

Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The Strategic Planning Elements section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The Operational Planning Elements section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

*Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

I. WIOA State Plan Type

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. No

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Yes

Combined Plan partner program(s)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) Yes

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) Yes

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))) No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.) Yes

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) Yes

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) No

II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

ii. Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupation

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

III. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

A majority of the industries targeted for recruitment, retention, and renewal are manufacturing industries. Three of those targeted industries, Aerospace, Automotive, and Metal Manufacturing, which includes ship building, are in the transportation manufacturing sector. At the height of the recession, the transportation manufacturing declined to 45,692 employed, but since that time has grown over 31 percent, with automotive parts manufacturing growing the most at 78 percent since 2010. Ship and boat building had a slight setback in 2010, decreasing from an employment of 3,515 in 2009 to 3,018 in 2010. It quickly recovered to 3,640 in 2011 and continues to increase every year. Top Aerospace cluster occupations for 2013 in Alabama are shown in Table 1. Top occupations in Alabama in 2013 for the Automotive cluster are shown in Table 2. Top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Sheet Metal and Ship Building cluster are shown in Table 3. (Note: Sources for all tables are the 2014 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment cost Index (ECI) factors. Annual wage information rounded to the nearest whole dollar. Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective cluster.)

Table 1: Top Occupations for Aerospace Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Computer Programmers	2,730	5%	\$39.41
	Computer User Support Specialists	2,500	4%	\$22.15
Computer Systems Analysts	2,290	4%	\$38.67	
Software Developers, Applications	2,140	4%	\$45.20	
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	2,050	3%	\$30.80	
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,920	3%	\$47.72	
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging,	1,820	3%	\$23.85	

