates under some kind of shared strategic plan, road map, etc.;
- Can demonstrate clearly identified priorities and an action plan, be able to demonstrate recent or current activities, services or products that are a direct outcome of the partnership.

Emerging

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

Exploring

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

**Information Technology** - emerging and ongoing. The future of Arkansas's workforce lies in the State's ability to infuse STEM education into the mainstream of our educational system. STEM is short for "Science, Technology, Engineering and Math." Another project goal is equipping Arkansas colleges with the tools they need to better educate the K-12 teachers in these core subjects. The Arkansas STEM Coalition is a statewide partnership of leaders from a diverse range of sectors, including 12 members of Arkansas businesses and industries, to enable programs that support excellence in STEM teaching and learning to expand the economy of Arkansas and produce higher paying jobs. We have also partnered with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences to assist the training of apprentices in Northwest Arkansas as well as our local community colleges and training providers. IT sector partnerships are ongoing throughout the entire Northwest area especially with IT apprenticeships on the rise. Northwest Business Services Team is working with employers in the area to help increase the number of apprenticeships.

**Entrepreneurs and Innovators** - exploring. Northwest Arkansas has a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem that has already supported a number of successful startups ranging from e-commerce businesses to product-as-a service businesses. We have worked with organizations such as StartupNWA, EforAll, Startup Junkie, and VentureNoire to secure partnerships for creating strategies that respond to current and future workforce needs. With entrepreneurship on the rise, it is imperative that we sustain these partnerships to ensure that the next generation of new businesses flourish. The Northwest Business Services Team works with entrepreneurs throughout the area to help connect them with the resources they need.

**Health Care and Social Assistance**- active and ongoing. Northwest Arkansas' economic future will be strengthened by targeted health-sector growth initiatives. Regional healthcare providers and academic institutions continue to expand service offerings in a bid to keep pace with population growth, and workforce development efforts are ongoing. The Northwest Arkansas Council's latest development strategy emphasizes the need for increased collaboration among healthcare providers, researchers, universities, and the business communities and the need for a dedicated roadmap for future healthcare sector investments. Innovative healthcare apprenticeships are currently being created. Northwest is partnering with those organizations to assist in getting the programs created and on the Eligible Training Provider list so that we can refer our participants to the programs.

**Retail** - exploring. Retail trade falls within Northwest Arkansas's top ten industries by gross regional product. With ideal available sites and a low cost of doing business, retailers can take advantage of a region with income levels much higher than the state average. Northwest Arkansas is a global center of excellence in retail, food, and logistics. We are home to the headquarters of three fortune 500 companies, Walmart, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt Transport. Additionally, Simmons Foods, America's Car Mart, PAM Transport, 1,450 corporate subsidiary offices, and internationally recognized consumer brands call NWA home. NWA has a world-class infrastructure of professional as well as technical services to support the flagship industries. The Northwest Business Services Team is seeking to create a sector partnership focused on Retail in the entire area.

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

The Board currently leverages and has oversight of funding outside WIOA Title I. Additional funding includes National Emergency Disaster Grants that provide temporary employment to assist counties and cities with cleanup after natural disasters and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grant. Leverage resources include NWAEDD community and economic development funds for joint projects. We will apply for future grants as they become available.

NWAEDD was awarded \$25,000 to enhance sector-based service delivery and increase support to business and industry partners. The objective is to connect public resources and programs, job seekers and students, and business and industry to achieve a shared understanding of industry needs and opportunities available to strengthen the economic structure in the district. The grant will allow us an opportunity to strengthen and establish regional industry and sector partnerships for in-demand occupations. Through these partnerships, the region will be able to utilize shared resources, such as technology and infrastructure, to connect, interact, innovate, and leverage opportunities to maximize economic development outcomes. Robust partnerships will further implement strategies that will stabilize and grow in-demand industry sector occupations across the nine counties we serve.

**Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation**

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

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

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

The Board ensures continuous improvement by the monitoring of service providers and the review and evaluation of eligible training providers. This helps ensure that the training provided is meeting the needs of employers and that employers are hiring from those training programs. The Board meets with the educational institutions to ensure needs are understood and conveyed on an ongoing basis. Service providers are encouraged to align their programs and services with the employment needs of local employers and industries. The local board facilitates communication and collaboration between providers and employers to identify skill gaps, industry trends, and emerging job opportunities. Training providers are held accountable for the performance outcomes of their programs, including job placement rates, completion rates, credential attainment, and wage gains. Performance data is collected and monitored to ensure that providers meet established benchmarks. Training providers

must comply with all applicable regulations and requirements outlined in the WIOA legislation and related guidance documents. This includes reporting requirements, program monitoring, and adherence to programmatic and fiscal guidelines.

Northwest eligible training providers must meet the criteria as stated in the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board's Eligible Training Provider policy. Staff is in continual contact with providers to ensure they understand the process to become an eligible training provider as well as to continue their eligibility.

Training providers must:

- meet the state minimum requirements
- must be on the projected employment opportunities list
- must have reasonable costs (Comparable to/not greater than public institutions for the same training), the credit hours must be transferrable to public institutions
- must be within our local Workforce area
- if it is outside the adjacent Workforce area the program can be approved if the program is not offered nearby, the program has demonstrated cost and time effectiveness, or if it is prudent to do so in order to accommodate participant needs.

The programs are brought to the Board at the next meeting for review and approval.

(NW Eligible Training Provider Policy)

The local board actively engages with employers to ensure that service providers are responsive to their workforce needs through the Northwest Business Services Team. The Business Services Team works with all partners to coordinate efforts with our employers so that there is no duplication of services and the employers are served as fully as possible.

