**Foothills Workforce Development Board**

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**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

**Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan**

**July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2028**

North Carolina Department of Commerce

Division of Workforce Solutions

313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120

4316 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

**Introduction and Instructions**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the chief local elected official (CLEO), a comprehensive four-year plan.

The WIOA Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2028, and will include required current local policies. The Local Area Plan will support the alignment strategy described in the 2024-2025 NC Unified State Plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the NC Unified State Plan. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper’s mission is to ensure North Carolinians are better educated, healthier, and have more money in their pockets so that they can live more abundant, purposeful lives. The cornerstone to achieving this goal is to help people get good-paying jobs to support themselves and their families. Through NC Job Ready, Governor Cooper’s workforce development initiative, North Carolina is working to build a stronger and better workforce. NC Job Ready is built on three core principles: education and skills attainment are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system. In addition, Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.  
  
The NCWorks Commission developed the strategic vision and mission for North Carolina’s Workforce System based on Governor Cooper’s NC Job Ready Initiative. This vision is to build a job-ready workforce to strengthen North Carolina companies, attract new businesses, and ensure our state can adapt to a changing economy. The mission of the state’s workforce development system is to ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity, and to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.

Plans are reviewed by the Division of Workforce Solutions and NCWorks Commission staff. Upon completion of Plan reviews and the resolution of any concerns, as applicable, fully compliant Plans will be given Final Approval. Approval letters are distributed through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE). Local WDBs must have a compliant workforce board in place to receive Final Plan Approval and distribution of formula WIOA program year funding.[WIOA Section 108(e)]

**Federal and State Requirements for Local Administration of the   
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

Local Area WDBs should reference the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014. Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>.

North Carolina policy information is available at: <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/jobs-training/workforce-professionals-tools-resources/workforce-policies>. Local Area WDBs should reference the North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan to be posted March 2024.

**Local Area Plan Submission and Due Date**

The Local Area Plan must be submitted through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE), the Division’s web-based financial system.

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| **The Program Year 2024 - 2028 Plan is Due: May 1, 2024** |

Each attachment must be clearly labeled in either Word or PDF format. Forms requiring original signatures may use DocuSign® (or similar) and may be uploaded in WISE.

If original signatures are obtained, forms may be mailed (and must be uploaded in WISE) to the Local Area WDB’s assigned Planner at:

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1. **Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) Overview**

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| *The Local Area WDB**Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). It is important that this section remain current during the Program Year. Updates should be submitted to the Local Area WDB’s assigned DWS Planner when changes occur.*  *In the first section and anywhere else in the Local Area Plan, please include the appropriate salutation along with Titles such as Dr., The Honorable, Chairperson, and Judge.* |

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| 1. Provide the **Local Area WDB**’s official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the WIOA or, if not a Consortium, in the formal request for Local Area designation. |
| **Region C Workforce Development Board (Doing Business as Foothills Workforce Development Board)** |

* If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.
  + Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Consortium Agreement*.
* If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation.
  + Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Local Area designation letter.*
* If the Local Area WDB officially changed its name, please attach a copy of the Status of Incorporation, attorney’s letter, or other document.

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| 1. List the counties served by the Local Area WDB. |
| **Cleveland, McDowell, Rutherford, and Polk Counties** |

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| 1. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number, and email address of the **Local Area WDB Director**. | |
| Name: **Annette Staley** | Title & Salutation: **Director of Workforce Development** |
| Organization Name: **Isothermal Planning and Development Commission, Doing Business as Foothills Regional Commission** | Address: **PO Box 841, 111 West Court St. Rutherfordton, NC, 28139** |
| Phone Number: 828-351-2369 | Email Address: **astaley@foothillsregion.org** |

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| 1. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, phone number, and email address of the **Chief Local Elected Official** (CLEO). | |
| Name: **Kevin Gordon** | Elected Title & Salutation: **Chairman** |
| Government Affiliation: **Cleveland County Board of Commissioners** | Address: **P.O. Box 340 Waco, NC 28169-0340** |
| Phone Number: 704-470-5378 | Email Address: **kevin.gordon@clevelandcountync.gov** |

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| 1. Provide the name, title, business name, address, phone number, and email address of the **individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Local Elected Official** (CLEO), if different than question 4. | |
| Name: **Phyllis Nowlen** | Title & Salutation: **Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners** |
| Business Name**: Cleveland County Board of Commissioners** | Address: **311 E. Marion Street., Shelby, NC 28150** |
| Phone Number: **(704) 484-4766** | Email Address: **Phyllis.nowlen@clevelandcountync.gov** |

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| 1. Provide the name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds**. This is the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)]. | |
| Name: Charlotte Sullivan | Title & Salutation: Finance Director |
| Organization Name: **Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (DBA Foothills Regional Commission)** | Address: **PO Box 841 Rutherfordton NC 28139** |
| Phone Number: 828-351-2369 | Email Address: csullivan@foothillsregion.org |

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| 1. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent’s signatory official**. | |
| Name: **Danna Stansbury** | Title & Salutation: **Executive Director** |
| Organization Name: **Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (DBA Foothills Regional Commission)** | Address**: PO Box 841, Rutherfordton NC 28139** |
| Phone Number: **828.351.2373** | Email Address: **dstansbury@foothillsregion.org** |

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| 1. Attach a copy of the **Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent’s organizational chart** with an ‘effective as of date’. |
| * Name document: **Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (DBA Foothills Regional Commission) *Organizational Chart*.** |

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| 1. **Provide the Administrative Entity’s Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and assurance that the ‘System for Award Management’ (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website** [**https://sam.gov/content/home**](https://sam.gov/content/home) **to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].** |
| **QRG2L9XNWC17 Status is current.** |

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| 1. Provide the name of the **Local Area WDB’s Equal Opportunity Officer** who shall be responsible for assuring that discrimination does not occur in its programs or projects. ([CPS 10-2021](https://www.nccommerce.com/documents/commission-policy-cps-09-2021-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa-youth-formula), Change 1) |
| **Laura Lynch** |

* Composition of the Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Area WDB Membership Requirements have been provided as a reference at [Appendix D](#Appendix_D).

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| 1. Provide each **Local Area WDB members’** name, business title, business name and address, phone number and email address on the provided form. The first block is reserved to identify the Local Area WDB chairperson (*form provided*). Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. |
| * Name document: **Foothills WDB *List*.** |

* If a Local Area WDB list is not in compliance, please provide the current list and state the expected date that a compliant list will be provided (detailing vacant positions). Do not change required category names except to clarify those representing multiple categories. When determining the total number of members, representatives serving in more than one category must be counted and listed only once on the form. Identify any names representing a dual category with an asterisk (\*).

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| ***Notes:***   * *Please complete the entire form. Check the block on the last page of the form certifying compliance with required WIOA Local Area WDB business nomination process.* * *Representatives with expired terms will not be included in the counted list of Board members. Board member terms must stated in a month/date/year format.* * *Plans that do not have a compliant workforce Board will not receive Final Approval. Formula funds will not be awarded until the Local Area WDB has a compliant workforce Board.* *Exceptions are allowed only when realignment is occurring in the upcoming program year.* |

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| 1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the Local Area WDB in compliance with WIOA Section 107. |
| **Consistent with the WDB bylaws:   The membership of the Board will be established in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws and rules governing the Board. Members shall be appointed by the board of commissioners of the county being represented by the specific appointment based on nominations from the following: local business organizations; local economic development agencies; local education agencies; vocational education institutions; state or local labor organizations and other appropriate entities.  The Region C Workforce Development Consortium Agreement indicates the following:  The member units of government certify that they possess full legal authority, as provided by state and local law, to enter into this agreement and to fulfill the legal and financial requirements of operating as a local Workforce Development Area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the entire geographic area covered by this agreement.  Additionally, The Economic, Community, and Workforce Development Division for the Administrative Entity (IPDC/ Foothills Regional Commission) regularly updates and reports to the Board of Directors on WIOA and other workforce development issues. This board consists of elected officials, administrative staff, and other appointees of all four county governments and most municipal governments in the Foothills Region.** |

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| *The Chief Local Elected Official must establish by-laws consistent with applicable local procedures, state, and federal laws to include WIOA Final Rules and Regulations 679.310(g). The Local Area WDB shall submit by-laws that clearly demonstrate all WIOA and North Carolina required elements described in* [*Appendix A*](#Appendix_A)*. Additional by-laws guidance/template and electronic meeting formats have been provided in* [*Appendix B*](#Appendix_B) *and* [*Appendix C*](#Appendix_C)*.* |

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| 1. Attach the Local Area WDB By-Laws including date adopted/amended. By-Laws must include the required elements found in [Appendix A](#Appendix_A). |
| * Name document: **Foothills WDB*****By-Laws***. |

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| 1. To demonstrate that the attached Local Area WDB By-Laws comply, complete By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart (form provided). |

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| *Sunshine Provision – The Local Area WDB shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Local Area WDB, including information regarding the Local Area Plan prior to submission of the Local Area Plan, and regarding membership, the designation and certification of one-stop operators, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, and on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Local Area WDB. [WIOA Section 107(e)]* |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB will make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public. If stating the Local Area Plan will be on the Local Area WDB website, provide link, as well as individual’s contact information for distribution of Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d) and 108(b)(20)] |
| **The Workforce Development Board shall make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of 30 days period beginning on the date the proposed plan is make available; and include with submission of the Local Plan and comments that represent disagreement with the Plan.   Plan can be accessed at: https://foothillsregion.org/workforce-development/** |

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| *Public Comment – The Local Area WDB shall make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed Local Area Plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Area Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Local Area Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d) and 108(b)(20)]* |

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| 1. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date.’ Include position titles, names, and contact information. |
| * Name document: Foothills *Organizational Chart*. |

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| 1. Complete the following chart for the PY2024 Local Area WDB’s planned meeting schedule to include, date, time, location, and virtual link (if applicable). (Expand form as needed) | | |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Location (include address, room #**  **and virtual link)** |
| August 1, 2024 | 12:00 PM | Foothills Regional  Commission, 111 West  Court St., Rutherfordton  NC, 28139  Main Conference Room |
| November 7, 2024 | 12:00 PM | Foothills Regional  Commission, 111 West  Court St., Rutherfordton  NC, 28139  Main Conference Room |
| February 6, 2025 | 12:00 PM | Foothills Regional  Commission, 111 West  Court St., Rutherfordton  NC, 28139  Main Conference Room |
| May 1, 2025 | 12:00 PM | Foothills Regional  Commission, 111 West  Court St., Rutherfordton  NC, 28139  Main Conference Room |

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| ***Note:*** *All Local Area WDB meetings shall be held in accessible facilities. All materials and discussions should be available in an accessible format upon request as indicated under North Carolina specific requirements detailed in* [*Appendix A*](#Appendix_A)*.* |

*The Comprehensive Four-Year Plan is developed in partnership with the chief local elected official and approved by the Local Area WDB. This approval should be reflected in the Local Area WDB meeting minutes as an Action item.*

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| 1. Provide the Month and Date of the Local Area WDB meeting that the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan was approved. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB minutes that reflect this action item. |
| * Name document: Foothills WDB *Plan Approval Minutes*. |

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| 1. Attach a copy of the signed ‘Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions’ Form (*form provided)*. [Required by the Regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 2 CFR 180, participants’ responsibilities.] |
| * Name document: Foothills WDB *Certification Form*. |

Document must have the original signature or DocuSign® (or similar) of the Administrative Entity signatory official. If using original signatures, mail the signed Certification form to the assigned DWS Planner at:

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions

313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120

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| 1. Submit the original Local Area WDB and Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Signatory Page (*form provided*), bearing the original signatures of the CLEO(s) and the Local Area WDB Chairperson, and attach a copy of the signed document if not using DocuSign® (or similar). |
| * Name document: Foothills *WDB Signatory Page*. |

If using original signatures, mail the Signatory Page to the assigned DWS Planner at:

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1. **Local Area WDB Strategic Planning**

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| ***The Local Area WDB is required to the keep the Local Area Plan up to date and adaptable as events and funding changes occur, which may require local area responses. Local Area Plans will require an annual modification.*** *North Carolina has implemented integrated services delivery with an enhanced emphasis on regional planning and services. This approach is consistent with federal, state, and regional initiatives and opportunities. North Carolina’s workforce development system includes businesses, organizations, agencies, employed and unemployed persons, training and educational institutions, adults, and youth. To enhance services to all constituents, aligning workforce development planning and services with regional labor markets is both effective and productive.* ***North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper’s NC Job Ready Initiative is built on three core principles: skills and education attainment are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system.***  ***At the local level, the Local Area WDBs are creatively working to address the new challenges of job growth and expansions. Employers in Local Area WDB areas continue to have a shortage of lower-wage, entry-level and middle-skilled level workers. As a Local Area WDB and workforce system, Local Area WDBs are leveraging resources and engaging in new partnerships that include the business community, economic developers, chambers of commerce, NCWorks Career Centers, community colleges, public schools, and community partners. Working together, Local Area WDBs are paving the way for an even stronger economy through sector partnerships and career pathways initiatives.*** |

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| 1. Provide a description of the Local Area WDB’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an in-demand industry-driven, 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 and how it aligns with regional economic growth, industry sectors, and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)] |
| **The mission of the Foothills Workforce Development Board is to develop a talent pool of skilled workers that provide capacity for regional business and industry that contribute to a strong regional economy and local prosperity and improve the wellbeing of its citizens.   Our work reaches people who include adults seeking more meaningful careers, dislocated workers aiming to regain employment, and youth focused on getting the right start in life. We also represent employers from a broad range of leading industries that need workers with the training, skills, and dedication to produce important products and services for a global marketplace. For both, we help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance North Carolina’s workforce capabilities.   The Foothills WDB realizes that embracing an employer (business customer) led system is paramount to our ability to truly develop and provide quality training opportunities for jobseeker customers that will have significant impact and value for local/regional businesses. This includes working collaboratively with our local community colleges as well Modification for as other training providers to convene honest communication with Business leaders and assess training that truly enhances their workforce as well as increases a jobseeker’s employability.   The Foothills WDB also is committed to working with eligible WIOA jobseeker participants designated as Adult, Dislocated Worker and/or Youth. The strategies implemented to positively impact these categories of customers include Individual Training Accounts, Career Assessment, Vocational Evaluation techniques, Basic Skills Testing, Career Readiness Certification assessments, Work based learning (On the Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Internships, Externships, Work Experience, Job Shadowing, etc.), Follow up, Career Counseling, and other support services determined on an individual basis to insure that we can maximize each individual’s employability.   In the post-Covid 19 environment, we are working closely with regional Chambers and local EDCs to anticipate and react to employers currently laying off and subsequent re-hiring. Foothills continues to provide assistance to clients, providing training and securing gainful employment.   Additionally, Foothills will focus primarily on the promoting and the facilitation of training  for the following occupational clusters:  - Advanced Manufacturing—including S.T.E.M. and maintenance occupations  - Nursing, Allied Health, and other health-related occupations  - Mission Critical Operations and Information Technology  - Energy Sector occupations  - Hospitality and Tourism   This has been enhanced by the development of Certified Career Pathways in Advanced manufacturing and Nursing/Allied Health, Advanced Manufacturing, and Energy Sector occupations.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Local Area WDB 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. Include how these strategies will be a result of regional economic and employer-driven priorities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(3)] |
| .**Working with the local partners that include NC Works Career Centers, Community Colleges, the regional public and private university system, local adult education providers, and high school Career and Technical Education, the Foothills WDB will streamline access and increase availability of the multitude of federal, state, and local programs. Serving as a convener and broker, Foothills will continue to facilitate the implementation and delivery of a broad array of initiatives that focus on the region’s priorities. These include the collaboration with the county level employer initiatives described in the previous section.   Addressing the needs of incumbent workers, Foothills will work with its business community to promote the training for the existing workforce through the Incumbent Worker Training program and set aside a portion of its formula dollars to upskill lower skilled workers to promote movement along career pathways. NCWorks staff will help promote and leverage dollars to encourage employers to hire and retain unemployed residents with a focus on the occupations within the currently developed Certified Career Pathways—Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing and Allied Health, and Careers in the Energy Sector.   In examining our performance, we see that In School Youth and Out of School Youth is an area of weakness. We believe this to be for several factors. The Youth in our area have limited resources many do not have family to provide support or assistance from family members. One There are just not a lot of high paying  jobs within our region. As part of our local economy is driven by tourism, there are a lot of jobs in the service sector such as hospitality/tourism and food service.   We have had more success with our adult and dislocated worker participants. We believe this is due in part to the fact that they are typically eligible for additional resources such as public assistance, Pell grants, etc. This can help them complete their educational journey without some of the barriers faced by Youth.** |