Table 1: Top Occupations for Aerospace Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Computer Programmers	2,730	5%	\$39.41
and Systems Assemblers				
Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,950	5%	\$14.67	
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	1,770	4%	\$18.07	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,340	3%	\$24.00	
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1,270	3%	\$15.42	
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	900	2%	\$11.39	
Industrial Engineers	830	2%	\$40.72	
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	650	1%	\$17.29	
	Table 3: Top Occupations for Sheet Metal and Ship Manufacturing Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage
	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Braziers	3,090	6%	\$17.87
Machinists	2,410	5%	\$19.21	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,810	4%	\$14.67	
Team Assemblers	1,790	4%	\$16.85	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,590	3%	\$24.00	
Layout Workers, Metal and Plastic	1,400	3%	\$22.26	
Helpers—Production Workers	1,390	3%	\$11.54	
Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1,360	3%	\$20.95	
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	1,230	3%	\$17.19	
(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations (continued)Two industries, Bioscience and Chemicals, are also being targeted through the state's strategic plan, Accelerate	Table 4. Top Occupations for Bioscience Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Alabama, introduced by Governor Robert Bentley in an executive order in July 2011. While the total employment in the bioscience cluster has experienced a downturn since 2000, the cluster has grown over 14 percent since 2010, and there have been announcements of 335 new jobs to come. Most of those jobs announced are in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, a field that has experienced a steady growth in employment of 473.0 percent since 2000, and has continued to grow during the recession years. The Chemicals cluster also experienced a downturn since 2000, but has				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
grown slightly since the recession. A very small portion of this cluster (soap, cleaning compound, and toiletry manufacturing) has grown 154 percent since 2000. Additionally, since 2014, announcements for 200 new jobs in paint, coating, and adhesive manufacturing have been made. Table 4 describes Alabama's top occupations in the Bioscience Cluster for 2013. Table 5 describes Alabama's top occupations in the Chemicals Cluster in 2013.				
	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,230	13%	\$31.17
Dental Laboratory Technicians	630	7%	\$16.54	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Chemical Plant and System Operators	500	5%	\$28.08	
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	370	4%	\$25.41	
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	360	4%	\$17.26	
Phlebotomists	300	3%	\$13.05	
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	280	3%	\$15.42	
Customer Service Representatives	250	3%	\$14.48	
Packers and Packagers, Hand	230	2%	\$10.17	
	Table 5. Top Occupations for Chemicals Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage
	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	1,140	7%	\$26.44
Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	950	6%	\$16.13	
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	780	5%	\$15.42	
Packers and Packagers, Hand	700	4%	\$10.17	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	690	4%	\$24.00	
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	680	4%	\$18.81	
Chemical Plant and System Operators	620	4%	\$28.08	
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	510	3%	\$14.59	
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	440	3%	\$14.49	
(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations (continued)Two or more targeted clusters in Accelerate Alabama were Distribution Centers and Corporate Operations. While Distribution, like most industries, experienced a downturn	Table 6. Top Occupations for Corporate Operations Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
<p>during the recession, it has steadily increased in employment since 2010. Warehousing, a component of Distribution Centers, has especially grown, increasing of nearly 47 percent since 2010, with more than 1,000 additional jobs announced since 2014. Additionally, approximately 140 new jobs have been announced for general freight trucking. Corporate Operations as a cluster has been growing at a steady pace since 2000. From 2000 to 2014 this cluster has grown 60 percent, with nearly 1,300 new jobs announced. Table 6 shows the top occupations in Alabama in</p>				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
2013 in the Corporate Operations Cluster. Table 7 describes the top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Distribution Cluster.				
	Customer Service Representatives	5,910	21%	\$14.48
Telemarketers	1,900	7%	\$10.55	
General and Operations Managers	1,650	6%	\$58.48	
Bill and Account Collectors	1,550	5%	\$15.00	
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,230	4%	\$17.06	
Accountants and Auditors	1,080	4%	\$31.97	
Office Clerks, General	610	2%	\$11.09	
Computer User Support Specialists	580	2%	\$22.15	
	Table 7. Top Occupations for Distribution Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage
	Heavy and Tractor–Trailer Truck Drivers	12,240	30%	\$19.74
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,810	16%	\$11.67	
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,400	6%	\$14.49	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1,990	5%	\$11.35	
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,810	4%	\$10.17	
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1,130	3%	\$14.46	
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,120	3%	\$31.17	
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	1,030	2%	\$14.34	
Alabama's strategic plan for economic development (Accelerate Alabama) also targeted industries that are associated with Enabling Technology, due to the increased use of nanotechnology and robotics used in many of the large automotive production plants in Alabama and surrounding	Table 8. Top Occupations for Enabling Technology Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
states. To show the Alabama's commitment to prepare the workforce for these types of jobs, AIDT and robotics industry leaders collaborated to build a robotics technology park. The park consists of three training facilities, each targeted to a specific industry need. While the industries associated with this cluster show minimal growth thus far, nearly 1,000 additional jobs have recently (since 2014) been announced for the state. Table 8 shows the top occupations in Alabama in 2013 in the Enabling Technology cluster.				
	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	1,000	8%	\$13.59