The Board will also use a report created by the Arkansas Research Center for the Division of Workforce Services pursuant to Act 852 of 2015 which provides Employment and Earnings Outcomes for Arkansas graduates of State supported higher learning institutions <http://dws.arkansas.gov/News/PDF/Act%20852%20Economic%20Security%20Report.pdf>

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

With two Workforce Centers across the nine-county area, access to a comprehensive center may be limited to very remote areas. In those remote areas staff will travel to work with participants and employers when requested. Arkansas Job Link is the State's technology system that allows participants and employers to access many services on a self-serve basis as well as in centers. <https://nwaedd.org/> is Northwest's website that provides information for workforce services. Northwest also has Facebook and "X" accounts. Northwest also partners with community partners such as local libraries and schools who help provide computers and internet access to our participants. Career Advisors use text messages and virtual platforms to communicate with participants. The Arkansas Mobile Workforce Unit can be scheduled when needed. The Mobile Workforce Center is regularly scheduled at the Frisco Station Mall, 100 N. Dixieland Road, Rogers AR every Monday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

Northwest Workforce will comply with WIOA section 188 by ensuring accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities by providing staff training and support by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Services for the Blind. The Job Access with Speech (JAWS) system is available at all Centers as assistance for customers that are visually impaired. JAWS provides speech and Braille output for computer applications. MAGIC is currently installed in the Workforce Centers in Fayetteville and Harrison. This software is a screen magnification and screen reading solution for computer users with low vision. Northwest will provide reasonable accommodations, ensuring equal access to facilities and services, and implementing nondiscrimination policies and procedures. Compliance efforts may vary based on the specific requirements and needs of the individuals served and the resources available. The Northwest Workforce Development Area ensures that individuals with disabilities or mobility limitations can easily access and utilize the services provider. This includes features such as wheelchair ramps, wide doorways and aisles, accessible parking spaces, accessible restrooms. Additionally, signage and materials are designed to be accessible to individuals with visual impairments, such as large print options. Staff members may utilize written communication, such as emails, notes, or visual aids to convey information clearly to hearing-impaired individuals.

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

Roles and contributions will be described in the memorandum of understanding and infrastructure funding agreements.

Partners in Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Area

| Program Partners                                 | Programs          | Location  |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District | Adult             | 818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District | Dislocated Worker | 818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |

|  |                                     |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District | Youth                               | 818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703  |
| Women Empowered Network                          | Job Corps                           | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601  |
| None   | YouthBuild                          | n/a  |
| American Indian Center of Arkansas               | Native American                     | Arkansas Workforce Centers<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703                               |
| Arkansas Human Development Corporation           | Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker     | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703                                |
| Arkansas Workforce Connections                   | Wagner-Peyser Employment Services   | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703                                |
| Fayetteville School District                     | Adult Education and Family Literacy | 612 South College, Fayetteville  |
| Northwest Technical Institute,                   |                                     | 610 E. Emma Street, Springdale   |
| North Arkansas College                           |                                     | 1320 N. Spring Road, Harrison<br>804 W Freeman, Berryville<br>102 Larimer Drive Suite 9, Green Forest<br>124 Lee Street, Huntsville<br>Jasper Public Library, Jasper<br>402 Oak Street, Leslie |
| Northwest Arkansas Community College             |                                     | One College Dr., Bentonville<br>1001 S. Mt. Olive, Siloam Springs<br>Gravette Public Library, Gravette<br>6101 Watkins, Springdale   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Arkansas State University at Mountain Home |   | ASU MH<br>1600 South College Street<br>Mountain Home, AR 72653  |
| Ozark Literacy Council                     |   | 2596 N. Keystone Crossing,<br>Fayetteville  |
| Arkansas Rehabilitation Services           | Vocational Rehabilitation                                 | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| Division of Services for the Blind         |   | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| Experience Works                           | Senior Community Service Employment Program               | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| North Arkansas College                     |   | 1515 Pioneer Ridge, Harrison  |
| Northwest Arkansas Community College       | Career and Technical Education postsecondary Carl Perkins | One College Dr., Bentonville  |
| Northwest Technical Institute              |   | 709 S. Old Missouri Rd.,<br>Springdale  |
| Arkansas State University at Mountain Home |   | 1600 S. College, Mountain Home  |
| Arkansas Department of Workforce Services  | Trade Adjustment Assistance                               | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |



|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Arkansas Workforce Connections                | Jobs for Veterans State Grants                        | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| Ozarks Opportunities                          | Community Services Block Grant Training and Education | By referral   |
| Northwest Arkansas Regional Housing Authority | Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training | By referral   |
| Arkansas Workforce Connections                | Unemployment Insurance                                | Arkansas Workforce Center<br>818 Hwy 62-65 N.<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>Arkansas Workforce Center<br>2153 E. Joyce Blvd, Suite 201<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703 |
| Goodwill Industries                           | Second Chance programs                                | 5252 W. Sunset Ave<br>Springdale, AR 72762  |
| Arkansas Department of Human Services         | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)        | 2126 Capps Road<br>Harrison, AR 72601<br><br>4201 N. Shiloh Drive<br>Fayetteville, AR 72703<br><br>204 Busher Drive<br>Mountain Home, AR 72653                  |

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

Our Local Area advocates and supports an integrated information system at the state and local level that would allow entities that carry out core programs to better coordinate service delivery for mutual customers and cross program referrals. Currently, all DOL-funded partner programs utilize Arkansas Job Link (AJL) as a technology platform. The State is exploring Information Technology options that will assist in the transitioning to an integrated common intake component which acts as the front end to the state's workforce programs. Until such an option exists, our workforce center staff maximizes the utilization of currently available technology to consolidate, streamline services and enhance the overall customer experience. Northwest has a website, Facebook and "X" accounts. Northwest also partners with community partners such as local libraries and schools who help provide computers and internet access to our participants. Career Advisors use text messages and virtual platforms to communicate with participants. The Arkansas Mobile Workforce Unit can be scheduled when needed. The Mobile Workforce

Center is regularly scheduled at the Frisco Station Mall, 100 N. Dixieland Road, Rogers AR every Monday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

Northwest's adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities are provided through the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District at the two Workforce Centers located across the region. NWAEDD has consistently produced excellent results by providing customers with case management, scholarships for institutional training, on-the-job training, work experience, apprenticeships, and supportive services. The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Northwest Technical Institute, John Brown University, North Arkansas College and Arkansas State University at Mountain Home as well as other schools provide a wide choice for those entering higher education.