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| 1. Considering the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning Section III, describe strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the Local Area to achieve the strategic vision and goals. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(F)] |
| **Working with the local partners that include NC Works Career Centers, Community Colleges, the regional public and private university system, local adult education providers, and high school Career and Technical Education, the Region C WDB will streamline access and increase availability of the multitude of federal, state, and local programs. Serving as a convener and broker, Region C will continue to facilitate the implementation and delivery of a broad array of initiatives that focus on the region’s priorities. These include the collaboration with the county level employer initiatives described in the previous section.   Addressing the needs of incumbent workers, Region C will work with its business community to promote the training for the existing workforce through the Incumbent Worker Training program and set aside a portion of its formula dollars to upskill lower skilled workers to promote movement along career pathways. NCWorks staff will help promote and leverage dollars to encourage employers to hire and retain unemployed residents with a focus on the occupations within the currently developed Certified Career Pathways—Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing and Allied Health, and Careers in the Energy Sector.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of strategies concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the Local Area through the NCWorks Career Center system.  Include how this coordination of services improves service delivery and avoids duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(12)] |
| **The NCWorks Career Centers in the FOOTHILLS WDB region continuously partner with multiple other organizations and resources throughout the service area to promote provision of services that will maximize efficiency while minimizing duplication for both jobseeker and employer customers. This strategic approach is an intentional effort led by the FOOTHILLS WDB in coordination with all of the NCWorks Career centers under their purview through regular communication, policy and plan implementation and through continuous improvement efforts utilizing jobseeker and customer feedback to mold and develop said strategies.  Primary examples of this coordination include, but are not limited to:  · Co-enrollment for dually eligible WIOA and Wagner-Peyser customers: Given that Wagner-Peyser Employment services serve as a foundational element for all jobseeker customer, the FOOTHILLS WDB NCWorks Career Centers and all applicable WIOA service provision staff insure that all customers are enrolled in Wagner-Peyser services and provided individualized assessment accordingly to insure maximization of appropriate referrals, leveraging of resources and assistance that will promote jobseeker customer employability. This also ensures that jobseeker customers are aware of various opportunities for career planning, training options, and appropriate referral to other partner entities (such as N.C. Vocational Rehabilitation, local Community based organizations, community service organizations, or other as appropriate). This strategy also promotes regular communication with all FOOTHILLS WDB contracted WIOA providers and Wagner-Peyser staff to attempt to seamlessly serve customers in their career planning and goals. These efforts are further enhanced through co-location and regular interaction of all WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff to allow customers to access services accordingly.  · Co-enrollment for TAA eligible individuals and WIOA Dislocated Worker programs/services: As per USDOL guidelines, the FOOTHILLS WDB works in conjunction with NCWorks TAA staff to promote dual enrollment for individuals who are eligible under a Trade Act Assistance Petition and also meet eligibility for WIOA Dislocated Worker services. This enables both the assigned TAA case manager and WIOA Dislocated Worker Case Manager to better partner in accessing resources available through the auspices of these programs and to minimize duplication for said customers. This also means better utilization of resources to minimize duplication, efficiently leverage other resources that might be available (depending on the individual’s goals and desired outcomes) and to hopefully maximize and expedite each individual in reaching their employment goals.** |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB implements **each** of the following initiatives: incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, layoff aversion, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other employer services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(B)] |
| **WDB’s and regional partnerships are committed to expanding the recognition of the labor force throughout our service areas by continuing to work with counties to achieve recognition as a Certified Work Ready Community, as recognized by ACT. Additionally, the WDB’s will focus primarily on the promoting and the facilitation of training for the following occupational clusters:   - Advanced Manufacturing—including S.T.E.A.M. and maintenance occupations  - Nursing, Allied Health, and other health-related occupations   - Mission Critical Operations and Information Technology   - Energy Sector Careers   This is enhanced by the development of Certified Career Pathways in Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing/Allied Health, and the pathway for Energy Sector Careers.   The On-the-Job Training Program provides incentives for business to help defray the cost of training eligible new employees. The program also provides training opportunities in the local business community to adults and dislocated workers. OJT is a training method where experienced employees instruct and coach new employees on how to perform their job, giving them the benefit of experience.   Services to the businesses include:   - Screening aptitude and basic skills requirements and referral of eligible applicants   - Reimbursement of up to 50% of the training wages for up to 26 weeks-depending on the skills   needed to perform the job and the skills gap identified for the training individual.   - Follow-up services to help ensure completion of training and retention of the newly trained employee   OJT is available to both public and private sector businesses and may be linked concurrently or consecutively to classroom training funded through WIOA or other resources.   Foothills does allocate a portion of the formula Adult funds to provide Incumbent Worker Training. To date, there has been limited participation in that program. The local area will continue to offer this service and will increase outreach to local business and industry to promote the availability.   The McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committee, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance and the Cleveland County Sector Partnership as previously discussed, serves as intermediaries to provide guidance and input on locally delivered initiatives.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB coordinates workforce investment activities – including strategies enhancing services, promoting participation in training programs, and avoiding duplication of services – is carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)] |
| **Adult Education and Literacy programs are currently co-located at one of Foothill’s NC Works Career Centers. Adult basic skills are provided directly through the McDowell center with the High School Equivalency and Adult High School programs directly delivered through the McDowell Center. High School Equivalency programs are accessed on the campuses of Cleveland and Isothermal Community Colleges. Each student participating in any Adult Ed. and Literacy activities will be enrolled in the NC Works labor exchange system.   Foothills has had a long-term relationship with the Adult High School and High School Equivalency programs through activities related to the rapid response process, providing high school diplomas/equivalency for dislocated workers where appropriate.   Adult Education representatives are members of the local rapid response teams and participant in the management meetings and affected worker orientations sessions. Additionally, these services have been a critical component of the WIOA Out-of- School Youth programs providing academic enrichment and secondary education certificates to those participants.   Local Area WDB staff provides consultation and input on the local Adult Education and Literacy and Career and Technical Education (Carl D. Perkins) plans that are submitted by the respective agencies administering those services—community colleges and public-school systems** |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area’s workforce development system. Identify the following: the programs that are included in the system, how the Workforce Development Board will work with the entities administering core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment and provision of services, and the programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).  [WIOA Section 108(b)(2)] |
| **The Region’s workforce system is a network of federal, state, and locally administered programs that function to support economic expansion and develop the talent of our region’s workforce. The workforce system works in partnership with employers, educators, and community leaders to foster economic development and high growth opportunities in regional economies. Our local system helps businesses find qualified workers to meet their present and future workforce needs. Listed below are the key components of the Foothills Region’s workforce system:  Community Colleges—McDowell Technical Community College (MTCC), Cleveland Community College (CCC), and Isothermal Community College (ICC)  Public Library Systems in each county  Garner Webb University  Community College system offers career and transfer programs continuing education and customized training for business and industry. Sectors include allied health/ nursing and manufacturing specific program.   Cleveland Community College offers specific short-term academies and job training programs resulting in certificates targeting the following:  Barber Academy  Electrical Line-worker EMT  Firefighter Heavy equipment operation Industrial Maintenance Mission Critical operations Pharmacy Technician Truck Driving  Isothermal Community College launched its new Comprehensive Applied Sciences and Workforce Development Center on Wednesday, February 27, 2019. The project is possible due to generous support of the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners, the Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees, the Appalachian Regional Commission and Golden LEAF Foundation. This Center is a key component of the regional workforce system focusing primarily on advanced manufacturing and energy sector career opportunities. ICC offers a new short term certificate program—Certified Production Technician—that focuses on manufacturing. Classes consist of Safety, quality practices and measurement, manufacturing processes and production, and maintenance awareness. Other certificate programs include:  Allied Health (CNA, Billing and Coding, Pharmacy Tech, Medication Aide/Med-Tech, Phlebotomy) Electrical Contractor Vehicle safety inspection ServSafe Food Safety Basic culinary Arts Equine Science  Building Construction Technology (Plumbing/HVAC) Basic Welding Electronics Engineering  Isothermal requested the support of the North Carolina General Assembly and was awarded an appropriation for a new Health and Sciences Building, currently estimated as a $30 million project in today’s market based on initial planning. This facility will provide future focused space for Isothermal to ensure direct, hands-on preparation for career entry and advancement in healthcare and emergency services fields that are currently experiencing serious personnel shortages in Rutherford and Polk counties and across western North Carolina. The planned 62,540 sq. ft., three-story building will allow Isothermal Community College to integrate state-of-the-art anatomy, chemistry, and related labs that support healthcare education and training, create high tech simulation classrooms, and return to campus the nursing programs which are currently housed at a leased off-campus site that has been deemed inadequate. Groundbreaking for the facility will take place in the summer of 2024.   McDowell Technical Community College Short term certificate programs include Culinary Training via Foothills Food Hub Fire, Rescue, and EMS Construction Trade Academies Welding Allied Health Trail Building  McDowell Technical Community College received upgraded instructional equipment recently due to a grant in the amount of $95,767 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The purpose of the grant was to assist with a major project intended to grow the newly established McDowell Apprenticeship Pipeline (MAP) and related career and technical training. With grant proceeds, the college has purchased a cache of mobile training equipment in Mechatronics and Applied Engineering to prepare youth, ages 18 to 24, to meet the skilled workforce needs of local and regional employers in Mechatronic-related careers.  All three community colleges offer a vast array of academic curriculum programs that are available in the areas of business, manufacturing/engineering, finance and health sciences. Health sciences include Nursing (RN and LPN) Information Technology Healthcare Management  Manufacturing and Trades (HVAC, Automotive, Building Construction, Electrical Systems, Mechatronics, Welding)  Gardner Webb University Gardner-Webb University seeks excellence in all things, but especially in academic instruction. With more than 80 majors and minors for undergraduate and graduate students to choose from, our comprehensive academic program is nationally recognized for its rigorous, inspirational, and insightful pursuit of knowledge. GWU students can expect small, individualized classes with a 11:1 student-faculty ratio, taught by professors hailing from prestigious educational institutions across the nation.   Specific workforce related programs offered by Garnder Webb University include: Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing Physician Assistant (Pre-pathway) Physical Therapy (Pre-pathway) Accounting Computer Science  Cyber Security  Elementary Education Human Services Among others…  Career and Technical Education (CTE)—Carl Perkins Act CTE provides high school and middle school students with technical skills, knowledge and education necessary for successful transition to post-secondary education or work. The Foothills Workforce Development Board has been designated as the CTE Advisory Committee for Cleveland, McDowell, and Polk County CTE programs.  CTE detailed activities by county:  Cleveland County Schools CTE Programs The following are goals and strategies, these have been the focus for the past two school years:  Enhanced the work-based learning opportunities for students. We hired two positions, a WBL Coordinator at the high school level and one at the middle school level. The high school coordinator has focused on internships and apprenticeships. She has helped 62 high school student’s complete internships in 45 different businesses. The middle school coordinator has implemented a career fair at each middle school for all 8th graders in the county. She has started a Junior Leadership program with 8th graders. She has also partnered with Kid Senses to bring in STEM focused educational programs into the middle school CTE classes. She started a Career Cafe series, a Girls in STEM club, and brought in numerous guest speakers on a variety of career topics.  Received a $50,000 CTE Modernization grant that we used to purchase and install career investigation labs, which have been placed in all our middle schools. The labs allow students to explore many different career fields and topics. Examples are criminalistics, 3D printing, veterinary medicine, nursing, construction, and flight and drone.  Analyzed and remodeled our career pathways at each high school. As a result, we added 5 new pathways: EMT, Drone Technology, Teaching, Advanced Manufacturing and Early Childhood. In our middle schools, we have added some diversity in courses. We now have Exploring Construction at two middle schools and Nutrition and Wellness at another middle school.  McDowell County Schools CTE Programs The impact of career and technical education extends beyond the classroom, with CTE concentrators—students completing advanced courses building on prerequisite skills—exhibiting a higher on-time rate of completing advanced coursed building on prerequisite skills—exhibiting a higher on-time graduation rate of 94.3 got 2022-23 academic year, surpassing the statewide rate of 86.5%. Acquiring industry-recognized credentials positions students advantageously in competitive job market. In 2022-23 academic year, McDowell County Schools achieves a CTE credential attainment rate of 54%. Seventeen students are engaged in internships, gaining valuable real-world experience in various career fields. Current internship sites include PG Elementary School, Bloom Realty Group, Silver Real Estate, MAHEC Project Promise, Bradley Masonry and Landscaping, Marion Police Department, Beams Funeral Home, Ben Patton Surveying, RJ Motors, Camp Fire RV Repair, Rugged Tree Service, and others. Additional occupational areas included in the internship career exploration activities include orthodontics, agriculture, culinary arts, firefighting, forestry, Welding, and electrical lineman.   Polk County Schools CTE Programs The Polk County Career and Technical Education Program is dedicated to constructing a seamless pathway towards successful careers. Our efforts encompass the development of a comprehensive career continuum beginning as early as 5th grade. We are working on building a system for Career Development plans that are created in the 7th grade. Moreover, we are actively expanding work-based learning initiatives, such as internships and pre-apprenticeships, to provide our CTE concentrators with valuable hands-on experience and real-world skills. Occupational areas of focus for Polk County Schools are Construction, Masonry, Agricultural Mechanics, Agricultural Production, Animal Science, Horticulture, Health Science, Entrepreneurship, Technology/Adobe Suite, and Child Development. There are currently interns and Pre-apprentices at St. Lukes Hospital (CNA's) and Polk Central Elementary in the Preschool-1st grade classrooms as teachers’ assistants. There are plans to add internship/pre-apprenticeship work-based learning opportunities in all career pathways.  Rutherford County Schools CTE Programs The purpose of Career and Technical Education (CTE) is to empower all students in grades 6-12 to be successful citizens, workers, and leaders in a global economy. CTE gives purpose to learning by emphasizing real-world skills and practical knowledge. Programs in CTE are designed to contribute to the broad educational achievement of students, including basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as their ability to work independently and as part of a team, think creatively, solve problems, and utilize technology. Rutherford County Schools (RCS) provides a comprehensive CTE program for all students at CHASE High School, East Rutherford High School, R-S Central High School, CHASE Middle School, East Rutherford Middle School, and R-S Middle School. Our CTE programs are aligned with state and national standards to help prepare students to succeed in a global economy. As a major component of a well-rounded education, a variety of CTE courses are offered to students in eight CTE program areas. RCS CTE program areas are as follows: Agricultural Education, Business, Finance, and Marketing Computer Science and Information Technology, Career Development Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Health Science Education, Trade and Industrial Education, and Middle Grades CTE. During the Fall semester of the 2023-2024 school year, RCS CTE received two Dogwood Health Trust grants. Funding from the initial Dogwood grant will construct an automated greenhouse for the CHASE High School Agricultural Education Department. The initial grant will also fund the purchase of an electric vehicle and related tool kits for the East Rutherford High School Automotive Technology program. The second Dogwood grant will fund the construction of an affordable house by the R-S Central High School Construction Trades programs. Carpentry and Electrical Trades students will construct an affordable house on the R-S Central High School campus adjacent to the school’s CTE building. The construction process will occur over a two-year period and the home will be auctioned or sold and moved to its permanent location. The construction of affordable housing will begin to address the need for suitable affordable housing in Rutherford County and the surrounding region.  Many of the CTE programs also have Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). Two examples of CTSOs include the Future Farmers of America (FFA) for Agricultural Education students and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) for Health Science students. Both CTSOs have chapters at each of our traditional high schools and routinely have students compete in regional, state, and national competitions. CTSOs help to build student leadership potential and provide opportunities and networking for collaboration.    Public Library Systems The Library System supports continuing education and workforce development. The electronic resources and databases that provide opportunities for members of the community to educate themselves and upgrade their employability skills. Data includes: NCWorks On-line Information regarding community college programs Foothills Workforce Development board information Learning Express Library offering career preparation resources, college prep, basic computer skills, and support and preparation to obtain high school equivalency   Adult Education—Title II Provides educational programs for citizens to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively as a worker and citizen. Title II programs continue to be a critical component of the Title I WIOA youth program focusing on high out-of-school youth, specifically school dropouts.  Collaborative programs offered through Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education includes but not limited to: • Manufacturing related programs—Metal Manufacturing and Welding • Hospitality/Tourism  • Food Service • Allied Health Science • Information Technology • Robotics • Agriculture • Business • Family and Consumer Science • Marketing • Masonry • Carpentry • Cabinet making • Electrical/Electronics  These programs provide locally developed or national certifications such as serve safe, NCCER, Career Readiness Certifications, and others. Title II provides educational programs for citizens to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively as a worker and citizen. Title II programs continue to be a critical component of the Title I WIOA youth program focusing on high out-of-school youth, specifically school dropouts.  Vocational Rehabilitation Provides case management, counseling, referrals, sponsored training and independent living services for people with disabilities.  Trade Adjustment Assistance Provides workers affected by international trade with means to attain competitive and marketable skills.  Labor Exchange/Wagner Peyser Title III Connects job seekers and employers and an entire menu of services related to job search, placement, job retention incentives to employers and information regarding training through the NCWorks Career Centers—NC Division of Workforce Solutions.  Veterans Employment Program Conducts outreach to businesses to increase employment opportunities for veterans.  Senior Community Services Employment (Title V) Provides part-time community service training assignments promoting transition to unsubsidized employment. Title V staff is a member of the regional NCWorks Career Center team.    NC State Industrial Extension Service Supports industry and business in the workplace by providing expertise that includes Lean enterprise and quality initiatives such as ISO management systems and Six Sigma, environmental and energy concerns, and safety and health management. NCIES has been a critical partner facilitating the Engineering competition for the Making It Work Engineering and Manufacturing Carrer Fair sponsored for HS students in Cleveland and Rutherford County.  Business/Industry Advisory Committees—McDowell and Cleveland County Pipeline Committees and the Rutherford and Polk County’s Foothills Manufacturing Alliance. Foothills/Region C WDB has a long history of collaboration with the key workforce partners in each county as evidenced by regular meetings and memberships in regional and county level committees and task forces to strategically implement program and collaborate on solving problems and addressing issues for local businesses and industry. These organizations continue to promote registered apprenticeship programs with various manufacturing firms in the counties, establishing manufacturing career pathways for the emerging workforce and to solve operational and workforce issues.       Continued below:** |

**Isothermal Community College Comprehensive Applied Sciences and Workforce Development Center**



**Duke Energy donated two massive breakers to Isothermal Community College. This equipment is used for education and training of Electronics Engineering Technology Electric Utility students. The breakers serve as laboratory equipment to enable students to learn breaker testing and change-out procedures including control wiring, phasing, current transformer testing, and breaker operation.**



Cleveland Community College Speaker Tim Moore Advanced Technology Center

A large room with many tables and a large window

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A building with a parking lot

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**Home of Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership, workforce training and home to the following programs: Automation Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Industrial Systems, Computer-Integrated Machining, Mechanical Drafting.**

**Cleveland Community College continues progress focusing on training for mission critical networking and technology occupations that are in need for regional business and industry.  Mission critical skills are those that** **enable a workforce to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, and respond to problems that directly impact an organization’s ability to perform operations. This initiative has expanded to include a**

* **Mission Critical Academy—a 12-week, self-paced online training program that teaches broad knowledge and skills for the mission critical industry and best prepares you to sit for the Certified Mission Critical Operator (CMCO) exam.**
* **Introduction to Mission Critical--introduces the fundamental aspects of mission critical operations and describes the skills that technicians perform on the job and environments they work in.**
* **Mission Critical Operations Infrastructure--survey of critical infrastructure and its impact on mission critical operations.**
* **Mission Critical operations Information Technology—Foundations certificate is an option of the MCO program and provides introductory knowledge of the types of support systems and system integration required for high availability interests.**

**McDowell Technical Community College’s Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center (UAMC) is located on property adjacent to the main campus in a portion of the former Universal Furniture**

**The facilities include classroom and lab space for programs located at UAMC. Welding; Machining; Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning; Electrical/Electronics; and Customized Training programs, including those for new and expanding businesses. Industry leaders had design input at every state of the development process, and they continue to serve on advisory committees for the facility. With the help of state and federal funding and a variety of grants, several new pieces of equipment were added to the college's existing equipment array when the facility opened, and a new state-of-the-art plasma cutter has been added since that time.**

**McDowell Technical Community College (MTCC) received a major donation from Baxter Labs with the gift of an industrial-grade, high-tech FANUC robot. The equipment is housed and maintained at the Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center.**

A brick building with a parking lot

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A large room with machinery

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A sign on the floor

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A machine with a blue cover

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**Cleveland Counties Making it Work Engineering and Manufacturing Career Fair**

**The purpose of the “Making It Work” Engineering & Manufacturing Fair is to create awareness and build excitement among local high school juniors and seniors about careers in manufacturing.  Manufacturing in Cleveland County is growing rapidly, and we need bright talent to fill the demands and future needs of our manufacturers.**







**Making it Work Engineering Competition**

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| 1. Provide a description of (a) cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Local Area WDB and other local entities described in Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of service 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 to include cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108(b)(14)] |
| **Our goal is to continue increasing the presence of Vocational Rehabilitation representatives at the NCWorks Career Centers improving access and services for individuals with disabilities. Sharing of resources for individuals that are in training has been a common practice over the years. Relationships have also been established with the community rehabilitation facilities in the region for consultation and referral.   These relationships help WIOA case managers, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, and other partner agency representatives to better serve individuals with disabilities.   These relationships help WIOA case managers, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, secondary and post-secondary education providers, and other partner agency representatives to better serve individuals with disabilities.   In addition, there are collaborative approaches to service provision that allows for the center partners to plan and maximizes resources and improve efficiencies regarding services to individuals with disabilities within the integrated service delivery model.   Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind are key partners in the sharing of resources for the financial support of the NCWorks Center infrastructure   The FWDB and partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the provision of services to individuals, to include individuals with disabilities. The MOU addresses such topics as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services are signatories to the MOU and are actively engaged in cross training of staff and sharing of information.** |

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| 1. Provide a brief description of the actions the Local Area WDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Local Area WDB, consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission. [WIOA Section 108(b)(18)] |
| **It is the intent and purpose of the Foothills WDB to adopt and implement strategies of continuous improvement regarding customer service to both jobseekers and business customers alike. Adherence to prescribed guidelines, regular monitoring, assessment of customer feedback, and implementation of state and federal policies pertaining to high quality performance are all strategies that will be embraced to ensure that continuous improvement occurs.   Specific strategies include the development of employer/business led initiatives such as the McDowell Pipeline Committee, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance, Cleveland County Sector Partnership, and the regional apprenticeship initiatives are examples of how the Foothills WDB works toward high performance and ensuring that there is a significant value add and return on investment for customers.   The Foothills WDB is also looked at as one of the leaders in the state regarding Work based learning. As Work based learning strategies are repeatedly stressed through the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act, it is our intention to not only maintain the current level of engagement in these practices, but to increase opportunities for On-the-Job Training, Internships, Work Experience, and Incumbent Worker services available to customers.   The Foothills WDB will also embrace the strategic goals set out by the NC Works Commission in their “Preparing North Carolina’s Workforce for Today and Tomorrow”. Developing a seamless workforce system for customers, being responsive to community/customer needs, using data driven strategies and embracing continuous improvement are paramount to the Foothills WDB effectively and efficiently providing workforce related collaboration and direct service(s) to customers.** |