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Computer Systems Analysts	680	5%	\$38.67	
Machinists	500	4%	\$19.21	
Software Developers, Systems Software	450	4%	\$47.72	
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	410	3%	\$15.57	
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Braziers	410	3%	\$17.87	
Electrical Engineers	380	3%	\$45.20	
Industrial Engineers	330	3%	\$40.72	
Team Assemblers	310	3%	\$16.85	
(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations (continued) Information Technology, another targeted industry cluster, overlaps the Enabling Technology cluster somewhat. The largest industry in the Information	Table 9. Top Occupations for Information Technology Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Technology cluster is business support services, a field that has grown at a steady pace, even during the recession, up 63 percent since 2000. Additionally, over 500 new jobs have been announced in this cluster since 2014. The top occupations in the Information Technology cluster in Alabama in 2013 are shown in Table 9.				
	Computer User Support Specialists	2,440	7%	\$22.15
Computer Programmers	2,400	7%	\$39.41	
Software Developers, Applications	2,160	6%	\$45.20	
Management Analysts	2,030	6%	\$45.23	
Computer Systems Analysts	1,830	5%	\$38.67	
Software Developers, Systems Software	1,350	4%	\$47.72	
Network and Computer	940	3%	\$33.73	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster			Mean Hourly Wage	
	2013 Employment	% of Cluster		
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Systems Administrators				
<p>The final two clusters targeted in Accelerate Alabama are historically a large part of the state's economy; Food Products and Forest Products. In 2012 Alabama's agriculture industry produced cash receipts of \$5.35 billion. In the U.S. the state ranks second in peanut production, third in aquaculture, and fourth in poultry broilers. The state also ranks tenth in the U.S. in both cotton and chicken/egg production. According to the Alabama Forestry Commission, Alabama's forests generate over \$21 billion in timber</p>	Table 10. Top Occupations for Food Products Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
production and processing revenue. The state ranks third in timberland acreage in the 48 contiguous states, behind only Georgia and Oregon. According to a 2013 report published by Auburn University (February 2013), Agriculture, forestry and their related industries account for 41 percent of Alabama's \$174 billion economy and provide 22 percent of all jobs in the state. The study has determined that agriculture, forestry, and related industries generate 8 jobs per million dollars of sales. This report identified over 90 industry sectors that are related to agriculture and				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
forestry production, including food and kindred product distribution sectors, like wholesalers, food stores, and restaurants. For these reasons, it is beneficial to the economy of the state to continue to support and pursue advancements in production and research for these industries. Table 10 describes the top occupations in the Food Products Cluster for 2013. Table 11 describes the top occupations in the Forest Products Cluster in Alabama for 2013.				
	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	12,090	29%	\$10.66
Sales Representative s, Wholesale	2,280	5%	\$31.17	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products				
Helpers—Production Workers	2,270	5%	\$11.54	
Packers and Packagers, Hand	1,480	3%	\$10.17	
Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders	1,330	3%	\$12.21	
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1,300	3%	\$12.73	
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,220	3%	\$11.67	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,100	3%	\$24.00	
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	990	2%	\$10.95	
(II)(A)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations (continued)	Table 11.Top Occupations for Forest Products Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage
	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	2,260	6%	\$18.11
Sawing Machine Setters,	2,200	6%	\$13.61	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Operators, and Tenders, Wood				
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	2,160	6%	\$11.87	
Logging Equipment Operators	1,920	6%	\$15.78	
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	1,840	5%	\$13.35	
Helpers—Production Workers	1,490	4%	\$11.54	
Team Assemblers	1,420	4%	\$16.85	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,360	4%	\$24.00	
One industry sector that was not addressed in the Accelerate Alabama plan is Healthcare. The fact that the baby boomers are approaching retirement age, and also that people are living longer, is beginning to have a large impact on the healthcare system. Additionally, there are many more	Table 12. Top Occupations for Healthcare Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
specialized jobs in healthcare than in the past, due to the fact that healthcare costs have risen in tandem with the demand for healthcare services. While hospitals have experienced small but steady growth every year since 2000, most of the growth in healthcare employment has come from industries that provide more specialized care. Industries such as outpatient care centers, home health care services, and specialized health practitioners have doubled in employment since 2000. In addition employment in residential disability, mental health, and substance abuse facilities has grown 226				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
<p>percent since 2000. Continuing care retirement and assisted living facilities have also doubled in employment. Furthermore, as the population ages, so does the workforce in the healthcare industry. In Alabama in 2014, 21 percent of the healthcare workforce was over the age of 55. There is a projection of nearly 60,000 new jobs in healthcare for the period of 2012–2022. That projection combined with an increasing number of workers approaching retirement, the demand for healthcare employees is very high in the state. Table 12 shows the top occupations in the Healthcare cluster in</p>				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Alabama in 2013.				
	Registered Nurses	39,580	16.95	\$27.82
Nursing Assistants	21,110	8.00	\$10.86	
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	12,060	5.12	\$17.52	
Personal Care Aides	11,050	3.59	\$8.82	
Medical Assistants	6,570	2.69	\$12.81	
Home Health Aides	3,660	2.57	\$9.70	
Office Clerks, General	4,780	2.40	\$11.30	
Receptionists and Information Clerks	6,690	2.33	\$11.95	
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,740	1.97	\$16.44	
Medical Secretaries	4,410	1.67	\$15.33	
Billing and Posting Clerks	3,820	1.49	\$15.30	
Radiologic Technologists	3,230	1.41	\$22.62	
Dental Hygienists	2,540	1.23	\$21.71	
Dental Assistants	3,340	1.22	\$15.13	
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	2,560	1.06	\$14.61	
Medical Records and Health	2,230	1.02	\$15.73	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
Information Technicians				
(I)(A)(1) (A) (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations Alabama's strategic plan for economic development is also targeting industries that are associated with Enabling Technology, due to the increased use of nanotechnology and robotics used in many of the large automotive production plants in Alabama and surrounding states. To show the dedication to prepare the workforce for these types of jobs, AIDT and robotics industry leaders across the nation collaborated to build the robotics technology park. The park consists of	Table 14 Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations by Region	Target Industries	Occupations	