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth provides services to individuals through basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. Title I assists clients in paying for training costs, as well as supportive services to alleviate barriers to employment.

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

Rapid Response is an early intervention designed to coordinate transitional services at the earliest point possible for employers and workers affected by mass layoffs or plant closure. Rapid Response works closely with the Northwest Local Workforce Development Board and the Northwest Local Elected Officials in adversely affected areas to ensure that dislocated workers receive program information and services.

The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program provides an alternative for employers faced with a reduction in the work force. It allows an employer to divide available work or hours of work among a specific group(s) of employees in lieu of a layoff, and it allows the employees to receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force division of Business Retention & Workforce Transition is responsible for the statewide rapid response and layoff aversion activities. Immediately upon receiving notice of a closure or workforce reduction, the Task Force contacts company officials. A community meeting is scheduled with elected officials and business leaders to create action plans to assist both the community and dislocated workers. To avoid duplication and confusion, local AWC staff do not initiate contact with an employer regarding a layoff without first speaking with the Task Force Coordinator. Layoff aversion may occur when word of a possible layoff or closure is addressed early by the Task Force. The Task Force will convene economic development agencies and others to try to find a solution to prevent the layoff.

The Business Retention & Workforce Transition team, as a part of the Dislocated Worker's Task Force, may conduct a worker assistance workshop, to be attended by representatives of local and state agencies

and affected workers to review available resources. Services and needs discussed at the workshop may include retraining and educational opportunities, unemployment insurance, social service programs, credit counseling, insurance options and resources to find a new job.

The Task Force Coordinator also serves as the liaison to the local chambers of commerce throughout the area. Information is provided to them about the affected workers, including their occupations and their educational and skill levels. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Center staff builds on the services provided through the Governors Dislocated Worker Task Force by providing information and services to the affected employees.

Dislocated workers are given a full array of services through the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers partnership and community organizations. Northwest staff meets with dislocated workers in our area to explain the services that are available and help them get enrolled into those programs.

State and local WIOA partners will continue to build and maintain relationships with the business community to help with early warning of potential layoffs and promote early intervention. Together, the following services will be provided:

- Layoff aversion activities
- Immediate and on-site contact with employers and local community representatives
- Assessment and planning to address the layoff schedule, assistance needs of impacted workers, re-employment prospects, and available resources
- Information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs; AWC services; and employment and training activities, including Trade Act, Pell Grants, GI Bill, and the WIOA DLW Program
- Necessary services and resources, such as workshops, resource and job fairs to support re-employment assistance
- Trade Act petition services through the Governors Dislocated Worker Task Force

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

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

The WIOA Title I provider will provide or make an appropriate referral to provide the fourteen required program elements to eligible youth participants in Northwest Arkansas. Northwest is creating a youth Program Resource Guide that will provide specific contact information for providers of each of the Youth Program Elements. This guide will be available upon request and on [nwaedd.org](https://nwaedd.org/). A Memorandum of Understanding is in place for each provider of the services. A copy of this memorandum can be found at <https://nwaedd.org/>.

Services may be provided through a referral basis if needed. When services are provided by organizations or individuals other than WIOA staff, written agreements and/or contracts will be utilized.

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

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

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

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

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

There are numerous resources in the area for tutoring students who are younger than 16 including the Fayetteville Public Library, school districts, and other private entities.

Northwest works to provide a tailored approach that considers the unique needs, resources and opportunities of the region. Northwest has strong partnerships with local educational institutions, employers, youth-serving organizations and community-based organizations. Those entities help Northwest to leverage resources, share expertise and coordinate services for you. Northwest makes referrals to partners, including Adult Education, to provide educational services and the use of on-line tutorials. The Northwest Workforce Development Board authorizes supportive services and incentives for the participants that achieve goals that contribute to their success. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will provide and coordinate services to students with disabilities. The primary goal of local WIOA youth programming is to ensure youth completion of a High School Diploma/General Education Development.

Youth Program Element #1 - Service Providers

- Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education
- North Arkansas College – Adult Education
- Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education
- Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Ed.
- Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education
- Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville
- Goodwill
- NWAEDD Title 1

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

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

Northwest works closely with alternative schools throughout the area. Alternative schools will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to obtain their high school diploma or a GED. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will provide and coordinate services to students with disabilities.

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| <p><b>Youth Program Element #2 - Service Provider</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education</li> <li>-North Arkansas College – Adult Education</li> <li>-Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education</li> <li>-Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Ed.</li> <li>-Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education</li> <li>- Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville</li> <li>- Goodwill</li> <li>- ALLPS School of Innovation – Fayetteville</li> <li>- Main Street Academy – Siloam Springs</li> <li>- Archer Alternative Learning Center – Bentonville</li> <li>- Harrison School District – Alternative School</li> <li>- Mountain Home School District – Alternative School</li> </ul> <p><b>NWAEDD Title 1</b></p> |
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**Program element #3** - Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:

- (i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
- (ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs;
- (iii) Internships and job shadowing; and
- (iv) On-the-job training opportunities;

Work Experience is a planned/structured learning experience that takes place in a private for-profit, non-profit, or public sectors workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience is temporary. Work experience for a participant in WIOA helps individuals obtain the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Work experience provides a helpful means for an individual to gain experience that leads to unsubsidized employment. It should promote the development of good work habits and work skills. The summer employment opportunities (SEO) include a planned and structured learning experience that takes place in a private or public worksite for approximately three (3) months.