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| 1. Discuss the increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage individuals with barriers to include dislocated workers, opportunity youth/high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard-to-reach communities, individuals with disabilities, and justice involved individuals to help reconnect the disconnected workforce. More importantly, clarify how success is measured. |
| **The Foothills WDB and core partners will facilitate the training and support services for eligible individuals particularly those with barriers to employment by the collaboration with human service agencies that include the Department of Social Services, United Way funded activities, Vocational Rehabilitation, public health clinics and departments and others associated with providing services to these target groups.   Career pathways developed by convening partners/stakeholders in support of the common vision, mission, and goals for the development of career pathways. Labor market analysis is conducted to identify in-demand sectors and programs. Skills assessments and matching is used to identify gaps where training is needed. Collaboration with the training providers, particularly the community colleges, will help to identify or develop new programs that will deliver solutions that are responsive to the needs of workers and the targeted industry sectors.   The Foothills WDB has developed three Certified Career Pathways that include Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing/Allied Health, and careers in the Energy Sector. Sector and career pathways partnerships include WIOA core programs, human service organizations, organized labor, NC Works Career Centers, economic development, chambers of commerce, and industry members that represent firms identified in the sectors.   Training academies have been developed by community colleges and high schools in the region to specifically address short-term training relevant to the certified pathways. These academies issue locally developed; employer recognized credentials. NCCER credentials, and other certifications.    Examples include:   - Electrical Line Workers Academy   - Medical Assisting and other allied health related training   - Manufacturing and Welding academies   - CNC Technology Academy   - Cabinet Making Certificate   Success will be measured by tracking the number of individuals in the target populations recruited and enrolled in program, number who complete programs and obtain training related employment.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with: 2. statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A). 3. specifically describe the coordination and delivery of services to businesses to include systems that are used to determine economic trends and partners within your Early Warning Network to help identify those businesses that are expanding and/or struggling.  [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)] |
| **a. The WDB and Local Area Partners coordinate through the rapid response process. Partners conduct employee orientations when timely notification is received regarding layoffs and business closings. Statewide rapid response unit establishes schedules for initial meetings with management when a WARN notice has been submitted. The Local Area Director or designated staff determine and convene local partner attendance. Local partners then schedule meetings or orientation sessions with affected employees when appropriate.   b. The local Area monitors trends by utilizing available labor market information available through NCLEAD, Lightcast Labor Market Analytics, BLS and other sources, regional and state unemployment rates, monitors traffic at the NCWorks Career Centers, and obtains information regarding layoff announcements through the NCWorks Career Center managers and WARN announcements. SalesForce may be utilized to track at-risk businesses that are not currently enrolled in the NCWorks System. Services can be designed, deployed, and coordinated with partners as necessary. These partners may include local Workforce Development Boards, the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC), NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES), Universities, Community Colleges, Economic Developers, Chambers of Commerce, Bankers and Certified Turnaround Professionals.** |

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| 1. Provide an overview of how the region partners with NC Community Colleges, UNC institutions, and independent colleges in the local areas to prepare workers to succeed by using skills and education attainment with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. |
| **Partnerships with local educational institutions such as the three schools under the NC Community Colleges umbrella and the one private university (Gardner Webb University) in our area are instrumental in building a steady workforce needed in our communities. As we observe the fallout of the Great Resignation, finding and training skilled workers to fill our many positions in our community is vital for the future of the Foothills Region. Aside from overseeing the WIOA title programs which provide much needed financial support to training seekers, the FWDB has partnered with these institutions on local and regional workforce efforts in the form of sector partnerships. These collaborative partnerships bring together various local support agencies and industry partners to develop a pipeline of skilled workers, developing them from secondary, to post-secondary education, to job seeking services, and finally into the workforce. The services and resources being provided by the FWDB, and our education partners are provided without prejudice and are equitable and inclusive.** |

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| 1. Based on the history of economic development projects in the Local Area, how many projects does the Local Area WDB expect to engage in during the upcoming program year? Please indicate the type of services the Local Area WDB expects to provide. |
| **Cleveland County had 7 successful announcements with 171 responses to inquiries to potential projects in 2023. There were 3 new industries located in the county and 4 expansions with a total of $93 million investment. The FWDB provides letters of support of for the most promising project and outlines potential services that may include the provision of labor market information, access to On-the-Job Training funds and activities, worker recruitment and screening services, incumbent worker training activities for existing business/industries that are expanding, and the full array of services provided through the NCWorks Career Centers and the region’s business service representative. It is expected that the WDB could be engaged in 5 new projects for 2024/2025.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of how the WDB is employing sector strategies by creating industry-led sector partnerships to facilitate engagement of employers and better coordinate workforce development services, training, and economic development activities. Include a brief example(s) of existing industry sector initiatives / partnerships or describe the strategy to implement them for evidence-based in-demand industry sectors for the region [WIOA Section 106 (c)(1)(C), Section107 (d)(4)(D) |
| **Need to add Section Partnership Grant information) It is important to maintain collaborative relationships with local, regional, and state economic development organizations. A major factor in business retention, expansion and attraction is the availability of a skilled workforce. If companies are not successful, there is no need for a skilled workforce. These groups share a symbiotic relationship and cannot succeed without the success of the other. Therefore, it is crucial for these two groups to collaborate. Industry partnerships and sector policy initiatives, such as the McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committee, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance and Cleveland County Sector Partnership, allow employers to lead local partnerships that bring many key players to the table. Additionally, the Foothills Workforce Development Board has established and maintains regular communication and collaboration with Economic Development entities in McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Cleveland Counties, as well with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and Chambers of Commerce. It is through these relationships that the Foothills WDB continues to support economic development initiatives by providing training, guidance, Labor Market Information, and expertise to continuously improve each county’s ability to support both existing industries and those that are being/have been newly recruited.   The WDB and WIOA service providers collaborate with county level and regional economic development during the industry/business recruiting process. This can be accomplished by meeting with the prospective business/industry and or providing written information regarding available training opportunities. Those opportunities may include On-the-Job training, Incumbent Worker Programs, other work-based learning opportunities, and short-term training provided by the Community Colleges. This also includes potential business/industry expansion projects. The facilitation of the recruitment of potential employees that may include listing jobs in NCWorks, job fairs, hiring events, and other outreach efforts are also included in the information provided. These efforts are coordinated with the Community Colleges’ Customized Training representatives and other departments, such as Human Resources development (HRD) that may be appropriate.   Additionally, this year, Commission staff and many regional partners are working on completing the Foothills Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This strategy is the result of a yearlong effort to develop a framework for addressing the weaknesses and highlighting the opportunities within the Foothills Region. Once complete the Foothills Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy can be found on the Foothills Regional Commission website: www.foothillsregion.org   The Four counties in the Foothills Region has been designated an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA).  Foothills Workforce Board received an Industry Sector Partnership Grant that will enable the board to collaborate with the regional industry partners provide some type of Employer Awareness Outreach Video for our Region. The Board will work with the existing pipeline partnerships to create a video that would involve the employers, community colleges, and Economic Development Board. It is our goal to provide an opportunity for employers within the pipeline to work together. This video could be ongoing, featuring employers and their products on a monthly basis. The employers may be able to provide information regarding the type of skills needed for different types of jobs in the video. The video could possibly be utilized within the CTE programs at our local schools, community colleges and career centers. Addressing needs within a video may provide a clearer expectation for potential employees or assisting in career decisions. Implementation of this effort will result in an overall planning strategy for engaging employers, educational institutions, and existing partnerships.** |

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| 1. Identify the Career Pathways developed by the Local Area. Complete the chart below. | | | |
| **Pathway Name** | **Partner WDBs** | **Year the pathway was developed** | **Number of trainees (to date) who have utilized the pathway** |
| **Nursing and Allied Health.** | **to Foothills WDB** | **2017** | **2000** |
| **Advanced Manufacturing** | **Foothills WDB** | **2018** | **1500** |
| **Energy Sector** | **Foothills, Mountain Area, Gaston, Western Piedmont, Carlotte Works, Centralina** | **2020** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Human Services** | **Foothills, Western Piedmont, High Country** | **2021** | Click here to enter text. |

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| 1. In addition to facilitating the development of career pathways, also describe the review process for  in-demand career pathways to determine if new pathways are needed, or if current pathways should be updated or removed based on the needs of the industry. 2. Include plans for new career pathways. 3. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders’ (Department of Public Instruction (DPI), community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates. 4. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts. 5. Describe the strategy to promote pathways and recruit participants. |
| 1. **Currently, we have not identified a need for a new career pathway or the need to update a current existing pathway** |
| 1. **Career pathways developed by convening partners/stakeholders in support of the common vision, mission, and goals for the development of career pathways. Labor market analysis is conducted to identify in-demand sectors and programs. Skills assessments and matching is used to identify gaps where training is needed. Collaboration with the training providers, particularly the community colleges, will help to identify or develop new programs that will deliver solutions that are responsive to the needs of workers and the targeted industry sectors.** |
| 1. **Duplication of efforts is avoided through communication efforts with the key stakeholders. Continued involvement in the regional workforce and economic development partnership meetings (McDowell Pipeline, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance, Cleveland County Sector Partnership, etc.) will provide needed input for the need for further development of pathways or the mediation of existing initiatives.** |
| 1. **Pathways will be promoted through the efforts at the NCWorks system. But the primary method of promotion will be through partnerships and collaborations with business and industries that utilize the occupations within the pathways and educational institutions that provide training. Methods will be outreach will be through career fairs, job fairs, internships, job shadowing and coaching and other career development initiatives.** |

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| 1. Provide a description of the Local Area WDB’s capacity to provide workforce investment activities to address (a) education attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields (b) strategies for awareness and cultivation efforts to increase access to education and postsecondary credentials and certificates, availability of learn-and-earn opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, summer employment) and (c) supportive services for hard-to-reach communities. (d) Explain strategies that include NextGen, NCCareers.org and any awareness models for success. (e) Explain strategies to align work across the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and (DPI) to increase youth apprenticeships or assist businesses in hiring youth apprentices. |
| 1. **Utilize partnerships to integrate targeted skills building into education, expand industry related training with community college programs and promote enrollment in certificate appropriate programs** |
| 1. **Continue to utilize partnerships to promote awareness of career opportunities with potential high earnings potentials utilizing community college and university programs, public education CTE programs, along with the incentives of paid internships and apprenticeships leading to long-term high-paying jobs.** |
| 1. **Supportive services, in addition to assistance with training services can be provided to the hard-to-reach communities through collaborations with agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Departments of Social Services, regional religious organizations, housing assistance and rehabilitation organizations, food assistance, Health Departments, and other philanthropic organizations.** |
| 1. **Contractor and WDB Staff will utilize all tools provided by NCLEAD, NCCareers.org, myFutureNC, such to identify skills gap information, Lightcast/EMSI labor market reports and regional employment information to provide guidance to adult, dislocated workers, and youth job seekers. Updated census data can be used to conduct outreach in areas of lower education and higher poverty.** |
| 1. **The Region’s workforce system is a network of federal, state, and locally administered programs that function to support economic expansion and develop the talent of our region’s workforce. The workforce system works in partnership with employers, educators, and community leaders to foster economic development and high-growth opportunities in regional economies. The collaboration of the region’s three Community Colleges and the Career and Technical education programs in the public school system is integral in the development of needed training to address skills shortages.** |

1. **Regional Strategic Planning:**

*North Carolina is defined by an expansive geography that covers over 53,000 square miles and spans from the mountains in the west, to the piedmont region in the state’s center to the coastal plain region in the east. This expansive geography contributes to the state’s diverse mix of rural communities, small towns, cities, metropolitan areas, and regional economic centers, each with its own unique industrial composition. Part of North Carolina’s economic development strategy includes organization of the state’s 100 counties into eight multi-county regions called Prosperity Zones, which are intended to help ensure economic growth across all areas of the state, by leveraging regional economic, workforce, and educational resources. Overlaying the eight prosperity zones are North Carolina’s 20 Local Area WDBs that facilitate the delivery of workforce services to the state’s citizens and employers.*

*Local Area WDBs are to continue, or begin, formal interaction based on these regional geographies.  The following regional configurations will be used for submission of this Regional Plan:*

* *Western Region: Southwestern, Region C (Foothills), and Mountain Area WDBs;*
* *Northwest Region: High Country, Western Piedmont, and Region C (Foothills)WDBs;*
* *Piedmont Triad Region: Piedmont Triad Regional and GuilfordWorks WDBs;*
* *Southwest Region: Centralina, Charlotte Works, Region C (Foothills), and Gaston County WDBs;*
  + *North Central Region: Kerr-Tar, Durham County, Turning Point, Mid-Carolina, and Capital Area WDBs;*
* *Sandhills Region: Cape Fear, Lumber River and Mid-Carolina WDBs;*
* *Northeast Region: Rivers East, Northeastern, and Turning Point WDBs; and*
* *Southeast Region: Eastern Carolina and Cape Fear WDBs.*

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| 1. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; as well as conditions that contribute to potential layoffs and closures and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)]. |
| **See attachment title Section III, Question 1 Occupation analysis and Section III, Question 1 Industry Analysis. This attachment contains an overview of the top occupations and industries in the region according to employment earnings, job growth or decline and more.** |
| 1. Describe how the regional strategic vision aligns with the [NCWorks Commission’s 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.](https://www.nccommerce.com/documents/ncworks-commission-strategic-plan-2019-2021) |
| **The mission of the Foothills Workforce Development Board is to help employers meet their workforce needs, help individuals build careers, strengthen the local economy, and meet the challenges of global competition.**  **Our work reach people who include adults seeking more meaningful careers, dislocated workers aiming to regain employment, and youth focused on getting the right start I life. We also represent employers from a broad range of leading industries that need workers with the training, skills and dedication to produce important products and services for a global marketplace. For both, we help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance North Carolina’s workforce capabilities.**    **This directly aligns with the NCWorks Commissions vision and systemwide goals and objective to:**   * **Prepare workers to succeed in the North Carolina economy by increasing skills and education attainment.** * **Create a workforce system that is responsive to the needs of the economy by fostering employer leadership.** * **Promote replication of creative solutions to challenging workforce problems by supporting local innovation.** * **Promote system access, alignment, integration, and modernization** |

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| 1. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, 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 Section 108 (b)(1)(C)]. |
| **See attachment titled Section III, Question 3 Economy Overview. This attachment outlines an overview of the labor force, educational attainment, unemployment demographics, historic and projected trends, population characteristics, commuting patterns, industry/business characteristics, workforce characteristics, education pipeline, and in-demand skills,** |

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| 1. Describe strategies, used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(i)(ii)]. |
| **The Workforce Development Boards partner with Economic Developers, Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce, and Industry Leaders to identify small businesses and in-demand sectors occupations. One of our workforce development resources is our Upskill Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training). The Upskill Training Grant is designed to offer funding assistance to small businesses and high-growth and in-demand industry sectors for incumbent worker training. This training grant offers funding resources to assist businesses with their strategies to develop talent so they can meet their current and future workforce needs. Local area business service teams stay up to date and engaged with businesses in order to understand business needs and help them (business) develop labor market intelligence that will guide their recruitment and retention efforts. Tools such as the LEAD Workforce Board Labor Market Overview, Data from EMSI and the Western Piedmont Economic Indicator Newsletter support business needs and strategies.** |

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| 1. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs  and economic development. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)]. |
| **It is important to maintain collaborative relationships with local, regional, and state economic development organizations. A major factor in business retention, expansion and attraction is the availability of a skilled workforce. If companies are not successful, there is no need for a skilled workforce. These groups share a symbiotic relationship and cannot succeed without the success of the other. Therefore, it is crucial for these two groups to collaborate. Industry partnerships and sector policy initiatives, such as the McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committee, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance and Cleveland County Sector Partnership, allow employers to lead local partnerships that bring many key players to the table. Additionally, the Foothills Workforce Development Board has established and maintains regular communication and collaboration with Economic Development entities in McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Cleveland Counties, as well with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and Chambers of Commerce. It is through these relationships that the Foothills WDB continues to support economic development initiatives by providing training, guidance, Labor Market Information, and expertise to continuously improve each county’s ability to support both existing industries and those that are being/have been newly recruited.   The WDB and WIOA service providers collaborate with county level and regional economic development during the industry/business recruiting process. This can be accomplished by meeting with the prospective business/industry and or providing written information regarding available training opportunities. Those opportunities may include On-the-Job training, Incumbent Worker Programs, other work-based learning opportunities, and short-term training provided by the Community Colleges. This also includes potential business/industry expansion projects. The facilitation of the recruitment of potential employees that may include listing jobs in NCWorks, job fairs, hiring events, and other outreach efforts are also included in the information provided. These efforts are coordinated with the Community Colleges’ Customized Training representatives and other departments, such as Human Resources development (HRD) that may be appropriate.   Additionally, Commission staff and many regional partners have completed the Foothills Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This strategy is the result of a yearlong effort to develop a framework for addressing the weaknesses and highlighting the opportunities within the Foothills Region.   The Four counties in the Foothills Region have been designated an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The completed Foothills Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy can be found on the Foothills Regional Commission website at the link below this text box.** |

[Link to CEDS](https://foothillsregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CEDS-2023-FC_Draft_2.0.pdf)

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| 1. Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region is/will address needs identified.  Include a description *and* map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Section 108(b)(11)]. |
| **The Foothills region is a rural region, so transportation is definitely an issue for economically challenged individuals. Many commute to neighboring counties for employment or training. Assistance can be provided to WIOA training participants. Rutherford, Cleveland, and Polk Counties have publicly funded transportation authorities that have published routes. However, these routes are not helpful for workers on shifts other than 8;00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. McDowell County does not have a publicly funded transportation service. A commuting pattern map is provided in the attachment for question 3 of this section. Transportation is a challenge in all rural economically stressed communities in North Carolina.** |

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| 1. Briefly provide a description of how the Local Area WDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(10)]. |
| **Partnerships with local educational institutions such as the three schools under the NC Community Colleges umbrella and the one private university (Gardner Webb University) in our area are instrumental in building a steady workforce needed in our communities. As we observe the fallout of the Great Resignation, finding and training skilled workers to fill our many positions in our community is vital for the future of the Foothills Region. Aside from overseeing the WIOA title programs which provide much needed financial support to training seekers, the FWDB has partnered with these institutions on local and regional workforce efforts in the form of sector partnerships. These collaborative partnerships bring together various local support agencies and industry partners to develop a pipeline of skilled workers, developing them from secondary, to post-secondary education, to job seeking services, and finally into the workforce. The services and resources being provided by the FWDB, and our education partners are provided without prejudice and are equitable and inclusive.  FWDB regularly acts as a convener to share ideas and program of instruction examples between training entities, thus ensuring that there is an effort to minimize duplication. We have engaged in ongoing communication with Community College providers to build and monitor training programs for viability and effectiveness. Furthermore, the FWDB remains very involved with Public School officials on a regular basis.** |

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| 1. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Centers serve military veterans. |
| **The FWDB is committed to providing prioritized services to military veterans and their families. The FWDB works closely with Local Veteran employment Representatives (LVER) as well as with Disabled Veteran’s Outreach Program Specialists to ensure that there is a wide variety of services available to military veterans’ and their families. It is vital to the FWDB to ensure that local business and employer representatives are aware of a variety of Veteran related subsidies and incentives designed to encourage and accelerate the employment of military veterans. The FWA also participates in regional Stand Downs in order to provide services for veterans. The FWDB’s work with, assist, and help coordinate the region's Homeless Veterans Stand-down events.** |

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| 1. Explain the strategic plan for how the region will respond to national emergencies or weather-related disasters to serve victims (such as lay-off aversion activities) and utilize special grants efficiently throughout the recovery period. |
| **While being at the western end of NC, we do not have widespread hurricane disasters, however, the recent COVID-19 pandemic required the board to act and to consider additional options to respond to our customer needs. We have reflected on the many lessons learned from COVID-19, because it is still ongoing and could continue for the future.  The board has highlighted and improved our virtual capabilities and the capacity to provide  services virtually. The board has updated our virtual mobility, with increased laptops for staff to take home or abroad, as well as wi-fi (jetpacks) for staff. Purchase virtual software for meeting license and possibly look at additional options that may better address a local/state/national emergency. We have responded as best we could with what we had.** |

1. **NCWorks Commission**

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| *The NCWorks Commission recommends policies and strategies which value diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility while enabling the state’s workforce to compete in the current and future global economy. The commission leads, builds partnerships, forms alliances, and is accountable for strengthening North Carolina’s innovative, inclusive, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system.*  *The Commission is designated as the state’s WDB under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Led by a private sector chair, the 37-member Commission includes representatives from the business community, heads of state workforce agencies, educators, and community leaders. All members are appointed by the Governor.*  *Mission of the NCWorks Commission: To ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity; and to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.*  *After extensive stakeholder work and programmatic reviews, the following systemwide goals and objectives were created for the workforce development system:*   * *Prepare workers to succeed in the North Carolina economy by increasing skills and education attainment.* * *Create a workforce system that is responsive to the needs of the economy by fostering employer leadership.* * *Promote replication of creative solutions to challenging workforce problems by supporting local innovation.* * *Promote system access, alignment, integration, and modernization.* |