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
<p>three training facilities, each targeted to a specific industry need. While the industries associated with this cluster show minimal growth thus far, nearly 1,000 additional jobs have recently been announced for the state. Cyber Security is an emerging industry another cluster which overlaps the Enabling Technology cluster.</p> <p>Huntsville, Alabama is home to the second largest research park in the United States, Cummings Research Park, with over 400 companies that include Fortune 500 companies, local and international high-tech enterprises, and US space and defense</p>				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
agencies. It also includes a thriving business incubator and competitive higher education institutions. Cyber security is most certainly an emerging sector in this state, and in the entire country. Table 14 lists Alabama's targeted industries and occupations by Workforce Development Regions.				
	WDR1	Automotive Metals Manufacturing Distribution Energy Related Service Related	Advance Manufac turing Engineer ing Technici ans Green Technici ans Logistics Nursing	
WDR2	Aerospace and Defense Construction Health and Life Sciences Information and Communications Technology	Architecture and Construction Business Management & Administration Finance Health Science		

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
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	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
		Hospitality & Tourism Information Technology		
WDR3	Automotive Healthcare Construction Manufacturing Service Industry	Healthcare/Nursing Hospitality Customer Service (Jobs) Transportation/Drivers Logistics Information Technology Machinists Industrial Maintenance Production/Assemblers Welders/Fitters		
WDR4	Manufacturing Healthcare Energy Service Industry Logistics	Welders/Fitters Machinists Industrial Maintenance Nursing Allied Health Green Technology IT Customer Service Culinary Drivers		
WDR5	Automated Manufacturing & Robotics Construction and Construction Services Healthcare Hospitality and Tourism Services	Quality Assurance & Safety Heavy Equipment Operator Healthcare Practitioner Medical Records and Health Information Technician Industrial Maintenance Computer User		

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
		Support Specialist Plating and Coating Machine Setters, Operators & Tenders Welding, Soldering and Brazing Workers Metal Workers and Plastics Workers Electrical Workers and Electronics Repairers, Commercial/Industrial		
WDR6	Construction Healthcare Hospitality and Tourism Manufacturing Retail and Services	Agricultural Business Bio-Fuel Customer Service Rep Entrepreneurial Development Healthcare Workers Industrial maintenance Tech IT Services Management Tourism Guides Trades (Carpentry, Brick Layers, Plumbers)		
WDR7	Agriculture Healthcare Manufacturing Service/Tourism Transportation/Warehousing/Distribution	Computer Skills Customer Service Reps Engineering Technician		

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37
		Industrial Maintenance Logistics LPNs Mechanics RN's Truck Drivers Welding		
WDR8	Manufacturing Healthcare Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Hospitality and Tourism Architecture and Construction	Assembler/Operator Certified Nursing Assistant Commercial Driver License Driver Computer Numeric Control Machinist Customer Service Representative Industrial Maintenance Technician LPN Occupational/Physical Therapist Pipe Fitter/Welder Utility Assistant/Line man		
WDR9	Aviation and Aerospace Construction Healthcare Advance Manufacturing Maritime	Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic Assembler Electrical Maintenance/Electrician Engineer Millwright Pipe fitter/Pipe Welder RN Ship-fitter		