Summer employment opportunities provide new academic/work skills that will lead to future employment. SEO will offer work experience and provide academic enrichment activities to enhance employability skills. Participants will prepare for employment opportunities through the provision of various services including, but not limited to: basic skill remediation; supervised work experiences; pre-employment abilities such as career planning, resume preparation, labor market information usage, application completion, and interview skills attainment; attainment of core employability/work maturity skills such as dependability, honesty, problem solving, initiative, enthusiasm, team player, interpersonal skills, appearance, leadership, and cultural sensitivity with emphasis on in-demand jobs and emerging industries.

Northwest Workforce Development works to provide work opportunities for our youth participants with an emphasis on jobs in in-demand and emerging industries. Participants will prepare for employment opportunities through the provision of various services including, but not limited to:

- basic skill remediation
- supervised work experiences
- pre-employment abilities such as career planning, resume preparation, labor market information usage, application completion, and interview skills attainment
- attainment of core employability/work maturity skills such as dependability, honesty, problem solving, initiative, enthusiasm, team player
- Interpersonal skills, appearance, leadership, and cultural sensitivity. emphasis on jobs in in-demand and emerging industries

By providing these services and engaging stakeholders effectively, Northwest Workforce can provide meaningful opportunities for youth people to thrive in the workforce. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will provide and coordinate services to students with disabilities.

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| <p>Youth Program Element #3 - Service Provider</p> <p>Division of Services for the Blind<br/>         Arkansas Rehabilitation Services<br/>         NWAEDD Title 1<br/>         Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education<br/>         North Arkansas College – Adult Education<br/>         Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education<br/>         Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education<br/>         Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education<br/>         Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville<br/>         Goodwill</p> |
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- **Program element #4** - Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;

Occupational skills training provides clients with tuition and fee assistance in demand occupational skills training that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills for in-demand and emerging occupations. This service closes the gap between jobseekers in the community and employers who

need a skilled workforce for their industry. By meeting the needs of current employers, the skilled workforce will help attract new industry to the area.

Northwest works with local eligible training providers in our area to enroll participants into programs that provide recognized degrees, certifications, or marketable skills for in-demand and emerging occupations. Northwest has strong partnerships with educational institutions, vocational training providers, community colleges, technical schools and industry training centers that deliver high quality skills trainings. Northwest Workforce Board has authorized supportive services for eligible participants that provide wraparound services to address barriers that may hinder participant and completion of occupational skill training programs. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will provide and coordinate services to students with disabilities.

Non-educational service providers often collaborate with community colleges, technical schools, or universities that are accredited to offer postsecondary education. These partnerships allow them to utilize the educational institution's curriculum, faculty, and resources to deliver training programs. Many industries have specific certifications or credentials that are recognized as standards for competency. Service providers design their programs to prepare participants for these certifications, ensuring that upon completion, individuals are eligible to obtain recognized credentials that enhance their employability. Programs often incorporate elements of work-based learning, such as internships, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training. This practical experience not only enhances skills but also provides opportunities to earn credentials that validate the skills acquired.

**Youth Program Element #4 - Service Provider**

- Northwest Arkansas Community College
- North Arkansas College
- Fayetteville Public Schools
- Arkansas State University Mtn. Home
- Northwest Technical Institute

**•Program element #5** - Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; Local apprenticeship organizations will be one of many sources for referrals for eligible WIOA Youth participants. The primary goal is for the youth to be trained and employed in a demand occupation that leads to self-sufficiency. Career Specialists work closely with the post-secondary school personnel to coordinate services

Northwest makes referrals to programs that provide concurrent education. While programs developing basic academic skills, which are included as part of alternative secondary school services and dropout recovery services (program element 2), workforce preparation activities that occur as part of a work experience (program element 3), and occupational skills training (Program element 4) can occur separately and at different times (and thus are counted under separate program elements), this program element refers to the concurrent delivery of these services which make up an integrated education and training model. Northwest strives to develop and implement a range of workforce preparation activities tailored to the needs and interests of youth in Northwest Arkansas. These activities may include career exploration, job readiness training, soft skills development, financial literacy education, and entrepreneurship training.

**Youth Program Element #5 - Service Provider**

**Workforce Preparation Activities:**

Division of Services for the Blind -  
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  
NWAEDD Title 1

Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education  
North Arkansas College – Adult Education  
Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education  
Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education  
Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education  
Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville  
Goodwill

**Training:**

Northwest Arkansas Community College  
North Arkansas College  
Fayetteville Public Schools  
Arkansas State University Mtn. Home  
Northwest Technical Institute

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

Leadership development opportunities are a broad set of activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Other activities include positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, teamwork and other activities. The purpose of leadership development activities is to develop skills and attitudes that are important in all areas of life to include education, employment, family, and community. Many youth do not have those skills and attitudes. Leadership development provides encouragement and support to youth and assists in developing skills and instilling confidence as they transition into adulthood. Examples include community volunteering, peer mentoring or tutoring, character education, citizenship education, including how and why to vote, serving on a youth council, community or advocacy organization board, leadership training consisting of how to work in a team, how to run meetings, diversity training, and life skills training such as parent education, financial education, goal setting and conflict resolution.

Northwest encourages our youth to participate in community service-learning projects, peer centered activities, teambuilding, life-skills training, healthy lifestyle choices, etc. The Pre-Employment Transition Program offered through Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind provide soft skills training which includes a focus on social behaviors intended to enhance the development of employment skills for transition age youth by fostering the knowledge and growth of independent living skills, communication, and interpersonal skills to gain understanding of employer expectations related to timeliness and performance on the job. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will provide or coordinate students with disabilities. Arkansas Rehabilitation Service offers the Youth Leadership Forum on the campus of the University of Central Arkansas which is open to youth with disabilities and designed to foster leadership skills. This is part of a nationwide effort to join youth with disabilities and promote empowerment.



Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind conducts interactive workshops focusing on leadership skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making. These workshops are tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by young people with visual impairments.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services offers programs that introduce youth to various career paths and industries. These programs may include career assessments, job shadowing opportunities, internships, and exposure to vocational training options. Career readiness workshops cover resume building, interview skills, and workplace etiquette.