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| 1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local employers and informs them of the wide array of business services offered. Include how the Local Area WDB (a) ensures collaboration with other employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as (b) Vocational Rehabilitation, (c) Agriculture Services, (d) Foreign Labor, (e) Re-Entry, and (f) Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery. |
| **Foothills WDB and core partners will facilitate the training and support services for eligible individuals particularly those with barriers to employment by the collaboration with human service agencies that include the Department of Social Services, United Way-funded activities, Vocational Rehabilitation, public health clinics and departments and others associated with providing services to these target groups. Career pathways developed by convening partners/stakeholders in support of the common vision, mission, and goals for the development of career pathways. Labor market analysis will be conducted to identify in-demand sectors and programs. Skills assessments and matching will be used to identify gaps where training is needed. Collaboration with the training providers, particularly the community colleges, will help to identify or develop new programs that will deliver solutions that are responsive to the needs of workers and the targeted industry sectors. Foothills will continue the outreach to regional employers through the earlier described groups that convene on a regular basis, McDowell Pipeline Committee, Rutherford Polk Manufacturing Alliance, and the Cleveland County Education Alliance, and increasing outreach to recruit additional business partners to these groups. Partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development’, Community Colleges, and county-based personnel associations offer a number of venues for the distribution of information of services offered by the workforce development partners. Information is distributed virtually through social media, websites, virtual newsletters, and other electronic methods of outreach. Examples include: • Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce’s Workforce Monday with local job listings in the region in partnership with the NCWorks Centers • Cleveland County Chamber posts job openings • Foothills Regional Commission/IPDC weekly newsletter and website promoting workforce and community development resources** |

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| 1. Please provide a brief overview of the business services team within the local area. Please identify the individual staff roles the Local Area WDB utilizes to conduct business services (that is Business Services Representative (Local Area WDB staff), contractor staff, Business Engagement Coordinator, NCWorks Career Center Manager, DWS staff, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, identify who makes regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff, etc.). |
| **Foothills will continue the outreach to regional employers through the earlier described groups that convene on a regular basis, McDowell Pipeline Committee, Rutherford Polk manufacturing Alliance, and the Cleveland County Education Alliance, and increasing outreach to recruit additional business partners to these groups. Partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development’, Community Colleges, and county-based personnel associations offer several venues for the distribution of information of services offered by the workforce development partners. Information is distributed virtually through social media, websites, virtual newsletters, and other electronic methods of outreach. Examples include: • Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce’s Workforce Monday with local job listings in the region in partnership with the NCWorks Centers • Cleveland County Chamber posts job openings • Region C/IPDC weekly newsletter and website promoting workforce and community development resources** |
| 1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB plans to increase NCWorks brand awareness at the local level (consult NCWorks Commission 2023-2025 Strategic Plan). |
| **Foothills Workforce Board will continually nurture the awareness of NCWorks brand to our customer base by providing increased access to NCWorks in our local communities. The career centers will continue to focus on providing access in different remote areas of our region, housing offices and libraries upon request. It is our goal and focus to enhanced remote accessibility for all individuals within our region.** |

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| *Communities across North Carolina are developing strong local models of workforce development. North Carolina should build on those successes and replicate them in more places to continue building and expanding innovative solutions.* |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB and the partners identify, address, and provide new and innovative solutions to support the job growth and business expansions of the local workforce system while including Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. |
| **The FWDB, Service Provider staff along with the local NCWorks Career Center teams to partner with the local community colleges, economic development, employers, and other identified partners to promote and align education and training opportunities in identified sectors. The Service Provider, NCWorks Career Advisors, and community college representatives meet with students at the beginning of the semester to inform participants of the assorted services and programs available. At that time students are encouraged to register on NCWorks.** |

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| *The U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor have jointly identified Recruitment and Hiring; Benefits; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; Empowerment and Representation; Job Security and Working Conditions; Organizational Culture; Pay; and Skills and Career Advancement as the eight key principles of a good job. Refer to Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 07-22 for details.* |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area WDB’s strategy for:    1. incorporating job quality principles into ongoing workforce development activities, to assist with identifying and creating long-term partnerships with employers offering good jobs;    2. creating strategic, flexible career pathways to good jobs that respond to local labor market needs. |
| * 1. **The FWDB, Service Provider staff along with the local NCWorks Career Center teams to partner with the local community colleges, economic development, employers, and other identified partners to promote and align education and training opportunities in identified sectors. The Service Provider, NCWorks Career Advisors, and community college representatives meet with students at the beginning of the semester to inform participants of the assorted services and programs available. At that time students are encouraged to register on NCWorks.  b. The result of this partnership has produced high-quality candidates, results in employment and ensures reduced turnover for the businesses that participate in On-the-Job Training opportunities.** |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB ensures that individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities have equitable access to the services of the workforce system and the jobs created in the economic growth spurred by federal investments. |
| **Staff development has been provided to better serve ex-offenders as well disabilities, limited English, high school dropouts or educationally challenge, and older workers. The Local Area works closely with the Title V older workers program regarding referrals for employment and the designation of the career centers as worksites. Ongong relationships with dropout prevention services in the public-school systems and the adult high school programs facilitate access for those groups. Equal Opportunity training is provided annually for WIOA staff and partners. Freedom Life Ministries, a comprehensive, holistic-approach program, assists those coming out of the criminal justice system. The non-profit program provides assistance with Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Housing, Transportation, Job Seeking Services, and financial planning to ensure accountability of the men and women released from prison and jail. The McDowell Re-Entry Council is an entity comprised of community partners, social agencies and employers that are interested in assisting this unique segment of the population. Foothills WDB is a part of this Council and was heavily involved in the planning of a April 2nd Employer Symposium and Job Fair for Justice Involved. In addition, the staff have participated in the Justice Involved Simulation Workshops.** |
| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB is engaged in work-based learning projects with local employers. |
| **Career pathways developed by convening partners/stakeholders in support of the common vision, mission, and goals for the development of career pathways. Labor market analysis is conducted to identify in-demand sectors and programs. Skills assessments and matching are used to identify gaps where training is needed. Collaboration with the training providers, particularly the community colleges, will help to identify or develop new programs that will deliver solutions that are responsive to the needs of workers and the targeted industry sectors. Foothills WDB has developed three Certified Career Pathways that include Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing/Allied Health, and careers in the Energy Sector. Sector and career pathways partnerships include WIOA core programs, human service organizations, organized labor, NC Works Career Centers, economic development, chambers of commerce, and industry members that represent firms identified in the sectors. Training academies have been developed by community colleges and high schools in the region to specifically address short-term training relevant to the certified pathways. These academies issue locally developed; employer recognized credentials. NCCER credentials, and other certifications. Examples include: • Electrical Line Workers Academy • Medical Assisting and other allied health related training • Manufacturing and Welding academies • CNC Technology Academy • Cabinet Making Certificate** |

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| 1. Briefly describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(A)] |
| **The local board regularly evaluates the performance of eligible service providers. This includes assessing the effectiveness of their programs in achieving employment outcomes, meeting industry demands, and addressing the needs of jobseekers and workers. We research and utilize data collection to measure the success of service providers in placing individuals into sustainable employment. This involves tracking outcomes such as job placement rates, retention, and the relevance of training programs to local labor market needs. Through communication and surveys, we regularly solicit input to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the services, ensuring that the feedback is considered in the continuous improvement process. We work closely with local employers to identify current and future skill needs and ensure that eligible service providers align their offerings with the demands of the local labor market, adjusting programs and services accordingly. We encourage and support ongoing professional development for staff within eligible service providers. This ensures that providers stay informed about industry changes, new technologies, and best practices, enhancing the quality of services they offer. This involves setting benchmarks for program effectiveness, participant outcomes, and overall service quality. To improve performance plans, we work collaboratively with eligible providers to develop and implement performance improvement plans, when necessary, which involves targeted interventions to address specific challenges and enhance the overall impact of their services. We encourage innovation and the adoption of best practices within eligible service providers and share successful strategies across the workforce development system to facilitate continuous learning and improvement, as well as foster strong partnerships with local stakeholders, including employers, community organizations, and educational institutions. Engaging stakeholders in the planning and evaluation processes ensures that services remain responsive to the evolving needs of the community. By implementing these measures, the local board can fulfill its responsibility to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, resulting in a more effective and responsive workforce development system that meets the employment needs of both local employers and jobseekers.** |

1. **NCWorks Career Centers**

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| *North Carolina’s workforce system includes multiple agencies, programs, and funders. Collaboration, policy alignment, systemic communication, integration, and modernization of the workforce system will ensure a strong and healthy workforce system that can adapt to a changing economy.* |

*For any documents that are missing or are unnecessary based on the response provided, please state, “No document is loaded and/or it will be loaded by a specific date”.*

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| 1. Identify PY 2024 NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Comprehensive and Affiliate Sites; On-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth service provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use the PY 2024 NCWorks Career Center Chart. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)] |
| * Name document: *Foothills PY 2024 NCWorks Career Centers.* |

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| 1. Provide the name(s) of the current One-Stop provider(s), date, and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to four years and the current year the contract is (e.g., two of three years). [WIOA Section 108(b)(16)] |
| **The current One-Stop Operator is the Division of Workforce Solutions. Operator was procured utilizing a letter of intent with RFP process (if applicable) in January of 2021 and period of agreement is 4 years. Only one letter of intent received.** |

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| 1. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)] 2. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults. 3. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers. 4. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth. |
| 1. **All WIOA Adult/DW and Youth funded services and programs are mandated by competitive procurement process to be offered through the Foothills WDB NC Works Career Centers. Title I contracted Service awards are reviewed and awarded by the Foothills WDB, following formal review and recommendation by the Foothills WDB procurement advisory committee (consisting of current Foothills WDB members).   Once procurement is completed and contracts awarded, the designated Center Manager will provide oversight regarding staff placement in particular functional areas (Welcome, Employment, Skill Development) according to customer need/flow.** |
| 1. **All WIOA Adult/DW and Youth funded services and programs are mandated by competitive procurement process to be offered through the Foothills WDB NC Works Career Centers.** |
| 1. **The Foothills WDB also provides that WIOA funded Youth services for both In School and Out of School students is available through each of the NCWorks Career Centers.   Services include, but are not limited to: Intake, Assessment, Career Counseling, Individualized Training Accounts, Support Services, Work based learning (Internships, Work Experiences, On the Job Training, etc.), Job Referral, Job Placement, Educational Attainment related services, and other individualized services necessary to assist Youth participants in obtaining their educational goals and maximizing their employability.   The Foothills WDB is committed to the provision of services to all individuals located in the four-county area served by the organization. The entire Foothills Area is rural locales, so it is essential that the Foothills WDB utilize technology and nontraditional measures to facilitate service provision. The Foothills WDB NCWorks Career Centers utilizes and promotes www.ncworks.gov throughout the service area to ensure that customers have access to the labor exchange and training opportunities contained within the system. Furthermore, the Foothills NCWorks Career Centers offer satellite location services in Polk County at a minimum of one day per week to facilitate service provision despite the absence of a formal center in that county. Services are provided at the Polk County library to ensure that jobseekers and business customers in our most rural locations can have access to services accordingly. WIOA Title I case managers have established regular schedules at all three community colleges to facilitate access to Title I services, NCWorks On-line registration, and other services provided through the system.   Foothills has implemented a paperless system for intake, enrollment, eligibility documentation, and case management activities. All required documents are scanned into the NC Works system and activities managed by the responsible individuals with oversight and technical assistance provided by WDB monitoring staff.** |

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| 1. Describe how Local Area WDBs determine the need for enrollment in Training Services. |
| **Individual customers’ need for training is determined through an initial objective assessment using the individual’s work history and any training the customer has previously been associated with. Further assessment may be conducted regarding reading, mathematics, interest inventories, WorkKeys, and etc. An overview of the individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities can be determined by the evaluation of these factors. The availability of employment opportunities requiring these factors will be assessed and those shared with that individual for placement. Training for occupations that are in demand within the region or in WDB’s target industry/occupation clusters may be an option. WIOA is designed to increase eligible individuals’ access to training that will equip them to enter the workforce and retain employment.   Training will be considered as follows:   - Eligibility has been determined   - Need must be consistent with employment plan   Training may be made available to employed/under employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:   - are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency   - are unable to obtain other financial assistance to cover the full costs of training** |

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| 1. Describe how follow-up services are provided through the NCWorks Career Centers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)] |
| **Job Matching, Placement, and Follow-Up Job matching, and placement require knowledge of the customer’s skills, interests, and career goals, as well as familiarity with his or her employment plan and access to LMI. As part of the coaching role, case managers provide career planning, review resumes, help the customer develop interviewing skills, and provide links to related services at the area community colleges.   The case manager connects the customer to staff Business Services specialists (or job developers) who help with job matching and placement. Case managers maintain frequent contact with the customer after placement and program exit to ensure that he or she is receiving any needed job retention assistance or services. Follow-up contacts are made once a quarter or more frequently if needed for a period of one year following the completion of training and/or exit from WIOA.** |

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| 1. Describe how: 2. New NCWorks Career Center staff (DWS, service providers, and partner staff) are trained in the integrated service delivery system model (include a training timeline). 3. How long after the initial start date does staff have full access to NCWorks.gov? 4. The staff development activities reinforce and improve the initial training efforts. 5. Describe the specific training that staff receive around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. |
| 1. **The Foothills WDB embraces a collaborative approach to cross training new Career Center staff, especially as it relates to the utilization of NCworks.gov. New Career Center staff will be assigned an experienced Career Center staff person to serve as a mentor. This individual will be available to help the staff understand the nuances of the program(s) as well as teach them the technical aspects of how to utilize the Management Information System daily as it was related to service provision.** |
| 1. **Foothills WDB also utilizes their Senior Workforce Development Specialist to provide additional training and support to new staff in an effort to approach their education of the system in a functional manner. This means demonstrating responsibilities and system usage in the course of providing actual services to jobseeker/business customers. Local staff identified as Super Users also provide assistance in obtaining employee access and in individually demonstrating how to access and begin utilizing the system. While acclimation to the system will always be an ongoing opportunity for all staff (as the system continue to evolve), we expect that new staff will be proficient in providing customer service and adequately identifying/securing required documentation/data within the first month of their employment.** |
| 1. **All Career Center Staff will also engage in regular cross training to be conducted through ongoing staff meetings and training opportunities. Through utilization of both the N.C. Works Training Center opportunities as well as private and public training excursions, the Career Center Manager will work collaboratively with the WDB Director to ensure that staff are informed and prepared to embrace a customer service philosophy of continuous improvement. Training such as: Leading at All Levels”, EEO related training, Customer Service-related training, training endeavors related to the various technology and Management Information Systems utilized through the center. Other applicable training will be encouraged and utilized regularly to help ensure that all staff (regardless of employer) have an opportunity to fully understand the Integrated Services Delivery system and philosophy of customer service.   Additionally, the staff development process includes visits by regional employers describing the organizations, and NCWorks staff frequently conduct on-site visits to various industries help to ensure staff understand the working conditions, products and services being manufactured or delivered, and the needs of the employers in order to better equip jobseekers with information and make appropriate referrals.** |
| 1. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training is essential and mandatory for all staff and is an integral part of the staff development process. DEI training can be accessed virtually through the state’s training system. Leader-led sessions on DEI are conducted on a quarterly basis often in collaboration with multiple career centers, sometimes from other regions.** |

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| 1. Briefly explain coordination with the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services. Please include specific details on how case managers for WIOA and TAA programs coordinate to provide seamless services to eligible participants. |
| **Dual enrollment (WIOA/TAA) is utilized for trade affected workers to maximize resources. Example: WIOA covers the cost of training and TAA covers the TRA benefits and/or supportive services. Back and forth, referrals are made where appropriate. However, there are no currently active TAA petitions in Foothills.** |

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| 1. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Center serves persons with disabilities. |
| **In addition, there are collaborative approaches to service provision that l allows for the center partners to plan and maximizes resources and improve efficiencies regarding services to individuals with disabilities within the integrated service delivery model. Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind are key partners in the sharing of resources for the financial support of the NCWorks Center infrastructure. The Career Centers are fully accessible and offer necessary accommodations to provide job seekers with disabilities effective and meaningful participation in the use of skills training for careers. The center’s providers strive to find job placements to match skills and provide the required accommodation for persons with disabilities. The center provides aid to assist the hard of hearing, and Interpretation assistance for non-English speaking clients.** |

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| 1. Briefly describe the integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers and how the Local Area WDB staff and staff within the NCWorks Career Center coordinate outreach strategies and services to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services. |
| **The Workforce Development Boards partner with Economic Developers, Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce, and Industry Leaders to identify small businesses and in-demand sectors occupations. One of our workforce development resources is our Upskill Training Grant (Incumbent Worker Training). The Upskill Training Grant is designed to offer funding assistance to small businesses and high-growth and in-demand industry sectors for incumbent worker training. This training grant offers funding resources to assist businesses with their strategies to develop talent so they can meet their current and future workforce needs. Local area business service teams stay up to date and engaged with businesses in order to understand business needs and help them (business) develop labor market intelligence that will guide their recruitment and retention efforts. Tools such as the LEAD Workforce Board Labor Market Overview, Data from EMSI, and the weekly FRC newsletter that identifies workforce and economic development issues provides needed intelligence to communities and business to help them develop strategies.** |

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| 1. Describe Local Area WDB strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between Local Area WDBs and the NCWorks Career Center system and unemployment insurance programs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iv)] |
| **Local Area WDB will continue to partner with NCWorks Career Centers and other support agencies to help in promoting workforce development programs. Though the local WDB does not have direct access to aid in distribution of unemployment insurance benefits, the local WDB will aid the NCWorks career centers in helping job seekers and training seekers. Participation in local partnerships such as our sector partnerships will continue to strengthen the working relationships between the WDB and the Career Center system.** |

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| 1. Attach a flowchart for services – flowchart must include: 2. initial one-on-one interviews with customers, 3. skills assessments, and 4. determination of the need for further services. |
| * Name document: Foothills WDB Services Flowchart 2024*.* |

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| 1. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. [WIOA Section 121(c)(1)(2)(A)] |
| * Name document: Foothills NC Works Career Center MOU*.* |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area WDB’s method for providing oversight to include: 2. the review process and the frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service; and 3. the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)] [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)] |
| **a. Centers and program contractors will be held accountable for customer outcomes by utilizing data that is available through interim performance reports and ongoing data provided through the NC Works On-line system. Performance for WIOA specific activities will be conducted on going and through the annual or semi-annual monitoring process. Discrepancies or lack of performance will be communicated to the contractors and staff with technical assistance provided as needed. Lack of progress in performance improvements may result in sanctions, suspension of funding, and/or procurement of new service providers.   Center performance will be monitored utilizing customer feedback information, outcome data provided through the State’s performance accountability measures, reports, and on-going local NC Works On-line data. Technical assistance and staff development will be provided or recommendations on methods for improving services.   b. Additionally, NCWorks functional managers will regularly report center activities, utilization information and performance indicators at the regularly scheduled WDB meetings. The roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Sharing Agreement document.** |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB facilitates access to services provided through the NCWorks Career Center delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. **[**WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(B)] |
| **Foothills WDB is committed to the provision of services to all individuals located in the four-county area served by the organization. Due to the fact that some areas of the Foothills Area are indeed located in more rural locales, it is essential that the Foothills WDB utilize technology and non-traditional measures to facilitate service provision. The Foothills WDB NCWorks Career Centers utilizes and promotes www.ncworks.gov throughout the service area to ensure that customers have access to the labor exchange and training opportunities contained within said system. Furthermore, the Foothills NCWorks Career Centers offer satellite location services in Polk County at a minimum of one day per week to facilitate service provision despite the absence of a formal center in that county. Services are provided through the Polk County library to ensure that jobseekers and business customers in our most rural locations can have access to services accordingly. Social media is increasingly being utilized to promote NCWorks services, provide access to scheduled regional events, and provide information regarding economic and workforce trends and services.** |