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster			Mean Hourly Wage			
	2013 Employment	% of Cluster				
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85		
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37		
WDR10	Healthcare Transportation Manufacturing Aviation Services	Auto & Vehicle Mechanics Automotive Technology Specialists Construction Trade Workers Customer Service Representatives Engineers Industrial Maintenance Nurses Physical Therapy Assistants Physical Therapists Sheet Metal Fabricators Surgical Technicians Truck Drivers Welders				
(I)(A)(1) (A) (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations Table 15 below describes the top ten knowledge, skills and abilities needed by employee in demand occupations in the targeted industry clusters. Table 15. Top 10 KSAs for Demand	Knowledge	Rank	Skill	Rank	Ability	Rank

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage			
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85		
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37		
Occupations in Targeted Industry Clusters						
	English Language	12.2%	Critical Thinking	10.42%	Problem Sensitivity	7.10%
Customer & Personal Service	9.8%	Monitoring	9.57%	Near Vision	6.79%	
Mathematics	8.9%	Reading Comprehension	9.01%	Oral Comprehension	6.31%	
Mechanical	8.2%	Active Listening	8.93%	Deductive Reasoning	5.71%	
Production and Processing	7.5%	Speaking	8.14%	Oral Expression	5.44%	
Public Safety and Security	6.7%	Operation Monitoring	6.29%	Written Comprehension	5.27%	
Education and Training	5.4%	Coordination	6.18%	Information Ordering	4.74%	
Computers and Electronics	5.2%	Judgment & Decision Making	4.84%	Speech Recognition	4.65%	
Medicine and Dentistry	4.8%	Quality Control Analysis	4.44%	Control Precision	4.09%	
Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division. O*Net OnLine. (I) (A) (1) (iii) Employers' Employment Needs In 2012, only 30 percent						

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
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of jobs were in occupations that typically require postsecondary education for entry. Within this group, jobs in occupations that require a Bachelor's degree for entry held the largest share at 15 percent. Occupations requiring a high school diploma or equivalent, and less than high school, made up 70 percent of jobs in 2012. Occupations with the highest percentage growth typically require a form of postsecondary education, with associate's degree occupations holding the highest share at 18.9 percent. All occupations in Alabama requiring postsecondary education are projected to grow faster than average,

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10.4 percent. At 8.7 percent, occupations requiring less than high school show the slowest growth over the projection period. Over the past five years there have been many reports all over the country about skills gaps. More importantly, the emphasis has been on employees' lack of soft skills. Alabama is no different. Employers all over the state declare that they cannot find employees with adequate skills. The Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division decided that the state needed current data to illustrate the employers' concerns in these areas. As

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a result, a skills survey was conducted and published in 2013. Many of the employers voicing these concerns were in manufacturing and construction industries. So, for this study, the decision was made to survey employers in manufacturing, construction and utilities. A sample of 6,926 employers was randomly selected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over 5,000 employers in the three industries responded to the survey. The survey instrument included three categories of questions: Recruitment Challenges; Skills Gaps Identified; and Training and future needs.

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
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<p>Employers in the sample who had hired within the past two years were asked the level of difficulty they had in finding candidates with adequate basic skills. A majority of those stated that it was either extremely or moderately difficult. The responses also indicated that it was most difficult to hire people with experience in the occupation, but hundreds of employers said it was most difficult to hire for entry-level positions. Over 1,300 employers indicated that the number one reason for rejecting applications was that the prospective employee did not pass a drug screen, surpassing lack of work experience as</p>				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
	Team Assemblers	13,580	34%	\$16.85
	Tire Builders	1,960	5%	\$23.37

a factor for not hiring an applicant. When given the opportunity to list other reasons, employers indicated (1) lack of driver's license or reliable transportation, (2) lack of required certification, (3) attendance history, (4) employment history, (5) failed employment skills testing, and (6) other reasons, most relating to a lack of soft skills. A list of soft skills and a list of technical skills were provided, so the employers could choose all skills gaps identified in existing staff. Of the soft skills, across all industries and all areas, poor attendance was the overwhelming top choice. Others chosen

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<p>at high levels were time management deficits, inability to following directions, lack of critical thinking skills, and poor communication . Gaps identified in technical skills often varied by industry. In a majority of the manufacturing industries, the top technical gaps were machining skills, welding skills, and electrical knowledge. In utilities, the number one technical skill gap was in the area of math. Utilities employers also ranked engineering and electrical deficits at high levels. The selections from construction companies varied depending on the type of work that was done. Some of</p>				