Northwest WIOA Title 1B supports summer employment programs for youth. These opportunities provide valuable work experience, allowing youth to develop leadership skills in a real-world work environment.

All of these entities provide programs that include training in financial literacy, budgeting, and managing personal finances. Additionally, youth receive instruction in essential life skills such as time management, stress management, and effective communication.

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| Youth Program Element #6 - Service Provider |
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| Division of Services for the Blind<br>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services<br>NWAEDD Title 1 |
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•**Program element #7** - Supportive services, including the services listed in §681.570; Supportive services for youth are to enable an individual to participate in WIOA youth program activities.

Supportive services include assistance such as housing, transportation, childcare, dependent care, medical care, school related supplies, training related supplies, etc., clothing, and related needs.

The Northwest Workforce youth program focuses on providing supportive services to help young people in Northwest Arkansas overcome barriers to education, training, and employment. These supportive services are crucial for ensuring that youth can fully participate in and benefit from workforce development programs. Northwest provides assistance for eligible participants with transportation, childcare, clothing, supplies, counseling, residential (rent, rental deposits, housing payments, utility, internet) emergency housing, health (vaccinations or physicals required), insurance, laptops and software and related needs based on the Northwest Workforce Development Supportive Services policy.

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| Youth Program Element #7 - Service Provider |
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| Division of Services for the Blind<br>Arkansas Rehabilitation Services<br>NWAEDD Title 1<br>Arkansas Workforce Connections<br>Goodwill |
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**Program element #8** - Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;

Adult mentoring is a one-on-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth that is based on trust. High-quality adult mentoring programs include an adult role model who builds a working relationship with a youth and who fosters the development of positive life skills in youth. Youth may receive adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months. The purpose of mentoring activities is to help youth succeed in the school or the workplace, facilitate positive social behaviors and learn leadership and citizenship skills. Benefits of adult mentoring include self-confidence/self-esteem, increase motivation, enhance achievements/aspirations, and ease transition to adulthood. Adult mentoring is available through several community-based organizations throughout the local area.

The Northwest youth program focuses on adult mentoring to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to young people in Northwest Arkansas as they navigate their education, training, and career pathways. Northwest Workforce refers participants to community-, faith-based, and/or other organizations to provide one-on-one encouragement and direction. By implementing adult mentoring programs as part of the WIOA youth program in Northwest Arkansas, stakeholders can provide young people with valuable guidance, encouragement, and support as they pursue their educational and career goals, ultimately helping them succeed in the workforce and achieve long-term success.

**Youth Program Element #8 - Service Provider**

Big Brother Big Sisters NWA (Madison, Benton, Washington)  
Youth Bridge Harrison/Fayetteville (Boone, Carroll, Newton Searcy, Madison, Benton, Washington)  
Baxter County Time Mentoring Program (Baxter, Marion)  
Marion County Extension Educational Program and Services (Baxter, Marion, Searcy)

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

Follow-up services are activities after completion of participation to monitor youth's success during their transition to employment and further education and to provide assistance as needed for a successful transition. Follow-up services for youth include frequent interaction, including guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit.

The Northwest youth program focuses on providing follow-up services to support the continued success and progress of young people in Northwest Arkansas after they have completed their education, training, or employment programs. Comprehensive follow-up services including frequent interaction with Career Advisors through guidance and counseling, support services, and other assistance for at least 12 months after exit ensures that youth participants continue to receive the support they need to achieve their goals, succeed in the workforce, and build a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

**Youth Program Element #9 - Service Provider**

Division of Services for the Blind  
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services  
NWAEDD Title 1

**•Program element #10** - Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth; Comprehensive guidance and counseling are a process of helping youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs impart skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development. An effective comprehensive guidance and counseling program develops a youth's competencies in self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning. Many at-risk youth need assistance in making informed decisions and choices. The purpose of comprehensive guidance and counseling is to promote growth in each youth's educational, personal, social, and employability skills. Career and employment counseling includes but is not limited to the provision of career and occupational information to include Labor Market Information (LMI). Participants may receive information on various occupations that will assist them in making career choices needed, WIOA staff will refer participants to partner programs for counseling in drug, alcohol, mental health, etc. Career counseling will be an integral part of youth programming and provide the basis for individual employment plans.

Northwest will offer one-on-one counseling sessions to youth participants to assess their interests, skills, strengths, and career aspirations. Career Advisors will provide personalized guidance and support to help participants explore career pathways, set achievable goals, and develop action plans for their future. Northwest Career Advisors will also provide educational planning assistance, job search assistance, financial aid and financial literacy programs and supportive services referrals. Northwest youth participants will receive the personalized support they need to make informed decisions about their education, training, and career paths, ultimately leading to greater success and fulfillment in the workforce.

**Youth Program Element #10 - Service Provider**

- Ozark Guidance (Several locations throughout the district)
- Arisa Health (Several locations throughout the district)
- Area Agency on Aging (Several locations throughout the district)
- Chenel Family Therapy
- Pinnacle Counseling
- Still Waters Family Counseling
- Behavioral Health Services

**•Program element #11** - Financial literacy education;

Financial literacy education is supported by activities such as partnerships with financial institutions and to provide workshops at the local one stop. Youth will learn to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals. Staff may use online information to teach basic skills in bank transactions (bank statement reconciliation, debit/credit), debt management (loans, credit cards, etc.), budgeting(actual vs estimated, savings, etc.), and other useful real-life skills as needed.

In Northwest financial literacy education is supported by activities such as partnerships with financial institutions and workshops at the local one stop. Northwest Career Advisors provide access to online resources, tools, and apps that support financial literacy education, such as budgeting calculators, interactive games, and educational videos. Northwest uses the FDIC Money Smart Program to help provide financial literacy to participants. By using these tools and partnerships Northwest Arkansas can

equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to make sound financial decisions, achieve financial independence, and build a secure future for themselves.