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| 1. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using virtual technology to provide integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information systems for programs carried out under WIOA including youth programs, and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. What software are NCWorks Career Centers using? [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)] |
| **The Covid 19 pandemic has increased the use of virtual meetings (ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, etc.) with service providers, workforce development partners, as well as virtual contacts with existing participants and program applicants. At the career centers, services are being provided through these platforms and via telephone increasingly, with more customers opting for virtual services over face-to-face services. As new technology becomes available, the FWDB will explore their benefits and weigh their costs to determine if they are suited for the Foothills region.** |

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| 1. Describe how entities within the NCWorks Career Center system, including Career Center operators and partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(C)] |
| **The NCWorks Career Center certification process includes an evaluation of each center’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Criteria is evaluated by organizations qualified to conduct these assessments utilizing the following elements prescribed by the NCWorks Career Center Certification Criteria:   Criteria for the NCWorks Career Center system and all centers comprising this system must address effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. Per WIOA, evaluations of NCWorks Career Centers focus on how effective centers operate in the areas indicated below integrating available services for participants and businesses, meeting the workforce development needs of participants and the employment needs of local employers.  Operating in a cost-efficient manner. Coordinating services among the one-stop partner programs. Providing access to partner program services to the maximum extent practicable, including providing services outside of regular business hours where there is a workforce need, as identified by the local WDB.  Utilizing feedback from one-stop customers.  Ensuring equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in or benefit from one-stop center services (physical and programmatic accessibility). TEGL 16-16 One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center Network also provide Additional criteria also includes: Customer Centered Design and Accessibility Partnerships and Integrated Services Professional Staff  Performance and Customer Satisfaction** |

1. **Employer Services**

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| 1. Please describe the efforts of the Local Area WDB staff, Employer services staff and Career Center   staff have made to deliver business services on a regional basis in the following areas:   1. Utilizing regional and local economic data to inform priorities [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)]. 2. Collaborating with employer-facing partners such as Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services to meet employer needs and jobseeker recruitment efforts. 3. Providing local and regional Rapid Response services, including identifying struggling and at-risk businesses and providing services to help avert layoffs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(8)] 4. Coordinating with DWS TAA and Business Services staff to provide Rapid Response assistance and appropriate career and training services to workers for whom a petition has been filed. (20 CFR 618.816) 5. Including Historically Underutilized Businesses (OG 20-2021) |
| **a. All activities listed above are coordinated on a regional basis. In addition, Foothills coordinates activities with the NCEDP regional representatives and is involved in the NEXTGEN partnership. Next Generation sector strategy is an Industry- led, community supported partnership that strengthens regional economies and connect people to jobs** |
| **b. When the services of Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services are identified as being needed for a particular customer or business, a referral will be initiated with a proper handoff. Proper handoff is an introduction and when needed and feasible an in-person meeting or virtual meeting. Handoffs should never be a simply providing contact information.** |
| **c. Business facing staff communicates with FWDB if a company has been identified as struggling and/or at risk of shutdown or mass layoffs. FWDB will contact local DWS staff and the state’s rapid response office to prepare for any layoff aversion services that can be provided or in the case of layoffs, facilitate the rapid response meeting** |
| **d. The FWDB and Local Area Partners coordinate through the rapid response process. Partners conduct employee orientations when timely notification is received regarding layoffs and business closings. Statewide rapid response unit establishes schedules for initial meetings with management when a WARN notice has been submitted. The Local Area Director or designated staff determine and convene local partner attendance. Local partners then schedule meetings or orientation sessions with affected employees when appropriate.  Business and Industry’s current challenge is the recruitment and retention of qualified workers.** |
| **e. Foothills received the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant that enables the board to provide On the Job Training opportunities targeting small- and micro- businesses (i.e., businesses with twenty-five [25] or fewer employees) to bridge the gap for business retention and expansion with funding for OJT, WEX, and IWT. This initiative will focus on historically underutilized business, industries most impacted by the pandemic (including manufacturing and hospitality), priority industries with substantial occupational skills gaps, and other risk indicators. Dislocated workers with transferable skills will also be targeted as priority job candidates.** |

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| 1. Please describe employer-focused partnership efforts in the areas of education and training and economic development in the following areas: 2. Enhancing the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement. 3. Coordinating and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(5)] 4. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)]. |
| 1. **The Business Services and Work-based learning representatives coordinate all activities with local and regional economic development organizations and community colleges. Regional groups for each county that are described in numerous previous sections of this plan are venues utilized to facilitate the coordination of education, economic development with employer groups.** |
| 1. **Through the small business centers located at each of the three community colleges in Foothills Region, community members can receive resources in entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. The business services team will promote these resources and direct interested parties to the small business centers. When the services are identified as being needed for a particular customer or business, a referral will be initiated with a proper handoff. Proper handoff is a introduction and when needed and feasible an in-person meeting or virtual meeting. Handoffs should never be a simply providing contact information.** |
| 1. **Business facing staff communicates with FWDB if a company has been identified as struggling and/or at risk of shutdown or mass layoffs. FWDB will contact local DWS staff and the state’s rapid response office to prepare for any layoff aversion services that can be provided or in the case of layoffs, facilitate the rapid response meeting.  Through the three sector partnerships in the Foothills Region, the support partners, with the input of our industry partners, are able to participate in regional economic strategic planning focusing on areas that are most important to the employers, such as recruitment and retention.** |

1. **Performance**

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| U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has the following WIOA Performance Indicators:   * Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit * Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit * Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit * Credential Attainment Rate * Measurable Skill Gains * Effectiveness in Serving Employers (system-wide measure, not program specific) |

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| 1. Examine the Local Area WDB’s current Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance for PY 2022-2023 and prior Program Years. (Reports available via FutureWorks BI.) What are some factors that have impacted performance levels both positively and negatively in the current program year? 2. Provide at least two examples of positive factors and two examples of negative factors with an explanation of each. Some examples to consider include:  * unemployment rate * factory closures/openings * economic development recruitment * retention and expansion efforts * regional industry growth priorities * weather events and natural disasters that may have impacted the area * internal operational factors  1. Are there any factors that you anticipate will impact your performance during the upcoming program year(s) either positively or negatively? |
| **a. In examining our PY 2022 performance, we have identified that Dislocated Workers (DW) Credentialing was an area of improvement (142.89% of goal). A total of 93% of the participants enrolled in the program earned a credential. The Adults improved and increased by 117% earned credentials and met their employment goals. With the low unemployment rate and fewer factories closing, participants have the ability to locate more jobs in their related fields. To the contrary, the unemployment rate in the Foothills Region is extremely low and therefore will continue reflect next year’s performance indicator. Fewer customers are entering the workforce and most of our career centers has seen a decreased in enrollments and in-person services. Youth enrollment continues to drop due to the lack of transportation in rural areas and the limited work experience available for youth participants.   The above-mentioned data point reflects not the COVID-19 pandemic but highlights the reality of the post-pandemic environment where the labor market is extremely tight. Though some dislocated workers may choose to seek credentialing, shortly after starting they are enticed back to the workforce due to the abundance of opportunities. This pattern has become more apparent as the region moves further away from the pandemic shutdowns.   b. The shortage of labor has affected most industries and has affected the way the FWDB operates. As businesses turn to innovation and automation to address labor shortages, the need for upskilling and credentialing has increased. This increases the FWDB, and partners focus to credentialing and other programs that involve upskilling workers such as OJT and apprenticeships.** |

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| 1. What strategies and methods are in place to meet or exceed performance goals? Include information about tracking performance, ensuring accountability of positive performance outcomes, and training.   Consider including the following information:   * Who is responsible for tracking performance? * Which reporting resources are used? * Is FutureWorks BI employed? If so, how, and how often? * How often is training provided to staff? |
| **The Local Area reviews performance on an on-going basis through NCWorks.gov and FutureWorks. Case managers are notified on a regular basis of any issues with performance. The Local Area holds quarterly case managers’ meetings where performance is reviewed, and information is shared on how to improve performance. The WDB Performance & Accountability Specialist reviews the individuals in the performance pool and emphasizes to the case managers the importance of follow-up. Individuals are offered follow-up services and provided other opportunities to maintain employment, earn a postsecondary credential and to increase their wages.** |
| 1. Discuss what corrective action steps are in place if, at any point during the program year, the Local Area WDB is not on track to meet or exceed yearly performance indicator goals.   This question is intended to be hypothetical and is seeking what plan the Local Area WDB has in place to address failing performance, if it were to occur. Answers should address how the Local Area WDB:   * monitors performance, * communicates with staff, * makes changes to Local Area WDB performance and training strategies based on reporting data, * and utilizes follow-up accountability measures. |
| **Monitor, Communicate, and Train. The Board works in partnership with the contractor to identify strategies to improve the indicator goal; current strategies include running reports from NCWorks Online or Future Works Rosters reports to identify clients that fall into the performance cohort. Contractor staff then follows up with those clients to ensure employment, credential attainment, and/or any other performance indicators. In PY19, the Board Staff plans to meet quarterly with each contractor to review performance and outline any strategies that will help meet their goals. A significant part of these quarterly meetings with each contractor will be training to ensure all team members are equipped with the knowledge and tools for proper and accurate data entry, programmatic models, service delivery, documentation, etc. to ensure performance goals are met. The Compliance Manager and Director of Programs also meet with contractors at least once per month to ensure contractors are on target and have a strong understanding. Each contractor also turns in a monthly report tracking their progress toward annual goals and the Research and Performance Manager along with the Compliance Manager and Director of Programs monitor progress on a monthly and quarterly basis and use the progress to inform and lead the monthly and quarterly meetings and trainings with providers. The WDB also develops corrective action plans with contractors when they are not on target with benchmark goals and deadlines to meet the benchmark goals. Training is provided consistently and will continue to be provided on a monthly and quarterly basis, at least. New hires are provided training as part of their onboarding plan and then participate in the monthly and quarterly trainings with the rest of the team.** |

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| 1. How is performance information shared throughout the hierarchy of staff? Please detail how the Local Area WDB addresses performance data in its relationship with its service provider(s) and how case managers are using performance data to drive Local Area WDB performance.   Consider including the following information:   1. How is performance tracked in your organization? 2. How is performance information communicated with staff? 3. How are staff/contractors held accountable? 4. How is training provided in your organization? |
| **The Local Area reviews performance on an on-going basis through NCWorks.gov and FutureWorks. Case managers are notified on a regular basis of any issues with performance. The Local Area holds quarterly case managers’ meetings where performance is reviewed, and information is shared on how to improve performance. The WDB Performance & Accountability Specialist reviews the individuals in the performance pool and emphasizes to the case managers the importance of follow-up. Individuals are offered follow-up services and provided other opportunities to maintain employment, earn a postsecondary credential and to increase their wages** |

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| 1. Discuss the factors that contribute to the Local Area WDB’s credential attainment indicator. 2. What are the challenges that the Local Area WDB faces in achieving its credential attainment goal? 3. What are some of the strategies that contribute to the Local Area WDB’s success in achieving its credential attainment goal? 4. How do case managers make use of NCcareers.org and the NC Workforce Credentials list? |
| **The Measurable Skill Gains measure is a new real-time performance indicator that we are working with Career Advisors to ensure they are entering this information on NCWorks Online. The Board plans to use the Measurable Skill Gains as a means to monitor a participant’s progress toward successfully completing training. Each Career Advisor must enter at least one Measurable Skill Gains for every year the participant is active in WIOA Title I. Participants enrolled in occupational skills training will be required to enter Measurable Skill Gains each semester in order to monitor the progress the participant is making toward successfully completing training. This will allow the Career Advisor to provide additional services in the event the participant is not attaining Measurable Skill Gains in an effort to assist them so they can successfully complete training and attain their credential. • The measurable skill gains measure is an early indication of the student’s probability of successful completion of their credential. Additionally, the measurable skill gain indicator also helps to reveal any issues the student may be experiencing. The information from the Measurable Skill Gains has helped our service providers be more accountable for our students’ progress while in training. Students with successful measurable skill gains are more likely to successfully obtain their credential and less likely to drop out of their program of study. In this LA, the WIOA case manager is expected to meet with the student monthly for counseling services. During these appointments the case manager will discuss the student’s progress and provide resources for tutoring, childcare, counseling and/or other critical needs that can affect grades. This allows staff to try to assist before the student drops out of school or fails a class, which may lead to negative performance for the credential attained measure. At the end of each semester, the student will turn in a copy of their grades/transcript to their case manager and discuss their semester progress. If grades show a dissatisfactory progress, then the customer will be provided further counseling, and a determination will be made whether to continue training or find a more suitable option in order for the student to become reemployed. Measurable Skills Gains helps to document incremental progress of individuals while in training. Successful completion of skill gains document satisfactory progress while enrolled in education, which helps lead to the completion of training and the attainment of credentials. Tracking progression through training and recognizing skill gains helps our career advisors track progress and continually motivate participants toward the end goal of attainment and employment. Also, by tracking skill gains, other assistance needed to achieve successful completion is more easily identified (such as tutoring). By tracking measurable skill gains in real-time, credential attainment is more easily managed, additional services are offered when needed and we are able to better set our participants up to achieve their goals and meet our performance goals. Using the Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) performance measure as a tool to track Credential Attainment can be done in a variety of ways. Using Futureworks Roster Reporting for MSG allows the Local Area to determine which participants were making strides towards credential attainment prior to program exit, thus giving their Case Mangers the opportunity to reach out to the participant or their training provider to determine if the credential was obtained within the 12-month time frame. This same practice can be utilized with active participants in NCWorks Online by running reports to determine who has had an MSG keyed within the program year. Case Managers that do a good job successfully tracking any and all classroom-based MSGs are more likely to record the credential when obtained, as they have built a pattern and rapport with their participant throughout the time of their training. The WDB strives to record as many MSGs as possible throughout the course of the participant’s training, including recording MSGs for both classroom-based AND work-based training milestones reached. This allows Case Managers to keep track of the participant’s benchmarks established in the IEP/ISSP** |

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| 1. **When selecting an eligible training provider from the State Eligible Training Provider List to certify for local use, what is the review process the Local Area WDB uses to make this decision?** How does the Local Area WDB ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training providers? **In other words, how are customers advised that they have options in choosing their provider?** [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)] |
| **When a participant requests a training provide that the WDB board has not used in the past, the WDB will collect the relevant information from the training provider and for information to the NC Eligible Training Provider Coordinator for Review in accordance with Part II of the NC Eligible Training Provider Guidelines (CPS-11-2021).   In addition, it is Foothills WDB responsibility to ensure that the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is disseminated publicly through NCWorks online and other partner agencies.** |
| 1. **Indicate whether the Local Area WDB has additional requirements for training providers above and beyond those requirements stated in the State ETPL policy. Does the Local Area WDB make use of USDOL’s trainingproviderresults.gov website in its evaluation of which training providers to certify for local area use? If so, how?** |
| **The FWDB does not have additional requirements for training provers above and beyond those requirements stated in the State ETPL policy.** |
| * **Name Document:** *Foothills WDB*  *ETPL Policy*. |

1. **Equal Opportunity**

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| 1. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. [WIOA Section 188] |
| **As a condition to the award of financial assistance under WIOA from the Department of Labor, the applicant assures, with respect to operation of the WIOA funded program or activity and all agreements or arrangements to carry out the WIOA-funded program or activity, that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; as amended; section 504 of the Rights Act of 1964; as amended; section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to section 188 and 29 CFR part 37. The United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance (a)The contractor shall not discriminate, as prescribed in Section 188 of the Act or as prohibited under state law, against any employee, applicant for employment, applicant for WIOA activities, WIOA participant, or subcontractor because of race, color, disability, religion, age, gender or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotions, transfers, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoffs or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, selection for training including apprenticeship; participation in recreational and educational activities or any WIOA activities. The Contractor certifies that it presently has in effect such an affirmative action program. The Contractor agrees to post in a conspicuous place available to employees and applicants for employment notices setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause. The Contractor shall in all solicitations or advertisements for subcontractors or employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, state that the Contractor is an "Equal Opportunity Employer". (b) The Contractor shall keep such records and submit such reports as allowed by law concerning characteristics of applicants for employment and employees as the IPDC, the State and USDOL may require. (c) The Contractor agrees to comply with such guidelines as the IPDC, the State or USDOL may issue to implement the requirements of WIOA. (d) The Contractor shall designate a person other than its chief executive as its equal employment opportunity officer, who shall be responsible for the Contractor's nondiscrimination policy, monitoring the equal employment opportunity compliance, development of a procedure for investigation of and hearings on equal employment opportunity grievances, dissemination of nondiscrimination policy for the Contractor and evaluation of the Contractor's proposal for adverse EO effects and liaison with the Foothills Regional Commission.** |

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| 1. Attach the Local Area WDB’s current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR 38.35]. |
| * Name document: Foothills EO Complaint and Grievance procedure |

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| 1. Describe the methods used to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated. |
| **The local area will make changes or adjust when policy statements regarding Equal Opportunity are issued by DWS, or there have been policy changes issued by USDOL. Region C is monitored each year and recommendations or corrections will be implemented as a result of the monitoring report. Equal opportunity training is provided annually to WOIA and NCWorks staff to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal policy.** |