Table 2: Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2013 Employment	% of Cluster	Mean Hourly Wage	
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the top skill gaps identified were in the areas of carpentry, blueprint reading, industrial experience, equipment operating, electrical, and welding. When employers were asked what area of training would be the most valuable to improve the workforce, choosing from soft skills, occupational experience, or education, the majority ranked soft skills as most valuable. Respondents also were given the opportunity to list future technologies that would require training. Employers listed mobile technology, robotics, computer numerical control (CNC) technology, manufacturing automation

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<p>technology, and general computer advancements as the top five technologies. The survey revealed that a majority of employers do not presently use training resources provided to them by various Alabama workforce development partners. A majority of employers conduct their own training on the job.</p>				

B. Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

i. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

ii. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

III. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

IV. Skill Gaps

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

(II)(B)(i) Employment and Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Alabama has been declining continuously since 2009 when it was highest (11%) due to the recession. Unemployment rates in 2014 ranged between 6.0 percent and 10.9 percent for the WDRs, with a 6.8 percent annual average for the state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014 unemployment rates were higher for younger workers. Youth, age 16 to 19, experienced an estimated unemployment rate of 29.7 percent in 2014, which is down from 2010 when it was 30.8 percent. Labor Force participants between the ages of 20 and 24 experienced a significant drop in unemployment rate between 2010 and 2014, dropping from 20.9 percent to 12.9 percent. In April 2015, unemployment rates ranged from 4.8 percent (WDR 4) to 8.3 percent (WDR 6) for the regions, with a 5.3 percent rate for the state. WDR 4 had the largest labor force and WDR 6 had the smallest. The latest figures show that in November 2015 Alabama had an unemployment rate of 6.0 percent, down from 6.1 percent in November of 2014. Still, Alabama's rate is higher than the nation, which is currently at 5.0 percent. WDR 2 has the lowest rate of 5.2 percent, while WDR 6 continues to experience the highest rate in the state at 8.6 percent.

Table 14. Unemployment Rate by Demographics

Demographic Category	Unemployment rate
AGE	
16 to 19 years	26.40%
20 to 24 years	16.70%
25 to 44 years	8.50%
45 to 54 years	5.70%
55 to 64 years	4.10%
65 to 74 years	3.70%
75 years and over	3.00%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	
White	6.70%
Black or African American	13.70%
American Indian and Alaska Native	8.60%
Asian	4.90%

Demographic Category	Unemployment rate
Some other race	5.00%
Two or more races	14.50%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	6.60%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	6.70%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Below poverty level	28.50%
DISABILITY STATUS	
With any disability	17.20%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 25 TO 64 YEARS	
Less than high school graduate	13.70%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.90%
Some college or associate's degree	6.60%
Bachelor's degree or higher	3.10%
MILITARY	
Veterans	5.54%
Source: American Community Survey 2014	

Alabama's labor force participation rate has fallen from 61.4 percent in 2007 to 57.2 percent in 2014, third lowest in the nation, behind West Virginia and Mississippi. Since the unemployment rate is based on those people actively seeking employment, the labor force participation has a significant impact. According to a study conducted by The Liberty Foundation, where it compared labor force participation rates using 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, out of the 51 states, Alabama ranked second lowest labor force participation for ages 35 to 44, third lowest for ages 45 to 54, and fourth lowest for ages 55 to 64. Fortunately, the participation rates for these age groups increased in 2014, with the 35 to 44 year old group increasing from 75.9 percent in 2013 to 80.2 percent in 2014. Furthermore, BLS data shows that labor force participation for youth age 16 to 19 has dropped from 31.4 percent in 2010 to 25.7 percent in 2014.