Youth Program Element #11 - Service Provider

Goodwill  
NWAEDD Title 1  
Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education  
North Arkansas College – Adult Education  
Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education  
Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education  
Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education  
Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville

•Program element #12 - Entrepreneurial skills training;

Entrepreneurial skill training is supported by activities such as partnerships with local colleges, local chambers of commerce, economic development agencies and referrals to business development organizations.

In Northwest entrepreneurial skills training is supported by activities such as partnerships with economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and referrals to business development organizations. These partners provide workshops, seminars, and training sessions on various aspects of entrepreneurship. By providing these partnerships Northwest Arkansas can empower young people to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams, create economic opportunities, and contribute to the region's economic growth and vitality.

Youth Program Element #9 - Service Provider

Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education  
North Arkansas College – Adult Education  
Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education  
Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education  
Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education  
Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville  
Harrison Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Siloam Springs Chamber of Commerce  
Rogers/Lowell Chamber of Commerce  
Springdale Chamber of Commerce  
Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce  
Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce  
Searcy County Chamber of Commerce  
Newton County Chamber of Commerce  
Marion County Chamber of Commerce

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

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Centers utilize [www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov](http://www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov) for up-to-date information about labor market information, employment information, in demand industry sectors.

Northwest partners with DWS to provide access for career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services. Workshops and other services prepare youth for in-demand careers and and/or emerging occupations. Information is provided in the local one-stops or on-line systems such as the Arkansas Job Link.

**Youth Program Element #13- Service Provider**

**Arkansas Workforce Connections**

Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education

North Arkansas College – Adult Education

Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education

Arkansas State University Mtn. Home – Adult Education

Northwest Technical Institute - Adult Education

Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville

NWAEDD Title 1

**•Program element #14 - Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.**

Northwest provides individual guidance and counseling, including career pathway discussion; assistance with applications for Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions. The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board has approved an Additional Assistance Youth Barrier Policy. The Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Services for the Blind provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In addition to counseling and guidance, Division of Services for the Blind provides or arranges for the following core services: career exploration, work-based learning, internships, post-secondary training opportunities, work readiness training, self-advocacy, independent living and social skills. Activities may also include individual guidance and counseling; career pathway discussion; assistance with applications or FAFSA; and referral to enrollment and career counseling services at post-secondary institutions. Activities offered provide exposure to post-secondary education options; assisting youth with placement into post-secondary education; and placement into training opportunities such as apprenticeships and occupational training.

**Youth Program Element #14 - Service Provider**

Division of Services for the Blind

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

NWAEDD Title 1

**Career Pathways Initiative – North Arkansas College, Northwest Arkansas Community College, ASU Mountain Home**

Northwest Arkansas Community College – Adult Education

North Arkansas College – Adult Education

Fayetteville Public Schools – Adult Education

Arkansas State University Mt Home – Adult Education

Northwest Technical Institute -Adult Education

Ozark Literacy Adult Education Fayetteville

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) and the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) have youth programs for youth with disabilities that focus on employment. ARS and DSB have Supported Employment program models that are appropriate for youth with disabilities and the Pre-Employment Transition Program, which serves youth that are also students in an educational program from ages 16 to 21 in the State of Arkansas.

The Supported Employment model provides job placement assistance, on-the-job supports and job coaching through a third-party vendor that is qualified and monitored through ARS or DSB. Regular meetings and updates are built into this program model. With the Pre-Employment Transition model ARS and DSB provide 5 core services to youth that are students. These services include self-advocacy, work readiness, work-based learning, counseling on opportunities in post-secondary training, and job exploration. These services can be arranged through 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors, schools, or directly through ARS counselors. This program is qualified and monitored by ARS or DSB staff.

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

Training services will be provided to eligible participants and will include on-the-job training, apprenticeship, classroom training, customized training or incumbent worker training.

The individual training accounts (ITA) system is used by participants who are eligible for training services and choose to attend training. A career advisor uses the ITA request form to determine a participant's financial need. The participant selects the course of study from the eligible training provider list. The participant must have made an application and have received determination from other funding sources and present the award letter to the career specialist to show the monetary amounts of unmet financial need. He/she must also present a statement of how much the family will be able to contribute to the cost of the training. Consideration of all available funds, excluding loans, will determine the person's overall need for WIOA funding. The ITA may be used to cover expenses for tuition, books, fees, supplies, and/or tools. Employment/Training Advisors will work with the participant to make sure that all possible funds have been applied for and there is no duplication of funding for services.

The amount of monies available from all sources, the financial status of the family, and the potential of the applicant prior to a determination of qualification are also taken into consideration. If approved by the Operations Manager, the ITA is completed by the career advisor. The Eligible Training Provider bills the WIOA Program each semester. ITA's may be adjusted up or down based upon case necessity. ITA's are not issued if the training program is not on the Arkansas Job Link (AJL) training list.

Registered Apprenticeship is another viable option for individuals in career development. It is earn and learn, individuals are employed and receive training to earn a credential and even become licensed in the field in which they are working. Examples include but are not limited to electrical and plumbing, IT and Bilingual Administrative Assistants.

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

The primary avenue for training services is through the Individual Training Account; however, contracts may be used but should reflect a training program that is in demand. ~~On the job training and customized training are other options available to serve a single employer with its training needs.~~

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

The Board uses the Projected Employment Opportunities List ([www.discover.arkansas.gov](http://www.discover.arkansas.gov)) as the basic guide for determining in-demand occupations. Additionally, demand occupations and targeted industry sectors specific to the Northwest Area ~~are identified through the Northwest Business Services Team~~. Northwest works with local employers to get feedback regarding employment success to help determine in-demand occupations. ~~Northwest researches demand occupations from neighboring Workforce areas to use as well.~~ ~~When developing on the job contracts with an employer an open position would indicate it is in demand.~~

## **Section 5: Compliance**

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

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

Interagency agreements typically are memoranda of understanding. These will be developed by the State Transition Roundtable Policy Committee as part of the Workforce Certification document.