1. **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

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| 1. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services. 2. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers. 3. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)] |
| **Direct Customer Service Activities: WIOA case managers in the NC Works centers carry out four critical activities for adults and dislocated workers enrolled in education and training services: assessment; career planning; coordination of supportive services, and job matching, placement, and follow-up.  Conducting Assessments Assessment is a systematic approach to gathering information about the customer’s strengths and assets, needs, and challenges, interests, and goals. This information, in turn, guides the development of the customers’ employment plan and all other case management activities. As such, assessment is considered the foundation of effective case management. Case managers understand and use the various assessments available and are able to interpret the results of multiple assessments, and translate the information obtained through the assessment process into a plan of action. The following guidelines inform the foundation for case managers to conduct productive, high-quality assessments in the center: Case managers use a comprehensive and exploratory approach that involves both informal and formal assessments. Case managers make assessment an ongoing process, allowing multiple opportunities to reassess progress and barriers.   Career Planning Career planning includes analyzing the customer’s skills, interests, and other assessment results, examining current labor market information, and working with the customer to develop an employment plan that includes immediate steps to obtain employment and long-term strategies to advance in the labor market. Specifically, the case manager works in close collaboration with the customer to develop a comprehensive service strategy or action plan. Involving the customer is essential, since assessments can help customers come to a new understanding of their interests and resources, which may affect how they would like to proceed with their employment plans. The case managers inform the customer of available activities, training programs, and other services, so that they can work as partners to develop a mutually agreed-upon service strategy or employment plan.   Case managers work with the customer to develop an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP is the agreement between the customer and case manager about how the customer will progress through benchmarks on the way to meeting his or her goals. IEPs are tailored to the specific needs of the customer, referenced often, and updated regularly to chart and reflect any changes. Case managers work with their customers to develop IEPs that set specific, measurable, obtainable goals and provide reasonable timeframes.   IEP/ISS include the following content:  Goals. The stated goals should reflect what the customer wants to achieve. IEP/ISS goals relate to a specific employment goal, such as obtaining a particular type of job.  Objectives. The specific steps the customer will take to realize a goal.  Services. The services the customer will need to receive to meet objectives.   Case managers use the content from the goals, objectives, and services sections of the IEP/ISS as a roadmap to help the customer achieve employment. When planning a course of action for an IEP/ISS, case managers consider the following:  The customer’s vision. Based on the customer’s current situation, his or her vision is where he or she would like to be after the education, training, or other services are received.  Next steps. These are the actions the customer needs to take at any point in the program or service strategy. This part of the IEP/ISS is dynamic and requires updating as customers complete steps.  Milestones denote when a step in the plan is complete, or an objective has been achieved. They should be specific, measurable, and attainable within a designated timeframe.   Labor market information (LMI) is used to direct the customer toward careers in occupations or industries that are predicted to have relatively high demands for labor in the region. If a customer initially identifies a career path for which there are not likely to be many job opportunities, case managers use LMI to guide the customer to make more forward-thinking decisions about his or her career path, taking into account not only his or her interests and goals, but also the current labor context. The customer’s IEP/ISS reflects the predicted demand for labor in the occupations or industries the customer has targeted.   Linking Customers to Supportive Services The case manager plays an important role in coordinating access to other services that a customer may need to achieve his or her employment objectives. The case manager is knowledgeable about all the workforce programs available at One-Stop Career Centers as well as the support services available from community partners and other agencies. This cross organizational knowledge allows the case manager to link the customer with transportation assistance, childcare assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), financial counseling, and other supportive services that enable all customers to find or maintain employment.   Community connection teams ensure relationships with staff members from human service agencies and community-based organizations and help case managers advocate more effectively for customers which enables them to receive needed support services.   Job Matching, Placement, and Follow-Up Job matching, and placement require knowledge of customer’s skills, interests, and career goals, as well as familiarity with his or her employment plan and access to LMI. As part of the coaching role, case managers provide career planning, review resumes, help the customer develop interviewing skills, and provide links to related services at the area community colleges. The case manager connects the customer to staff Business Services specialists (or job developers) who help with job matching and placement. Case managers maintain frequent contact with the customer after placement and program exit to ensure that he or she is receiving any needed job retention assistance or services.   The Strengths of the Foothills service provision for Adult and Dislocated education and training services include:  Provision through an Integrated Services Delivery System  Partnership/Collaboration by stakeholders (DWS, WDB, Comm. College, Economic Development, K- 12 educational providers, private entities, etc.) to develop efficient methods of service provision  Regularly scheduled and consistent coordination with business sector customers (McDowell Pipeline, etc.) Coordination of services through both a four county (Foothills) and 15 county Future Force Workforce Alliance regional approach to Business and Employer Services to promote consistency in service provision. Commitment and continued promotion of utilization of Career Readiness Certification as well as other applicable employability readiness tools. Development of customized training programs created in collaboration with local business customers and sustained through their leadership and continued involvement. Knowledgeable and experienced staff who are committed to the well-being of both jobseeker and business customers service provision through three certified NC Works Career Centers. Commitment to Pathway specific services through the Advanced Manufacturing Certification Program, Nursing and Allied Health, Energy Sector Occupations, and various short-term training academies. Commitment to collaboration by all Local area partners to obtaining grants and leveraging resources to better enable service provision of eligible business and jobseeker customers, including, but not limited to: Appalachian Regional Council funding, Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, as well as other private and public entities.  Close collaboration with Economic Development Partners to partner and provide a comprehensive menu of services to business customers with regards to workforce training, recruitment, assessment, and skill development for existing employees.  Case Managers review current positions in the customer’s commuting area to ensure a sufficient number of job openings before approving training program.  The weaknesses of the Foothills WDB Adult and DW program of services includes:  a. Limited staff available due to restricted funding, lower allocations, and attrition.  b. Continued promotion of cross training for all ISD related staff as we continue to embrace and utilize Integrated Services Delivery philosophies.  c. Continued reduction in annual allocations Business Services Reps need better connections to case managers so case managers can refer enrolled participants and one-stop customers for placement  d. No follow-up process for customers served in the one-stop center (non-WIOA enrollees)  e. Unclear what to do with customers who are only “dropping in” to one stop to see what companies are hiring and who don’t want or ask for more services.  f. Unclear what to do with customers who need education and training but who won’t follow through with recommendations—need better ways of engagement  g. Some long-term community college curriculum programs that are outdated and don’t match regional workforce needs  h. Traditional community college training timelines of fall, spring, summer semester; need more fast-track training programs  i. Not enough staff in the centers to handle customer loads   Any weaknesses identified will be addressed with a full evaluation of the program’s procedures and processes and determining where the shortfalls are. Were the weaknesses due to unforeseen circumstances or can they be addressed with training and mentoring. Continued monitoring after prescribed training and mentoring to ensure weaknesses are addressed.** |

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| 1. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Section 108(b)(7)] |
| **The FWDB service area currently operates three Tier 1 certified NCWorks Career Services, located in Rutherfordton, Shelby, and Marion. These centers are all fine representations of the collaboration through integrated services delivery between WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded programs. On site partners include the FWDB WIOA contractor, N.C. DWS, local Community College providers (McDowell Tech, Isothermal Community College, and Cleveland Community College), Public education systems (Cleveland County Schools), Private organizations and other applicable organizations as necessary.**  **All WIOA Adult/DW and Youth funded services and programs are mandated by competitive procurement process to be offered through the FWDB NC Works Career Centers. Title I, contracted Service awards are reviewed and awarded by the FWDB, following formal review and recommendation by the board’s procurement advisory committee (consisting of current FWDB members). Once procurement is completed and contracts awarded, the designated Center Manager will provide oversight regarding staff placement in particular functional areas (Welcome, Employment, Skill Development) according to customer need/flow.**  **The FWDB also provides that WIOA funded Youth services for both In School and Out of School students is available through each of the NCWorks Career Centers. Services include, but are not limited to: Intake, Assessment, Career Counseling, Individualized Training Accounts, Support Services, Work based learning (Internships, Work Experiences, On the Job Training, etc.), Job Referral, Job Placement, Educational Attainment related services, and other individualized services necessary to assist Youth participants in obtaining their educational goals and maximizing their employability.**  **The FWDB is committed to the provision of services to all individuals located in the four-county area served by the organization. The entire Foothills Region is rural, so it is essential that the FWDB utilize technology and non-traditional measures to facilitate service provision. The FWDB NCWorks Career Centers utilizes and promotes** [**www.ncworks.gov**](http://www.ncworks.gov) **throughout the service area to ensure that customers have access to the labor exchange and training opportunities contained within the system. Furthermore, the Rutherford NCWorks Career Centers offer satellite location services in Polk County at a minimum of one day per week to facilitate service provision despite the absence of a formal center in that county. Services are provided at the Polk County library to ensure that jobseekers and business customers in our most rural locations can have access to services accordingly. WIOA Title I case managers have established regular schedules at all three community colleges to facilitate access to Title I services, NCWorks On-line registration, and other services provided through the system.**  **The paperless on-line system for intake, enrollment, eligibility documentation, and case management activities has been utilized for a number of years. All required documents are scanned into the NC Works system and activities managed by the responsible individuals with oversight and technical assistance provided by WDB program and monitoring staff.** |
| 1. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs that ensures an arm’s-length relationship between the Local Area WDB and service delivery. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to three years and the current year status of the contract (e.g., two of three years). Identify any serviceprovider contract extensions. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16), CPS 04-2022] |
| **FWDB procurement of Title I WIOA services was conducted during February through May of 2023. The competitive RFP process was utilized. A contract was awarded in May of 2024 to Ross Innovative Employment Solutions for a one-year term with the option for an additional 2 years of extensions. It is intended to extend the current contract with Ross Innovative Employment Solutions for Program Year 2024.** |

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| ***Note:*** *While Final Regulations Section 679.410 (b) and (c) provide exceptions to the competitive procurement process, Local Area WDBs must have an arm’s-length relationship to the delivery of services.* |

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| 1. Attach the Local Area WDB’s Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider list effective July 1, 2024 using the PY 2024 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List provided. |
| * Name document: Foothills Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider List *PY 2024* . |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area WDB’s vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include (a) high level goals, (b) outreach strategies, (c) services delivery, and (d) expected outcomes. |
| **The vision for delivering WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services in Foothills is to better align workforce training and services with education and economic development efforts to provide well-coordinated response to the needs of the regional business, labor market demands, and the needs of the job-seeking customers. The goal is to address identified skills shortages and target specific sectors of concentration. Those sectors through the current certified career pathways that include, but not limited to, advanced manufacturing, nursing and allied health, and the energy sector. Information technology and mission critical operations will also be a focus of training. The Workforce Development Board will continue to improve engagement and collaboration with area business and industry and convene partnerships.   Focused activities will help to increase employment retention and earnings for customers providing recognized credentials improving the quality of the regions workforce, reduce dependency on public assistance, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of area business and industry, and improve the overall regional economy. This will be accomplished by providing access to training opportunities that are relevant to sectors mentioned in the previous paragraph. Opportunities available include long-term training through community colleges or other providers. Short-term training, however, that provides nationally, and locally recognized credential will be a focus in order to address the growing needs of new and expanding industries in the region. These opportunities may be accessed through the various academies (manufacturing, hospitality, allied health, electrical line-worker, medical assisting) that are available in the region. Additionally, industries are becoming increasingly interested in exploring Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.   Outreach will include enhanced collaboration between the NC Works Career Centers, WDB staff, and organizations that have contact individuals that may benefit from career development activities and training that is provided by WIOA. Community organizations include Departments of Social Services, Veterans Services (county level and DWS), Community College financial aid and specific curriculum department meetings, Career and Technical /Secondary Education, Adult Education programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other community-based organizations. Most agencies are represented on the Region’s workforce development partnership committees and other advisory groups. Additional outreach will be conducted though participation in job and career fairs, through mailings and targeted information distributions through social service agencies and the faith community. Individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance will be provided information regarding training opportunities through the EAI and RESEA claim review processes. The WDB has collaborated with 211 ensuring that all information regarding workforce and labor exchange resources are listed for each county in the region. The 2-1-1 three-digit telephone number s easy to remember, that connects people with important community services to meet every day needs and the immediate needs of people in crisis. Media outlets will be utilized to promote access to services. Outreach to business and industry will continue to be conducted through the WDB’s Business Services Liaisons utilizing various advisory groups—McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committees, Rutherford Manufacturing Alliance, chambers of commerce, and county-based human resource organizations.** |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area WDB’s method for ensuring that a sufficient number of adults receiving individualized career and training services in the Local Area are from one of the following priority of services categories: public assistance, low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. [134(c)(3)(E), 3(24)] |
| **Service providers are required to target those individuals that meet the categories in the Foothills WDB’s Priority of Service list. Those individuals include public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and individuals with basic skills deficiencies. Recruitment efforts are targeted to those populations through the local Departments of Social Services, community-based organizations, and the community colleges’ basic skills programs.** |

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| 1. Describe follow-up services provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)] |
| **Job Matching, Placement, and Follow-Up Job matching, and placement require knowledge of the customer’s skills, interests, and career goals, as well as familiarity with his or her employment plan and access to labor market information. As part of the coaching role, case managers provide career planning, review resumes, help the customer develop interviewing skills, and provide links to related services at the area community colleges. The case manager connects the customer to staff Business Services specialists (or job developers) who help with job matching and placement. Case managers maintain frequent contact with the customer after placement and program exit to ensure that he or she is receiving any needed job retention/support services. Follow-up contacts are made once a quarter or more frequently if needed for a period of 12 months after exit from WIOA services.** |

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| *Per Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16 and Section 134(C)(2)(A), funds described shall be used to provide career services, which shall be available to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the one-stop delivery system and shall, at a minimum, include - (xiii) follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce investment activities authorized under this subtitle who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.* |
| 1. Please describe the process for monitoring the service provider(s) in the Local Area WDB. Include details such as how it is conducted, who is involved, and how often. |
| **The FWDB staff conducts an official programmatic monitoring review of the service providers once a year to ensure that services comply with contractual agreements, board policies, and WIOA regulations. This review may be conducted in-person, or virtually. Some monitoring activities occur monthly through desk reviews. The desk review consists of the WIOA Title I Contract service provider invoices and NCWorks Online reports. Technical assistance is given throughout the year as needed. Fiscal monitoring is also conducted for the contractor’s financial staff, the Local Area Director, and the administrative entities’ Finance Director. Finance records are reviewed with backup documentation compared to submitted invoices, accounting practices reviewed, and compliance with local, state, and federal requirements.** |

1. **Youth Services**

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| *USDOL provides funds to states who in turn provide local workforce areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting out-of-school youth and in-school youth with one or more barriers to employment, prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. USDOL and North Carolina’s priorities are:*   * *Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – A minimum of 75% of the Youth funds allocated to Local Area WDBs, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide services to OSY;* * *Work Experience – Not less than 20% of Youth funds allocated to the Local Area WDB, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide paid and unpaid work experiences; and a* * *Focus on Partnering – Co-enrollment encouraged where appropriate with Title II and IV.* |

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| 1. Provide a general overview of the local current total population (within five years) of the Title I WIOA eligible youth by Local Workforce Development Board area. Include the following general information:   **In-School Youth Analysis**   1. Approximately, what number of the Youth are ages 14-21? 2. Approximately, what percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)? 3. Approximately, what number of these Youth are in the current school dropout statistics?     **Out-of-School Analysis**   1. Approximately what number of Youth ages 16-24 of the current total population (within five years) make up the population? 2. Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population? 3. What are the general educational levels of this age group? 4. What is the general employment status of this age group? |
| The Foothills Workforce Board general overview of the local current total population for the Title I eligible Youth in our region consisting of Cleveland, McDowel, Polk and Rutherford counties is below:  In-School Youth Analysis: A. There were nine (9) Youth, ages 14-21 years old, who were attending school, according to NCWorks. B. Approximately 100% of In-School Youth, ages 14-21, are low income. C. According to myFutureNC, in 2023, and 2% of students drop out of high school (240 total students), compared to 2% statewide.   Out-of-School Analysis according to myFutureNC, NC Workforce Service Delivery Outcome Dashboard, and NCWorks:  A. Approximately twenty-four (24) Youth, ages 16-24 years old, not attending school. B. A total of 8.6% of Out-Of-School Youth range from ages 16-24 years old.  C. The general educational levels of this age group are Adult Basic Education, Post-Secondary and Occupational Skills, and Pre-Vocational Skills.  d. The general employment status of this age group is 79% |

*\*NC Division of Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) is a data resource.*

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| 1. Based on the analysis in question 1, does the local Workforce Development Board plan to  serve In-School Youth? |
| **YES. Currently, the Foothills Workforce Development Board is serving ISY with a growing number of participants across the four counties. During PY23 the new provider reinstated pipeline for high school students to participate in the program to assist with credential completion and offering work-based learning activities**. |

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| 1. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area WDB, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities being used and/or planned. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(9)] | | | |
| **Youth Workforce Activity** | **Activities For Persons with Disabilities?** | **Brief Assessment/Model Used** | **Success Rating** |
| **Work Based Learning** | **Yes** | **Job Shadow, Work Experience** | **95%** |
| **Financial Literacy** | **Yes** | **Workshops, One-on-Ones, and Mynextmove.org** | **100%** |
| **Short Term Trainings** | **Yes** | **Community College and other private training providers.** | **60.1%** |
| **HS Equivalency** | **YES** | **Community College ABE** | **80%** |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB’s Young Adult (NextGen) Program design is unique to include: 2. providing objective assessments; 3. supportive services needed; and 4. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)] |
| 1. **Comprehensive youth services are provided, and each youth participant receives an objective assessment and an individual service strategy. The objective is to prepare them for completion of secondary education, post-secondary education and training, and employment. Assessments will identify a participant’s current skills and abilities, educational level, environmental factors, identify potential for justice involvement and other potential barriers to employment. A services will be designed to and referrals make based on the factors identified in the objective assessment. b. Supportive Services needed; The Foothills WDB and core partners will facilitate the training and support services for eligible youth and young adults particularly those with barriers to employment by the collaboration with human service agencies that include the Department of Social Services, United Way-funded activities, Vocational Rehabilitation, public health clinics and departments and others associated with providing services to these target groups. Parenting youth may need assistance with childcare or transportation to training. Other supportive services may be provided consistent with the Local Workforce Area Supportive policy.  c. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)]  Consistent with the youth participants’ ISS/IEP and the results of objective assessment, interest inventories, career pathways will be identified that meets their needs. Labor market analysis will be conducted to identify in-demand Page 51 North Carolina Modification for Local Workforce Area Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plan sectors and programs. Further skills assessments and matching will be used to identify gaps where training is needed. The Foothills WDB developed 3 Certified Career Pathways Initiative Advanced Manufacturing, Nursing/Allied Health, and Energy Sector Occupations.** |

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| 1. How does the Local Area WDB ensure the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) identifies appropriate services based on the objective assessment and is linked to youth performance indicators, career pathways, and program elements? [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(B)] How does the provider ensure the ISS is unique to the individual? |
| **The ISS is developed, and updated as needed, based on the needs of each youth participant. The ISS directly link the performance objectives for the program, identify career pathways that include education and employment goals, career planning and the results of the objective assessment and prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant. The ISS will identify, through the assessment, strengths, challenges, and services to be provided. Goals established may include educational goas, occupational/employment goals, and personal goals. All goals will be linked to performance indicators, i.e. credentials, earnings, employment retention, and skills gain when applicable The ISS will identify elements need to achieve the goals such as tutoring, alternative educational needs, employment preparation activities such as paid or unpaid work experience, job shadowing, OJT, long-term- or short-term occupational training etc. Supportive services needs will also be a component of the ISS.** |

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| 1. Describe the Local Area WDB’s strategy to ensure Youth (NextGen) Program activities lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent or a recognized post-secondary credential and post-secondary education and training opportunities. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)] |
| **The Foothills Local Area does provide incentives to eligible youth for recognition and achievement. Incentives provide a means to recognize and reward an active youth’s success while participating in WIOA youth services or incentive to obtain credential in follow up. In addition to incentives, a heavy focus is placed on building rapport, open communication, and follow-ups. to enter text.  Strong partnerships with Adult Basic Ed, ELL services, and employers lead to successful completion through a community-based approach for every high school dropout. Work Experience is leveraged to incentivize students to obtain their High School Equivalent in order to progress to additional workforce-based activities within the program** |

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| 1. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for (NextGen) youth. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)] |
| The new Future Works online system, supplemented by NCWORKS Online MIS system, for tracking performance will be a key component for tracking all measures for WIOA Youth performance for individuals enrolled in services. Additionally, the U/I screen is utilized to assist in tracking entered employment rates and earnings in conjunction with good case management and follow-up practices utilizing individual case manager’s internal data tracking tools. Retention will be addressed as needed through the case management and follow-up process. The individual case managers are responsible for providing follow-up services for 12 months following exit with oversight and technical assistance provided by WDB staff. Follow-up contacts are made on a quarterly basis or more frequently if required. Follow-up services may include:  • Leadership development and supportive service activities;  • Regular contact with a youth participant’s employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise;  • Assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development and further education;  • Work-related peer support groups;  • Adult mentoring; and  • Services necessary to ensure the success of a youth in employment and/or postsecondary education. |

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| ***Note:*** *All youth participants must receive some form of follow-up for a minimum duration of 12 months.* |

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| 1. Where does the Local Area WDB plan to serve the young adults (NextGen): NCWorks Career Centers Specialized Centers, Services Provider Offices, or Hybrid situations? Explain if it is both NCWorks Career Centers and Provider Offices or some other option. |
| **NEXTGEN clients will be served in NCWorks Career Centers and touch points around the region. NEXTGEN staff are placed at NCWorks Career Centers for any opportunity youth that may come into the center. NCWorks Career Centers provide a recognized space for NEXTGEN staff to be housed so that the community can tether Career Advisors to a particular office. Staff are also involved in the public-school systems and hold some type of office hours at almost every high school in the region. This allows students that need services and have schedule and transportation limitations, to have access to NEXTGEN and NCWorks services. NEXTGEN are also equipped to be at any touchpoint that is convenient for the population. Other touchpoints include nonprofits, colleges, DSS, and other community partners.** |

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| 1. Attach the Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider’s chart, effective July 1, 2024, using the PY 2024 Youth Service Provider List provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. |
| * Name the document: *PY 2024* *Foothills WDB Youth Service Provider List*. |

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| 1. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs that ensures an arm’s-length relationship between the Local Area WDB and service delivery. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to three years and the current year status of the contract (e.g., two of three years). Identify any serviceprovider contract extensions. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16), CPS 04-2022] |
| **The competitive process for PY2023 began in February of 2023 with the release of Requests for Proposals and will be finalized on May 7, 2023.** |

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| *USDOL granted North Carolina a waiver for Program Years 2022 and 2023, which reduced the minimum Title I Youth expenditure rate requirement for OSY from 75% to 50% and allowed the maximum expenditure rate for in-school youth (ISY) to be increased from 25% to up to 50%. NC is requesting the same waiver for Program Year 2024.* |