A majority of counties with participation rates lower than the state average are located in the western part of the state. In 2014, the measure of labor underutilization in Alabama was 12.6 percent, close to the nation at 12.0 percent. This measure includes the unemployed, those employed part time, and those marginally attached to the labor force. According to the Current Population Survey (CPS), Alabama had an average of 153,500 unemployed residents in 2014. Just over 89,000 workers were employed part time for economic reasons, referred to as involuntary part time. These people were either part time because the businesses they worked for were experiencing poor business conditions or were unable to find full time employment. People marginally attached to the labor force are those who are not presently working, but would like to work, are available to work, and have looked for work within the last year, but have not searched within the last four weeks. In Alabama, the marginally attached in 2014 was approximately 35,600. The number of discouraged workers in the state, which is a subset of the marginally attached, was around 11,000, accounting for 31.0 percent of all marginally attached.

(II)(B)(i) Employment and Unemployment (continued)

The latest census figures for 2014 estimate the population in the state age 16 to 19 is 266,406. Over 43,000 were not enrolled in school, and approximately 17,000 were not enrolled in school or participating in the labor force. In Alabama, in 2014, there was approximately 120,000 youth age 14 to 21 in the workforce, 60.0 percent of them worked in retail trade and accommodation and food services, earning an average monthly wage of \$800. Nearly 7,500 worked in manufacturing, earning an average monthly wage of \$2,000, 6,500 in health care with an average monthly wage of \$1,000, and 8,800 in administrative and support and waste management services with an average monthly wage of \$1,300. In 2012, the unemployment rate for youth age 16 to 19 was 17.1 percent, and 16.0 percent for those age 20 to 24.

According to the SSI Annual Statistical Report 2014, Alabama ranks seventh in the nation in the percentage of the population who are receiving disability social security benefits. Census estimates from 2014 show that there were approximately 776,448 people in the state with a disability, nearly 40.0 percent over the age of 65. Nearly 140,000 disabled persons were in the labor force in 2014, with over 24,000 being unemployed (Table 15). Half of those unemployed had some form of cognitive difficulty. Approximately 14,000 of the employed disabled persons had been determined to be below poverty level within the previous twelve months, while just over 11,000, nearly half, of the unemployed were below poverty level. Nearly 45.0 percent of the households in the state, with one or more people having a disability, received food stamps (Table 16).

Table 15. Disabled in the Labor Force

Degree of Disability	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force
Total with disability	114,928	24,477	283,144
Hearing Difficulty	37,185	3,364	36,278
Vision difficulty	25,109	5,052	44,060
Cognitive difficulty	29,134	13,020	134,187
Ambulatory difficulty	44,315	7,576	183,488
Self-care difficulty	9,816	1,656	63,148
Independent living difficulty	16,211	6,069	130,137

Source: American Community Survey 2014

Table 16. Households & Families Receiving Food Stamps

Types of Households and Families	Number And %
Households Receiving Food Stamps	291,541
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	25.50%
Households with children under 18 years	53.70%
Households below poverty level	59.10%
Households with one or more people with a disability	44.90%
Household Median income (dollars) past 12 months	15,749

Types of Households and Families	Number And %
Families Receiving Food Stamps	210,434
Families with no workers in past 12 months	28.00%
Families with 1 worker in past 12 months	48.20%
Families with 2 or more workers in past 12 months	23.80%

Source: American Community Survey 2014

In 2014, Alabama ranked 21st in the country in veteran population. (VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics) The state is home to five military bases: Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Montgomery; Anniston Army Depot, Bynum; Fort Rucker, Dale; Redstone Arsenal; and, Aviation Training Center Coast Guard, Mobile. In addition, Alabama is home to the fifth largest Army National Guard in the nation, with a total force of approximately 13,000. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS, 2014), the veteran population in the state in 2014 was approximately 344,304 (Table 17). The largest percentage of veterans lives in the areas where military bases are located. WDR 7, which includes the Montgomery metro area, includes a large percentage of veterans. A very large percentage of veterans live in southeast Alabama in WDR 10, where Fort Rucker is located.

Veterans in the state display a strong desire to become members of the workforce, which is displayed in the labor force participation rate of 72.0 percent. Over 63.0 percent of the veteran population in the state has at least some education beyond high school, with 25.0 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher. While the unemployment rate in 2014 averaged around 6.8 percent, the rate for veterans was 5.6 percent (ACS 2014). Still, there are many who need additional assistance due to disabilities incurred while serving, and other circumstances. Nearly 30,000 veterans were considered below poverty level in 2014 (ACS 2014). In addition, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics estimated that 88,048 veterans in the state were receiving disability compensation.