Local ARS Field offices or other ARS organizational units will replicate cooperative agreements in whole or in part with local divisions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core programs. These may include the following:

- provision of staff training and technical assistance with regard to the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services
- the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities in the State through the promotion of program accessibility, the use of nondiscriminatory policies and procedures, and the provision of reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology, for individuals with disabilities
- use of information and financial management systems that link all components of the statewide workforce development system, that link the components to other electronic networks, including nonvisual electronic networks, and that relate to such subjects as employment statistics, and information on job vacancies, career planning, and workforce innovation and

- opportunity activities; use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines
- establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate job placement
- carry out any other activities that the designated State unit and the employers determine to be appropriate; identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources, and specification of the financial responsibility of each component of the statewide workforce investment system with regard to paying for necessary services (consistent with State law and Federal requirements)
- specification of procedures for resolving disputes among such components.

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

To ensure compliance the local workforce board rehabilitation committee will review and provide oversight of the cooperative agreements as well as facilitate compliance.

The local rehabilitation committee provides oversight of the cooperative agreements as well as facilitates compliance as established in the MOU's between core partners.

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

The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District is responsible for disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Officials. Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District is located at 818 Highway 62-65-412 North, Harrison, Arkansas 72601. Joe Willis is the Executive Director.

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

During Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Board Chair appointed the One Stop Operator Procurement Task Force and approved hiring a consultant to guide the Board through the procurement process.

The NWAEDD One Stop Operator RFP was released on April 5, 2021. Notices were sent to Board members, Chief Elected Officials, One Stop partners and bidders list. The Notice of Publication appeared April 4, April 11 and April 18, 2021, in the Statewide edition of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. 5 requests for the RFP were received.

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board One Stop Operator Procurement Task Force met on May 5, 2021 to review and score the responses to the RFP. The Task Force approved Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District RFP to be the One Stop Operator.



The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board Executive Committee met on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Executive Committee approved the recommendation from the One Stop Operator Task Force to award the One Stop Operator to NWAEDD. The Northwest Chief Elected Officials also approved NWAEDD as the One Stop Operator.

**5.4** Describe the local area’s negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures and their implications upon the local workforce system; attach the completed Performance Targets Template. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

Performance measures for each local area will be the same as the State’s goals.

**Northwest WIOA Performance Measures**

| <b>WIOA Adult</b>                           | <b>PY22 - PY23 Performance Goals</b> |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)      | 81%                                  |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)      | 80%                                  |
| Credential Attainment Rate                  | 79%                                  |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | \$6,449.00                           |
| Measurable Skills Gains                     | 69%                                  |
| <b>WIOA Dislocated Worker</b>               | <b>PY22 – PY23 Performance Goals</b> |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)      | 81%                                  |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)      | 83%                                  |
| Credential Attainment Rate                  | 77%                                  |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | \$7,227.00                           |
| Measurable Skills Gains                     | 66.5%                                |
| <b>WIOA Youth</b>                           | <b>PY22 - PY23 Performance Goals</b> |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)      | 71%                                  |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)      | 74%                                  |
| Credential Attainment Rate                  | 60%                                  |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) | \$3,450.00                           |
| Measurable Skills Gains                     | 57%                                  |

The impact of WIOA performance measures on Northwest Arkansas is positive, driving greater alignment between workforce development efforts and the needs of employers and job seekers in the region. By promoting accountability, data-driven decision-making, collaboration and equity, WIOA helps strengthen the workforce and support economic growth in Northwest Arkansas.

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

Local, third party and state monitoring of the fiscal agent, Title I Service Provider and One-Stop Operator will be conducted at least annually. The local board will be made aware of any issues or concerns that may arise from the monitoring. Performance reports will be presented to the board at the end of each program year for the board to approve/disapprove. The fiscal agent, Tile I service provider and One-Stop Operator shall be audited on an annual basis. The board will be presented the eligible training provider list and programs quarterly for its review and approval. Key performance indicators include employment rate, employment retention, median earning, credential attainment, measurable skill gain, effectiveness in

serving employers and participant outcomes by demographic characteristics. Performance indicators for the one-stop delivery system include employment outcomes, customer satisfaction, employer engagement and performance against WIOS goals. These performance indicators provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness of workforce development programs and one-stop delivery system funded under WIOA. By tracking and analyzing these indicators, Northwest Workforce can assess program performance, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders, including participants, employers, policymakers, and the public.

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

The Northwest Workforce Development Board was asked for input into the development of the local plan at its March 1, 2024, board meeting. The vision of the Arkansas Workforce Development Delivery System was shared, providing the board with an overview of the Governor’s vision for the system under WIOA. A draft of the local plan was emailed to all board members as well as members of the Northwest Business Services Team, with a request for help with the development of the plan. An initial draft of the plan was forwarded to the board volunteers for input and review. CEOs had the opportunity to provide input as well. Workforce Center partners, businesses, labor organizations, educators, and economic developers from the local area are all represented on our board and Business Services Team and had the opportunity to comment. A notice of the draft Local Plan was placed on the NWAEDD website. Public notice ads were purchased in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on March 31, April 7 and April 14. Anyone wanting to comment was provided with an email address to request the Northwest local plan as well as comment on the plan. No comments were received.

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

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

A proclamation was released by newspaper, advising members of the public to submit comments on the proposed plan 30 days from March 31, 2024. Additionally, the proclamation was made public via NWAEDD’s website and physical location, as well as through email notification. The public comment period was March 31 to April 30, 2024.

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

At the conclusion of the public comment period, all comments will be reviewed and submitted.

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

Concerns or apprehensions received during the public comment period will be addressed succeeding the local board’s review of said concerns. Any concerns presented will be included in the attachment of this plan.

There were no comments.