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| 1. Provide the Local Area WDB’s approach to meeting the required 75% minimum (NextGen) youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design. 2. State how the WDB will achieve the 75% OSY expenditure rate and describe the steps that will be taken to comply with the WDB's programmatic goals and outcomes. 3. Describe why there is a need to serve additional ISY in the local area region and state how the WDB will achieve the 25% ISY expenditure rate. 4. Describe how the local area region will be able to meet the demand for youth services by using the waiver.   [WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)] (CPS 09-2021, Change 1) (OG 07-2022, Change 1) |
| 1. **NEXTGEN will offer scholarship, supportive services, and work-based learning opportunities to OSY populations in order to meet the 75% goal. Serving high schools and ISY will automatically generate OSY services, due to working with early graduates and other high school graduates that need to connect to post-secondary services immediately after high school. NEXTGEN will also focus on GED and AHS students to ensure that Title II recovery services are supported and NEXTGEN students are incentivized to obtain their equivalent.  b.) ISY are a crucial part of services for NEXTGEN as they are a captured population that needs additional resources to connect to workforce opportunities. Work based learning opportunities will be afforded to these students, in partnership with CTE program in the public schools.  c. N/A** |

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| 1. How does the Local Area WDB ensure that the minimum of 20% of funds is spent on work experience and is the Local Area WDB expending the 20% minimum on work experience, to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth? If the Local Area WDB has not been meeting the minimum of 20% of funds, please explain additional measures to be taken this year. [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)] (CPS 09-2021, Change 1) |
| **The staff are ensuring that staff time is allocated to the 20% work experience funds. Work Experience placements are expected each month and supportive services are added to work experience opportunities to ensure the 20% is being appropriately reached. FWDB staff will work closely with the youth services provider and continuously monitor monthly to ensure the program is maintained at the minimum 20% work experience funds. If requirements are not met, youth services will be scrutinized further to determine if there is an opportunity to increase funding of work experience** |

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| 1. Does the Local Area WDB have a dedicated full-time Youth Business Services Representative (or similar title) at the Local Area WDB level or at the Provider level. If so, state at which level, how many representatives, and how this impacts the Youth Program Design? |
| **All staff act as ambassadors for youth business services. Staff coordinate and maintain relationship with the businesses that host their respective student.** |

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| 1. Does the Local Area WDB have special programs for young adults that are Justice-Involved or have a substance use disorder? If yes, please briefly describe them. |
| **Recently, we have partnered with juvenile justice system, to best served justice involved youths.** |

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| 1. Describe how the Local Area WDB partners, aligns, and leverages, as appropriate with: 2. Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies. 3. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies. 4. Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as Local Area WDB’s and the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15] |
| **a. Adult Education and Literacy programs are currently co-located at two of Foothill’s and NCWorks Career Centers. Adult basic skills and GED programs are provided directly through them. Adult high school, GED, and Adult Education programs are accessed on the campuses of Cleveland and Isothermal Community Colleges. Each student participating in any Adult Ed. and Literacy activities will be enrolled in the NC Works labor exchange system.  b. Referrals of individuals with disabilities are facilitated by the part-time presence of the Vocational Rehabilitation representatives at the centers and referral process within the integrated service model. Sharing of resources for individuals that are in training has been a common practice over the years. Facility and technological accommodations are available at the centers or arrangements are made to facilitate services. Also, information about resources that are available nation-wide for customers with disabilities is available at: https://www.usa.gov/disability-services This information is made available to center staff and customers.  c. FWDB has had a long-term relationship with the Adult High School and GED programs through activities related to the rapid response process, providing high school diplomas/GEDs for dislocated workers where appropriate. Adult Education representatives are members of the local rapid response teams and participant in the management meetings and affected worker orientations sessions. Additionally, these services have been a critical component of the WIOA Out-of-School Youth programs providing academic enrichment and secondary education certificates to those participants.   Local Area WDB staff provides consultation and input on the local Adult Education and Literacy and Career and Technical Education (Carl D. Perkins) plans that are submitted by the respective agencies administering those services community colleges and public-school systems Basic Skills Plus program offering transitions and career pathway support to students preparing for entry into employment and postsecondary education programs. Career pathways that are offered by the local college must align with demonstrated demand for employment in local and regional labor markets, offer integrated instruction, and student support. Adult Education programs collaborate with the Foothills Workforce Development Board in the development of the local career pathways offered. The Foothills WDB serves as the Advisory Committee for the Career and Technical Education Programs for Cleveland, McDowell, and Polk County Schools.** |

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| 1. Specify if the Local Area WDB plans to offer incentives for (NextGen) youth. If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy, which should include: 2. criteria to be used to award incentives; 3. type(s) of incentive awards to be made available; 4. whether WIOA funds will be used; and 5. the Local Area WDB’s internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards. |
| * Name document: *Foothills WDB Youth Incentive Policy.* |

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| ***Note:*** *Federal funds may not be spent on entertainment costs. Youth Incentive Policies should include: compliance with the Cost Principles in 2 CFR part 200; identify types of items that may be awarded (gift cards, plaques, certificates, checks); identify types of achievements/completion of activities (an inclusive list is required); practices for internal controls for safeguarding incentives, and provide a sample list of required documentation for reimbursement (diploma, evaluations).* |

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| 1. If the Local Area WDB does not offer incentives for (NextGen) youth, please explain why. |
| **N/A** |

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| 1. Describe the local strategy to prepare the youth (NextGen) for unsubsidized employment, including with small employers, specifically those that include in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and/or regional labor markets. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)(v)] |
| **It is a requirement that all WIOA Youth participants are enrolled in either high school equivalency education or post-secondary education or training. Work-based learning is provided either concurrently or sequentially. Enrollment in the work-based learning component is contingent upon progress being made on achieving the educational goals.   As previously described, both short-term and long-term educational goals may be established. Strategies to improve educational achievement include:   • Tutoring, study skills, training, and instruction  • Alternative secondary school offerings  • and activities that help youth prepare for transition to post-secondary education and training or employment** |

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| 1. Please complete the Youth Program Elements chart provided to demonstrate how the Local Area WDB ensures each of the 14 youth program elements is made available to youth participants. Be certain to complete both columns of the chart to demonstrate partnerships and potential use of shared funding. Please specify partners. [WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(A)] |
| * Name document: *Foothills WDB Youth Program Elements Chart.* |

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| 1. Does the Local Area WDB have a standing committee to provide information to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)] |
| 1. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided. |
| **Oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the youth services are handled by the Foothills WDB as a whole.** |
| 1. If yes, please provide a response to the following |
| 1. Provide the committee’s purpose/vision. |
| **NA** |
| 1. Provide the youth committee’s top three goals or objectives for PY 2024. |
| **NA** |
| **NA** |
| **NA** |
| 1. Provide a list of youth committee members to include members’ agency/organization, one of which must be a community-based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. Provide the Committee’s Chair information in the first block (*who must be a Local Area WDB member*). |
| * Name document: *Local Area WDB Name Youth Committee Members* [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)] |
| 1. Complete the following chart for the PY 2024 Youth Committee’s planned meeting schedule to include dates, time, and location. (Expand form as needed or mark Not Applicable.) |

| **Date** | **Time** | **Location (include address and room #)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NA** | **NA** | **NA** |
| **NA** | **NA** | **NA** |
| **NA** | **NA** | **NA** |

1. **Local Area WDB Innovations**

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| 1. List all additional funding received by the Local Area WDB (for example, to include but not limited to, special grants, NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants, Business Services funds, National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) (disaster), YouthBuild, Foundations, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD), NCWorks Commission Local Innovation Fund Grant, and/or outside funding to include a brief description of the source and the amount received). |

| **Grant Name/Kind** | **Brief Description** | **Beginning and End date** | **Source and Amount** | **Partner Organization (if applicable)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Foothills Forward** | **Recruit and serve economically disadvantaged individuals, providing institutional training to include English Second Language, high school equivalency, and career training.** | **07/01/2019 to 12/31/2022 01/01/2022 to 12/31/2024** | **US DOL Workforce Opportunities in Rural Communities (WORC) program** | **McDowell Technical Community College, Isothermal Community College, Centro Unido Latino Americano (CULA)** |
| **Business Services Funding for Industry Sector Partnerships Planning Grant** | **To provide planning grant funding for collaboration between local partners and industry partners.** | **March 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024** | **DWS $35,000** | **Industry Partners** |
| **Business Services Virtual Reality Grant** | **To purchase Virtual Realty headset and training modules. These training modules may be used in the career centers for soft skills training as well as providing job descriptions.** | **February 1, 2024- Jun 30, 2024.** | **DWS $5,000.00** | **N/A** |

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| 1. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising **Adult/Dislocated Worker** program practice that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective. |
| **Some of the best practices include: Provision through an Integrated Services Delivery System Partnership/Collaboration by stakeholders (DWS, WDB, Comm. College, Economic Development, K-12 educational providers, private entities, etc.) to develop efficient methods of service provision Regularly scheduled and consistent coordination with business sector customers (McDowell Pipeline, Foothills Manufacturing Alliance, and Cleveland County Sector Partnership) Coordination of services through both a four county (Foothills) and 15 county Future Force Workforce Alliance region. Regional approach to Business and Employer Services to promote consistency in service provision and promotion and management of Work-based Learning specifically On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker programs Service provision through three certified NC Works Career Centers Commitment to Career Pathway specific services through the Advanced Manufacturing Certification Program, Nursing and Allied Health, Energy Sector Occupations, and various short-term training academies Commitment to collaboration by all Local area partners to obtaining grants and leveraging resources to better enable service provision of eligible business and jobseeker customers, including, but not limited to: Appalachian Regional Council funding, Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, as well as other private and public entities. Close collaboration with Economic Development Partners to partner and provide a comprehensive menu of services to business customers with regards to workforce training, recruitment, assessment, and skill development for existing employees.** |

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| 1. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising **Youth** program practice that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective. |
| **The Making it Work Engineering and Manufacturing Fair is a collaboration between manufacturing firms, Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership (CCEDP), Cleveland Community College, Career and Technical Education programs in Cleveland County and Rutherford Counties, and the Foothills WDB. (See photos in Section II element 4.) The Making It Work Event promotes careers in manufacturing and engineering. The event is for high school students and began in 2015. Making it Work has expanded each year. It showcases local industry with displays, demonstrations, and on-on-one discussions with students. Regional post- Page 60 North Carolina Modification for Local Workforce Area Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plan secondary educational institutions participate providing information regarding engineering-related curricula. NC State.** |

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| 1. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising **regional strategy** that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective. |
| **The McDowell Workforce Pipeline Committee, designed and overseen by the Foothills WDB, has been a model of public/private engagement for the entire State, and has received a Governor’s Award of Excellence. The Pipeline Committee brings together the leading manufacturing companies in McDowell County monthly and allows the industry to direct and lead the meetings, resulting in industry-oriented solutions to issues identified by these companies. The WDB and other regional service partners are in attendance to listen to the companies and assist them with programs and projects that are developed because of the discussions at the Pipeline Committee. To date this concept has yielded several positive results, including an enhanced McDowell-centric workforce pipeline that stretches from 8th grade to postsecondary and into the workplace. In fall 2017, representatives from the McDowell Economic Development Association (MEDA) and the Foothills Workforce Development Board met to discuss the employment needs of McDowell County. MEDA serves as the economic development organization for McDowell County and engages regularly with existing industry partners in the county, as well as working with industry clients looking to move to McDowell County. The Foothills WDB represents the counties of McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Cleveland, and works to meet the employment and training needs of both industry and the local workforce. By the fall of 2017, McDowell County was experiencing an employment crisis, resulting from record low unemployment numbers coupled with continued high industry demand for workers. With existing employers seeking to expand operations and new business expressing interest in the county, MEDA, and the Foothills WDB determined that it was vital to obtain or develop a more in-depth understanding and analysis of the existing McDowell County workforce. Strategic Employment Plan for McDowell County--link here. Page 61 North Carolina Modification for Local Workforce Area Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plan As a founding participant in the regional NextGen Western Region Partnership, we have made sure that the right business leaders are at the table. C-Suite level participants not only have a voice at the table, but it is left to them as regional executives to define the problems and create the solutions. While we have an observer role, we are pleased that they are working on five workforce issues that they collaboratively defined.  Following the same type of model, two sector partnership have been established, one on the campus of Isothermal community college and the other in Cleveland County. The Foothills Manufacturing Alliance and the yet to be named Cleveland County Sector Partnership takes all the lessons we’ve learned from the success of the McDowell Workforce Pipeline and establishes a much-needed partnership of industry partners, support agencies and workforce teams from Cleveland, Rutherford and Polk counties.** |

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| 1. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising **virtual services strategy** that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective. |
| **Due to pandemic restrictions, the FWDB like many other entities have learned to adapt to virtual platforms for communication, meetings, workshops, and events. The FWDB has used social media platforms as a means of dispersing information, advertising hiring events, and spotlighting success stories. On several occasions, the FWDB has used virtual platforms to conduct virtual hiring events to varying success. The Workforce Board recently purchased virtual reality goggles to enhance real life work experience for job seekers and potential training careers. These tools are still being readily utilized in our day-to-day activities, serving our population.** |

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| 1. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s innovative **business services strategies** and engagement practices that demonstrated employers taking charge and driving the agenda that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective. |
| **FWDB has focused heavily on partnering with local and regional support agencies in an effort to collaborate and streamline services provided to local businesses. Instead of inundating businesses with a long list of services, each agency communicates with other supporting agencies when a need arises that can be resolved. In Rutherford County, we have Business Advancement Team that supports the Foothills manufacturing alliance and communicate through a shared spreadsheet where various support agencies can list their engagements with local businesses and their needs.** |

1. **Program Year 2024 Local Area WDB Plan Required Policy Attachments**

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| 1. The following policies are *required* to be attached as separate documents in WISE as part of the PY 2024 Local Area Plan. The Local Area Plan is not complete without these documents. |
| * Name Each Document: *Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name.* |

* In the first column, state if the policy is attached or why it is missing and when it can be expected. If two of the policies have been combined, please make a notation.
* In the second column mark “Yes” ***only*** if the policy has been changed/revised for the PY 2024 Plan and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
* Revised policies should be submitted with a highlight or summary of the changes made to the local policy.
* Do not add an empty document in WISE as a “placeholder”.

| **Required Local Area WDB Policies** | **Attached (Yes/No).**  **If no, why?** | **Revised for PY 2024 (Yes/No) and needs review** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Competitive Procurement Policy | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Conflict of Interest Policy | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Individualized Training Account Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. On-the-Job Training Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Priority of Service Policy | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Youth Work Experience Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Supportive Services Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Eligible Training Provider Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| 1. Non-Criminal Complaint Procedures | **Yes** | **No** |

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| 1. Designate whether the following local *Optional Policy* is included and used at the Local Area WDB and is included in the Local Area Plan or write “N/A” implying “Not Applicable”, if the Local Area WDB does not have this policy and; therefore, does not use these services. |

In the second column mark “Yes” ***only*** if the policy has been changed for PY 2024 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.

* Do not add a blank document in WISE as a “placeholder”.
* These policies are required to operate/offer these services
* If “Yes”, load the policy as a separate document.
* Name document: *Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name*. (Example: IWT Policy – Yes. Attached as *Board Name IWT Policy*.)

| **Optional Local Area WDB Policies** | **Yes- the Local Area WDB has a policy or N/A**  **(Not Applicable)** | **Revised for PY 2024 (Add Yes or N/A for this column)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Local Area WDB Guidance for Local Incumbent Worker Grants | **Yes** | **N/A** |
| 1. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| 1. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| 1. Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy | **Yes** | **Yes** |

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| 1. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are required [Regulations Section 680.300] to pay the cost of training provided with Adult and Dislocated Worker funds and limitations on duration and amount may be included [Regulations Section 680.320]. Please provide the following ITA elements in summary: |

| **Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary** | |
| --- | --- |
| Dollar Amounts | **$4,600 annually, $9,2300 for 2-year program** |
| Time Limits | **2 years** |
| Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor’s, other) | **Certificates (CNAs, CDL-A, EMS, BLET, etc.,) Associates, Bachelor’s Degree** |
| Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed | **Case managers may request that WIOA funds be used to cover a portion of transportation and childcare expenses where the approved Pell Grant amount is based on estimated personal resources that are no longer available to the applicant, and where funds to cover these expenses are not available from other sources (e.g., DSS). The WIOA review committee must approve the use of WIOA funds for these types of expenses.** |
| Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short-term, etc.) | **Generally issued by semester, however it depends on the student and program. Short-term programs can be issued in one lump sum.** |
| Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.) | **Program fees, Books, and Supplies needed for attendance in the approved programs such as uniforms and tools.** |
| Other | Click here to enter text. |

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| 1. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)] |
| **The FWDB has identified steps that ultimately lead to Training Services, when applicable. The Steps are as follows: Center Orientation / Initial Assessment / Enrollment – Wagner-Peyser Title III Application/Data Validation – WIOA Title I Enrollment – WIOA Title I Objective Assessment(s) Individual Employment Plan (IEP) Development Service Delivery Customer Exit Follow-Up Staff also utilize tools such as , NC Careers, O\*NET, TABE, NCWorks Assessments, data from Lightcast etc. to assist in skill assessments. Assessments results in English proficiency, aptitudes, Determination for Training Services may be generally explored at any point. The individual employment plan is developed with the customer, with guidance/counseling from NCWorks and/or WIOA contractor staff and the exploration of training services is considered . Objective Assessment(s) utilizes the NCWorks Objective Assessment (OA), that may include information from Lightcast, and NCCareers.org, O-Net, and other assessments to comprehensively evaluate customers’ existing employment history, experience, education, and occupational barriers. Objective Assessment(s) also focuses on analyzing local / regional labor market information (LMI) and comparing data to the desired career pathway choices of the customer. The identification of skills, abilities, gaps in skills, and what supportive services may be needed by the customer to successfully complete training. Following the compiling and evaluation of all the data Objective Assessment(s), NCWorks/contractor staff will review (Staff) individual cases with the leadership team prior to the assignment to training. The staffing/review allows leadership to confirm the training request aligns with local / regional labor market information (LMI) and that appropriate funding is available to support training services. Once completed and the training service is approved by the leadership, case management staff move forward with completing an Ongoing Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and assign the appropriate WIOA services per the individuals plan. Training programs and services must lead to industry recognized credentials and in-demand careers. Also, training programs/services must also be listed in NCWorks Online, be on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and be locally approved. Informed customer choice is of primary consideration when assigning or recommending training services. Customer choice will be ensured through a consistent counseling process and utilization of the approved training provider list, information available on NCWorks, and through the development of the individual employment plan.** |

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| 1. Please specify the supportive services provided by the Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy. List specific items under Supplies, Emergency, and Other, as identified in the Local Area WDB policy. (Expand form as needed.) |

| **Transportation** | **Childcare** | **Supplies**  *(include examples)* | **Emergency**  *(include examples)* | **Other**  *(include examples)* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **To and from school.** | **Yes, during school hours.** | **Uniforms, tools, required PPE, anything required as part of the curriculum.** | **Utility bill, car repair, rent, Items that prevent student from completing the program.** | Click here to enter text. |
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. |
| Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. | Click here to enter text. |

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| ***Note:*** *The Local Area WDB must adequately safeguard all forms of supportive services payments (i.e., gas cards, cash, gift cards, etc.) and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes. The Supportive Services Policy must include the Local Area WDB’s internal controls to safeguard supportive services. The internal controls must address issuance, storage, and reconciliation of supportive services throughout the area and be clearly stated within the policy.* |

**Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions**

Local Area WDB Signed copy of Consortium Agreement (if applicable)

Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Organizational Chart

Local Area WDB Board Members (*form* *provided*)

Local Area WDB By-Laws

Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements Crosswalk (*form provided)*

Local Area WDB Organizational Chart

Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Certification Regarding Debarment\* (*form provided*)

Local Area WDB Workforce Development Area Signatory Form\* (*form provided*)

Local Area WDB NCWorks Career Centers (*form* *provided*)

Local Area WDB Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider (*form* *provided*)

Local Area WDB Eligible Training Provider Policy

Local Area WDB 14 Youth Program Elements Chart (*form provided*)

Local Area WDB Youth Committee Meeting Schedule (*optional*)

Local Area WDB Youth Committee Members (*optional*)

Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider (*form* *provided*)

Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy *(optional)*

Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy (*required*)

Local Area Adult/Dislocated Worker Work Experience Policy

Competitive Procurement Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy

Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures

Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I

Local Area WDB Individualized Training Account Policy

On-the-Job Training Policy

Local Area WDB Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool, and Schedule

Priority of Service Policy

Youth Work Experience Policy

Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy

Local Area WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy *(optional)*

Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy *(optional)*

Non-Criminal Complaint Procedures

Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy *(optional)*

Memorandum of Understanding

Customer Flow Chart

\*Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned DWS Planner at:

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions

313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120

4316 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

DocuSign® (or similar) signature pages may be uploaded in WISE.

**Appendices**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| NC Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements | [Appendix A](#Appendix_A) |
| By-Laws Guidance | [Appendix B](#Appendix_B) |
| Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means | [Appendix C](#Appendix_C) |
| Local Area WDB Membership Requirements | [Appendix D](#Appendix_D) |

At a minimum the Local Area WDB by-laws must include the following items for DWS approval. When submitting the Local Area WDB by-laws, please specify the section (provide a clear crosswalk) where the following required elements are located within the submitted by-laws.

**Elements 1-7 are the *required* elements designated at WIOA Final Rule 679.310(g).**

1. The nomination process used by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) to elect the Local Area Board Chair and members.
2. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year.
3. The process to notify the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) of a Board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee within ninety (90) days of the vacancy.
4. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a Board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements of 20 CFR 679.110(d)(4).
5. The use of technology such as phone and web-based meetings, that will be used to promote Board member participation (20 CFR 679.110(d)(5)).
6. The process to ensure Board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system’s stakeholders, brokering relationship with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities.
7. A description of any other conditions governing appointment or membership on the Board as deemed appropriate by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs); (20 CFR 679.310(g)(1-7)).

**North Carolina specific requirements that must be specified within the by-laws:**

1. The adopted generally accepted parliamentary procedure, such as Robert’s Rules of Order, chosen by the Board.
2. Whether an appointee filling a vacancy will serve the remainder of the unexpired term or be appointed for a new full term.
3. The Board’s policy assuring attendance and participation of its members.
4. Quorum requirements to be not less than 51% constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions.
5. Any standing committees the Board has established shall be included in the by-laws.
6. The Board’s conflict of interest policy, which may not be any less stringent than the requirements of the DWS’s Policy, shall be referenced in the by-laws.
7. The process the Board will take when expedient action is warranted between Board meetings, such as calling a special meeting or allowing the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Board.
8. Board meetings will be held in accessible facilities with accessible materials available upon prior request.
9. The Board will meet no less than four times per program year.

*This template is provided for guidance purposes only. It contains sample language that may be used in by-laws development. It is not required that Boards utilize this template or language within. This template reflects multiple counties within a Consortium. Single-county Boards and non-Consortia will need to adjust their by-laws accordingly.*

**Article 1**

**Name and Purpose**

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the **Click Here to Enter WDB Name. Board** (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”).

Section 2. Purpose and Responsibilities

The purpose for which the Board is organized is to perform all functions of a WDB and Local Workforce Development Area as set forth in the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (“WIOA”), or the corresponding provision of any applicable federal or state laws of related purpose and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, and Section 143B-438.11 of the North Carolina General Statutes and to perform such functions with the **Click Here to Enter WDB Name.** **WDB**.

The Board services area shall encompass the counties of **Click Here to Enter WDB Name.**.

The Board responsibilities shall include:

1. Develop and submit Local Area Plan annually to the Governor, a comprehensive 4-year Local Area Plan, in partnership with the Chief Local Elected Official.
2. Perform workforce research and regional market analysis.
3. Convene local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the Local Area Plan and identify non-federal expertise and resources to leverage support for workforce development activities.
4. Lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and with entities in the region involved.
5. Lead efforts with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs in the Local Area to develop and implement career pathways within the Local Area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers.
6. Lead efforts in the Local Area to identify proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, and workers and jobseekers in the local workforce system, and to identify and disseminate information on promising practices carried out in other local areas.
7. Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, workers, and jobseekers.
8. Conduct program oversight.
9. Negotiate and reach agreement on local performance accountability measures.
10. Designate or certify one-stop operators, contractors, and service providers and, in appropriate circumstances, terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators.
11. Coordinate activities with education and training providers in the local area.
12. Develop a budget for the activities of the Local Area WDB consistent with the Local Area Plan and the duties of the Local Area Board and subject to the approval of the Chief Local Elected Official.
13. Annually review the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of all one-stop centers, as well as locations for contractors and service providers, in the local area, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

**Article 2**

**Board Members**

Section 1. Appointment

There shall be a Board of no more than **Click Here to Enter Number.** Board members. Members of this organization shall be appointed by the following procedure: The Chief Local Elected Official (of the **Click Here to Enter Name.** County Board of Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as the CLEO) shall appoint members based on nominations from the following: local business organizations; local education agencies; vocational education institutions, community-based organizations, and higher educational institutions; and private and proprietary schools; state or local labor organizations and other interested organizations.

The number of business sector nominees shall be at least 51% of the number of individuals to be appointed and are appointed from amongst individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations. The nominated candidate or company must be a member of the nominating organization. A majority of the Members shall be representatives of businesses in the local area (including small businesses or organizations representing businesses that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area) and are owners, chief executives or operating officers, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. The members of the local Board shall represent diverse geographic areas within the local area.

Section 2. Composition

Organized Labor and Community Based Organizations:Not less than 20% of the Members shall be representatives of the workforce within the local area, who:

1. shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by local labor federations, or other representatives of employees;
2. shall include a representative, who shall be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such program exists in the area, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the area, if such a program exists.
3. may include representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and
4. may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth;

Education and training activities:The Board shall include representatives of entities administering education and training activities in the local area, who:

1. shall include a representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II of the WIOA;
2. shall include a representative of institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities (including community colleges);
3. may include representatives of local educational agencies, and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to training;

The Board shall include representatives of governmental and economic and community development entities serving the local area, who:

1. shall include a representative of economic and community development entities;
2. shall include an appropriate representative from the State Employment Service Office under the Wagner-Peyser Act serving the local area;
3. shall include an appropriate representative of the programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, serving the local area;

1. may include representatives of agencies or entities administering programs serving the local area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance, and
2. may include representatives of philanthropic organizations serving the local area; and

This Board may include such other individuals or representatives of entities as the Chief Local Elected Official determines appropriate.

Section 3. Tenure

All appointments will be for a two-year term to expire on June 30 of each respective term. No member shall serve more than three consecutive terms (6 years) or a total of five terms (10 years) in any one appointed position. An individual whose initial appointment is to fill an unexpired term or an initial staggered term of less than two years, shall be eligible to serve the number of full-length terms other members are eligible to serve, unless, prior to the time for reappointment that individual has already served six consecutive years. Members may be re-appointed at the discretion of the Chief Local Elected Official subject to the term limitations outlined in this section.

Terms shall be staggered to ensure that at any given time a percentage of the members are experienced in WDB functions.

The Board shall advise the Consortium Counties of potential Board member vacancies prior to the end of the term. In the case of a midterm vacancy, an immediate replacement shall be requested of the Consortium County represented by the departing Board member. The appointed Board member shall fill the remaining term of office.

The Board shall not compensate Board Members for their services, but by resolution of the Board, a fixed sum and expenses, if any, may be allowed for attendance at each regular or special meeting of the Board.

Section 4. Termination for Cause

By two-thirds majority vote of the membership or by action of the Chief Local Elected Official, a member may be removed for cause from the Board. Cause would be for such actions as malfeasance, misconduct, or any action which would be deemed not in the best interest of the Board; or three unexcused absences from regular scheduled meetings within the preceding twelve calendar months. Notice that a removal vote that may be taken for cause must be included on the agenda of said meeting. The Chair shall send a precautionary letter to the said Board member upon two unexcused absences within the preceding twelve calendar months prior to the next meeting.

Section 5. Resignation

Letters of resignation must be submitted to the **Click Here to Enter WDB Name.** Chair. Three consecutive absences without justification and no response to the above referenced letter from the chair will be considered acceptable terms for resignation. Justification must be submitted in writing. The Board Chair has the authority to accept or deny justification.

Section 6. Vacancies

Upon vacancy of any position on this Board, the procedure in Article II, Section 1, will be followed to provide replacement representation to complete the remainder of that term of appointment.

**Article 3**

**Meetings**

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Board shall meet at a public location at such time and place as determined by the Chairperson. All meetings must be held in an accessible facility, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. All materials must be in an accessible format (i.e., large print, Braille, interpreter, etc.), as needed or indicated.

The Board will meet no less than four times per program year. Regular Board meetings are face to face; however, Board members may attend meetings via conference call, video communications and other alternative methods.

Five working days’ notice shall be delivered to each member stating a reasonable time, date and place of the meeting and the meeting’s purpose unless deemed an emergency by the Chair or Executive Committee calling for said special meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The Chair of the Board and Committee Chair may, when deemed necessary, call a special meeting of the Board via conference call, video communications, or alternative media sources for transacting any business designated in the call.

Section 3. Quorum

At all meetings (regular or special) of the Board, a majority of the Board members present constitutes a quorum for transacting business. A quorum shall require the participation of Board members constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions. Proxy representatives who are unable to cast votes shall not count toward meeting the quorum requirement. Votes may be cast via electronic medium for remote attendees. The act of the majority of the Board members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. However, a two-thirds vote of those present shall be required to amend any provision of these by-laws.

Section 4. Conduct of Meetings

All meetings of this Board shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.

Section 5. Open Meetings

Local Area Board Conducts Business Openly:The Local Area Board must conduct its business in an open manner as required by WIOA sec. 107(e), by making available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information about the activities of the local Board. (20 CFR 679.390) This includes:

1. Information about the Local Area Plan, or modification to the Local Area Plan, before submission of the Local Area Plan;
2. List and affiliation of Local Area WDB members;
3. Selection of one-stop operators;
4. Award of grants or contracts to eligible training providers of workforce investment activities including providers of youth workforce investment activities;
5. Minutes of formal meetings of the Local Area Board; and
6. Local Area Board by-laws, consistent with § 679.310(g).

Section 6. Proxy Representation and Voting

A member may designate a representative to attend a meeting of the Board in his/her absence. The proxy must meet the membership criteria for the member’s affiliation type. The proxy will count toward the appointed member’s attendance. The representative may participate in discussions and may vote so long as the member provides written voting instructions to the Chair allowing his/her proxy representative to cast votes in accordance with the written voting instructions.

Each Board member present shall be entitled to one vote on each matter for which a vote is taken. Votes may be cast telephonically or via electronic medium.

Section 7. Conflict of Interest and Voting

No WDB member (whether compensated or not) shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award or administration of a sub-grant or contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

1. The individual,
2. any member of the individual 's immediate family,
3. the individual's partner, or
4. an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the above, has a financial interest in the firm or organization selected for the award.

No WDB member, member of his/her immediate family, officers, employees, or agents of the WDB member's agency or business, shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub agreements.

A WDB member shall not cast a vote on, or participate in, any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such member (or any organization which that member directly represents), nor on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to that member.

No WDB members shall participate in a governmental decision including voting on a matter (including recommendations, appointments, obligating or committing the WDB to a course of action) when such action influences a decision or exercises judgement in making a decision. Any member with a potential or actual conflict of interest shall comply with requirements for public disclosure and recusal.

**Article 4**

**Organization**

Section 1. Officers

The officers of this Board shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.

Section 2. Election of Officers

Officers of this Board shall be elected in June for two-year terms. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from among the members who are representatives of the business sector. The secretary will be elected from among all members.

The Chair shall appoint a nominating committee to recommend officers who shall be elected from the Board's business sector membership and shall begin their term at the beginning of the new program year effective July 1. These officers shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified or until they are no longer Board members. If an officer is unable to complete his/her term the Board shall elect a successor to complete the remaining portion of the original term. The Vice-Chair shall not be required to succeed the Chair at the end of the Chair’s term of office.

Section 3. Chair

The Chair shall preside at Board meetings, designate standing and ad hoc committees deemed appropriate and appoint their Chair and members. The Chair shall not vote except in the case of a tie, in which event he/she shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 4. Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall assume all duties and responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence from meetings. In the event that the office of Chair is vacated before the end of the term, the Vice- Chair shall assume the office in an acting capacity until such time as the Board elects a new Chair.

Section 5. Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for proper notification of meetings, review, and submission of the minutes to the Board, and shall carry out any other duties deemed appropriate by the Chair. Local Area staff will serve as support personnel in performing these duties.

Section 6. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary (from a sector other than business), and the previous Chair or Vice-Chair. As determined by the Chair of the Board, chairs of Board committees will attend Executive Committee meetings. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee are as follows: make standing committee assignments and coordination among committees, prepare recommendations to Board on state and national issues, act as needed between regularly scheduled Board meetings, and develop immediate and long-range goals for Board concurrence.

Section 7. Vacancy

If an office becomes vacant, the Board shall elect a successor at its next meeting.

**Article 5**

**Committees**

Section 1.

The Chair of the Board shall have the power, except as otherwise provided in this Article, to appoint the members of any Committee for a term of two (2) years. No Committee, except as elsewhere provided in this Article, shall take any action or position on behalf of the Board, bind the Board, or exercise the authority of the Board in the management of the Corporation. The Chair of all the Committees shall be members of the Board. The Executive Committee of the Board shall meet at the call of the Chair of the Board or the written request of any two (2) members of the committee. The Board's other Committees shall meet at the call of their respective Chair or the Chair of the Board.

Section 2.

Electronic meetings shall be permissible in lieu of face-to-face committee meetings at the discretion of the Committee Chair. An electronic meeting of the Committee occurs when Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through audio, video, or both. All votes taken during an electronic meeting shall be by roll call. All scheduled electronic meetings shall be held in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time. When speaking, each member will be asked to clearly identify himself, so that proper recognition is given and recorded. All Board policies, administrative practices, and by-laws shall apply equally to electronic meetings.

Section 3.

The Local Area WDB may establish standing committees to provide information and assist the Board in carrying out its responsibilities (20 CFR 679.360).

**Article 6**

**Amendments**

Section 1. Amendment Procedure

Board by-laws can be amended at any regular Board meeting provided the proposed amendment(s) has been submitted in writing to the Board members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Vote Needed

The by-laws shall be amended upon affirmative vote by a two-thirds majority of the Board.

**Article 7**

**Severability**

In the event that any of the rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions of these   
by-laws are held to be partially or wholly invalid or unenforceable for any reason, such holding shall not affect, alter, modify, or impair in any manner any of the other terms, provisions, rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions contained herein.

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| *Adopted This NUMBER DATE Day of MONTH, YEAR.* | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| *Board Director, Printed Name and Signature* | |  | | *Date* |
|  | | | | |
| *Chief Local Elected Official Printed Name and Signature* | |  | | *Date* |

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| *Board Chair, Printed Name and Signature* |  | *Date* |

All public WDB meetings and Committee meetings will be held at specified times and places which are convenient and open to the public.

The Board believes it is in the best interest of its members, systems, and customers that the fullest participation and attendance in all meetings be achieved whenever possible. Furthermore, it recognizes that the use of electronic, audio or video conferencing for meeting attendance and voting requirements is permissible so long as the meeting is conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Provision.

The Board in all of its regular and special, standing committee, and ad hoc committee meetings complies with and intends to comply with the provisions of the Sunshine Provision. Therefore, the Board hereby adopts this policy, to be used when needed, to make use of the capabilities for conferencing by electronic means or any other type of audio or video conferencing for its meetings *or* any of the standing committee and ad hoc committee meetings as set forth and adopted according to the following rules as applicable:

1. All pertinent provisions of the Sunshine Provision must be complied with, including specifically the proper notice of any regular or special meeting, the proper record keeping or minutes of each meeting, the appropriate agenda preparation for each meeting, which in addition shall be posted along with the notice of the meeting; and, in particular, any use of closed sessions shall be in compliance with the provisions of WIOA.
2. All Board and Committee members attending meetings by electronic conferencing shall be entitled to vote as if they were personally and physically present at the meeting site so long as a quorum is, in total, present and accounted for, and their votes shall be recorded by the Board Director.
3. A Board or Committee member who attends a meeting by electronic, video, or audio conference must provide notice to the Board Director at least 24 hours prior to the meeting unless such advance notice is impracticable.
4. The location of the meeting included on the notice shall be equipped with a suitable transmission system (e.g., a speakerphone) in order that the public audience, the members in attendance and any staff in attendance will be able to hear any input, vote, or discussion of the conference and that the member attending by electronic means shall have a similar capability of hearing and participating in such input, vote, or discussion.
5. As the Board or its committees begin each new matter of business, the Chair will check with all remote locations(s) where members are to ensure that each such connection is active.
6. When a motion is made, and seconded, and discussion regarding the motion begins, the Chair will check that the connection with remote location(s) where members are present is active. Prior to closing discussion and taking any vote, the Chair will ask all remote location(s) where member(s) is(are) present whether there are any additional comments, questions, or information to be added to the discussion.
7. All decisions will be made using majority rule except when a higher vote is required. There will be no muting of any connections with remote location(s) where members are present at any time. There will be no sidebar discussions.
8. The procedures outlined above shall also apply to each Board and its Committee members.

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| **Representative of Business (WIOA Section 107(b) (2)(A))** |

**Who May Satisfy the Requirements:**

The majority of the members of the Local Area WDB must be representatives of private sector business in the local area. At a minimum, two members must represent small business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Business representatives serving on Local Area WDBs may also serve on the State Board. Each business representative must meet the following criteria:

* be an owner, chief executive officer, chief operating officer, or other individual with optimum policy making and hiring authority;
* provide employment opportunities in **in-demand** industry sectors or occupations, as those terms are defined in WIOA section 3(23); and provide high-quality, work-relevant training and development opportunities to its workforce or the workforce of others (in the case of organizations representing business as per WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(A)(ii); and
* are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations.

In North Carolina, examples of allowable business organizations may include chambers of commerce, trade organizations, large non-profit organizations, such as Rex Hospital, and for-profit organizations, such as Duke Hospital, depending on the specific circumstances. Examples of unallowable business organizations include the N.C. Department of Public Safety or other state or municipal agencies.

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| **Representative of Workforce (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(B))** |

**Who May Satisfy the Requirements:**

**Not less than 20%** of the members of the Local Area WDB **must** be workforce representatives. These representatives:

* **must** include **two or more representatives of labor organizations,** where such organizations exist in the local area. Where labor organizations do not exist, representatives must be selected from other employee representatives;

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| *Employee representatives must come from organizations that advocate, enhance, or protect the rights of a group of employees. In North Carolina, such examples include the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC), and the National Guard Association). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is an example of an organization that is not allowable as a labor organization.* |

* **must** include **one or more representatives of a joint labor management, or union affiliated, registered apprenticeship** program within the area who must be a training director or a member of a labor organization. If no union affiliated registered apprenticeship programs exist in the area, a representative of a registered apprenticeship program with no union affiliation must be appointed, if one exists.

In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Local Area WDB **may** include the following to contribute to the 20% requirement:

* one or more representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and

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| *In North Carolina, examples of allowable community-based organizations include organizations such as Goodwill and community action agencies.* |

* one or more representatives of organizations that demonstrated experience or expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.

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| *Community College representatives would not be appropriate for this category.* |

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| **Representatives of Education and Training (WIOA Section 107(b) (2)(C))** |

**Who May Satisfy the Requirements:**

The balance of Local Area WDB membership **must include:**

* **At least one** eligible provideradministering **adult education and literacy** activities under WIOA Title II;
* **At least one** representative from an **institution of higher education** providing workforce investments activities, including community colleges; and
* **At least one representative** from each of the following governmental and economic and community development entities:
  + **Economic and community development** entities;
  + The **State Employment Service Office** under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S. C. 49 et seq.) serving the local area; and
  + The programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than Sec. 112 or part C of that title.

In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) **may** appoint other appropriate entities in the local area, including:

* Entities administering education and training activities who represent local educational agencies or community-based organizations with demonstrated expertise in addressing the education and training needs for individuals with barriers to employment;
* Governmental and economic and community development entities who represent transportation, housing, and public assistance programs;
* Philanthropic organizations serving the local area;
* and Other appropriate individuals as determined by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO).
* The board chair shall be elected among the business representatives.

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| ***The Division of Workforce Solutions may request additional information from Local Area WDBs on representatives and the organizations they represent at any time in order to determine compliance with these requirements. The final determination on whether requirements are met is made by the Division of Workforce Solutions.*** |