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

Michelle Ryan  
 Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District  
 818 Highway 62 65 412 North  
 Harrison, AR 72601  
[mryan@nwaedd.org](mailto:mryan@nwaedd.org)  
 870-741-6882

**Section 6: Plan Assurances**

|   | <b>Planning Process and Public Comment</b>   | <b>References</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| X | 6.1 The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to obtain input into the development of the local plan and provide the opportunity for comment by representatives of business, labor organizations, education, other key stakeholders, and the public for a period that is no less than 30 days. | WIOA Sections 108(d); 20 CFR 679.550(b)                              |
| X | 6.2 The final local plan is available and accessible to the public.  | 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)   |
| X | 6.3 The local board has established procedures to ensure public access (Including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.  | WIOA Section 107(e); 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.550                      |
|   | <b>Required Policies and Procedures</b>  | <b>References</b>  |
| X | 6.4 The local board makes publicly available any local requirements for the public workforce system, such as policies, including policies for the use of WIOA Title I funds.   | 20 CFR 679.390   |
| X | 6.5 The local board has established a written policy or procedure that identifies circumstances that might present conflict of interest for any local workforce investment board or entity that they represent and provides for the resolution of conflicts.   | WIOA Section 107(h); 20 CFR 679.410(a)-(c)                           |
| X | 6.6 The local board has copies of memoranda of understanding between the local board and each one-stop partner concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area and has provided the State with the latest versions of its memoranda of understanding.   | WIOA Section 121(c); 20 CFR 678.500-510                              |
| X | 6.7 The local board has written policy or procedures that ensure one-stop operator agreements are reviewed and updated no less than once every three years.  | WIOA Section 121(c)(v)   |
| X | 6.8 The local board has negotiated and reached agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and the Governor.  | WIOA Sections 107(d)(9) and 116(c); 20 CFR 679.390(k) and 677.210(b) |

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|---|--|--|
| X | 6.9 The local board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth service provision under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations, provided no conflict exists with WIOA. | WIOA Sections 121(d) and 123; 20 CFR 678.600-615 and 681.400                       |
| X | 6.10 The local board has procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I individual training accounts.   | WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123;20 CFR 679.370(l)-(m) and 680.410-430 |

| Required Policies and Procedures (Continued) |   | References  |
|--|---|---|
| X  | 6.11 The local board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts. | WIOA Section 181(c); 20 CFR 683.600   |
| X  | 6.12 The local board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service one-stop center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and local board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein.   | WIOA Section 121(e)(2)(A); 20 CFR 678.305   |
| X  | 6.13 All partners in the local workforce and education system described in this plan ensure the physical, programmatic and communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials in one-stop centers for individuals with disabilities.   | WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR parts 37.7-37.9; 20 CFR 652.8(j)   |
| X  | 6.14 The local board ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from one-stop services.   | WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42  |
| X  | 6.15 The local board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals.   | WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.42  |
| X  | 6.16 The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.   | WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 37.54(a)(1)  |
| X  | 6.17 The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.   | WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 37.37  |
| X  | 6.18 The local board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements   | 2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; <b>RCW 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100</b> |
| X  | 6.19 The local board ensures that one-stop Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven.  | WIOA Section 167  |

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|---|---|---|
| X | 6.20 The local board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.   | WIOA Sections 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603; WIOA Section 116(i)(3) |
| X | 6.21 The local board has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (or applicable   | WIOA Section 108(b)(16); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); 20 CFR 680.300-310  |
|   | federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.   | WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-310   |
| X | 6.22 The local board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program funds.   | WIOA Section 108(b)(15)   |
| X | 6.23 The local board ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.   | WIOA Section 184(a)(3);<br><br>20 CFR<br><br>683.200, 683.300, and 683.400-410                                  |
| X | 6.24 The local board has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.              | WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750                                    |
| X | 6.25 The local board will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.  | WIOA Section 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.850  |
|   | <b>Eligibility</b>  | <b>References</b>   |
| X | 6.26 The local board has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career services and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of | 20 CFR Part<br><br>680 Subparts A and B;<br><br>20 CFR Part<br><br>681 Subpart A                                |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | service.  |   |
| X | 6.27 The local board has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.  | WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-320   |
| X | 6.28 The local board has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in I WIOA Title programs.   | WIOA Sections 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570                                    |
| X | 6.29 The local board has a written policy for priority of service at its workforce centers for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services. | Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09 |

## Appendix D: Planning References and Resources

### State of Arkansas's Combined Workforce Development Strategic Plan (State Plan)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategic Goal 4: Address Skills Gaps.

The Arkansas PY 2024 – 2027 Combined State Plan can be found at on the ADWS Website.

### Governor's Workforce Strategy

In February of 2023, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed an executive order establishing the governor's workforce cabinet and the chief workforce officer position.

The executive order states that the Workforce cabinet will advise the governor on issues regarding workforce development and career education in Arkansas, and the Governor's Chief Workforce Officer ("CWO"), shall be appointed by the Governor and will coordinate, manage, and direct the Governor's workforce development policies and career education strategy for the State of Arkansas. It is anticipated that the Governor's Workforce Strategy will be published in early 2024. Local workforce areas should reference this publication during the planning phase of regional and local plans.

### State Policy and Guidance



State policy can be found at <https://dws.arkansas.gov/workforce-services/workforce-innovation-wioa/wioa-plans>

Labor Market and Workforce Information.

A. Discover Arkansas

Arkansas Labor Market Information (LMI) is posted online at <https://www.discoverarkansas.gov/> and is available to the public.

B. Arkansas State Plan Economic and Workforce Analysis

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

To provide local workforce boards in the state with tools for development planning in their own areas, data is available courtesy of the [Arkansas Workforce Connections](http://www.discoverarkansas.gov/) Labor Market Information (LMI) website, <http://www.discoverarkansas.gov>. The goal is to help stakeholders at the state and local level better understand future industry and occupational needs and to provide workforce development boards with the tools needed to better serve their areas.