Table 17. Veteran Population

Characteristics and Features of Veterans	Numbers and %
Veteran population 18 years and over	344,304
MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Veteran population 18 years and over with income	35,573
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	
Veteran population 25 years and over	339,797
Less than high school graduate	7.30%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	29.00%
Some college or associate's degree	38.20%
Bachelor's degree or higher	25.50%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
Veteran population 18 to 64 years	189,579
Labor force participation rate	72.00%
Veteran labor force 18 to 64 years	136,509

Characteristics and Features of Veterans	Numbers and %
Unemployment rate (CPS rate)	5.60%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
Below poverty in the past 12 months	8.60%
DISABILITY STATUS	
With any disability	32.40%
Source: American Community Survey 2014	

(II)(B)(i) Employment and Unemployment (continued)

An additional source of skilled labor exists in a pool of workers who are considered underemployed. Workers in occupations that underutilize their experience, training, and skills are underemployed. These workers often respond to job opportunities that they believe are better for reasons that include; lack of job opportunities, low wages in available jobs, and living too far from jobs. Workforce partners in Alabama fund an annual underemployment survey. This survey is in its sixth year of existence. The 2014 survey reported approximately 8,896 responses across the state. In 2014, the underemployment rate in Alabama was 25.2 percent. Half of the counties in the state had an underemployment rate higher than the state. The workforce development regions with the lowest rates were WDR 5 and WDR 10, with 22.2 percent for both. WDR 8 had the highest, 30.6 percent, with WDR 7 close behind at 28.7 percent. Both of those regions include universities that produce large numbers of college graduates annually.

Most workers are satisfied with their jobs, but not satisfied with their earnings. If offered jobs paying up to 15.0 percent higher wages, 29.0 percent, about 590,000 workers, will leave their current jobs; 6.0 percent, 140,925, would leave for only a 5.0 percent increase. Respondents are asked if they have looked for a better job within the past three months. For all employed respondents in the state in 2014, 21.7 percent responded that they had, which was up from 19.3 percent the previous year. Of only those considered underemployed in the state, 35.7 percent had sought another job, up from 34.9 percent the previous year. The latest survey reported WDR 2 and WDR 3 with the highest percentages of respondents that have pursued a better job within the last three months. In WDR 2, 26.5 percent of all employed, and 43.9 percent of those considered underemployed sought better opportunities. Data reported in WDR 3 was 23.8 percent of all employed, and 42.1 percent of underemployed.

Included in the survey instrument were questions about job satisfaction and willingness to train. Data collected showed that 70.0 percent of workers classified as underemployed were willing to train for a better job. Understandably, more were willing to train if the cost was covered by someone other than themselves. However, more of the underemployed were willing to pay for training themselves to develop their skills and gain better opportunities.

(II)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends

Nonagricultural employment of Alabama residents in the state averaged about 1.8 million quarterly from the second quarter of 2001 to the second quarter of 2014. The number of jobs in the state dropped from a high of 1.9 million in fourth quarter 2007 to a low of 1.7 million in the first quarter of 2011. Employment has shown signs of recovery after the first quarter of 2011, but was just above 1.8 million in the second of quarter of 2014.

The manufacturing sector was the leading employer in Alabama with 254,575 jobs in the second quarter of 2014. Rounding out the top five industries by employment are health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and educational services. These five industries provided 1,063,112 jobs, 58.8 percent of the state total. Manufacturing has historically had a huge impact on the economy of the state. Due to the export of jobs to other countries, a large fraction of Alabama's manufacturing employment in textile and apparel dwindled down to only a few thousand, tens of thousands at its height. Alabama has since replaced many of those lost jobs with transportation manufacturing. The state is home to four major auto manufacturing plants, a major ship building plant, several aerospace manufacturing plants including one producing planes in the US for the first time, located in Mobile, AL. These major plants have led to hundreds of thousands of jobs in parts manufacturing across the state. Automobiles have become Alabama's number one export. The state ranks second in the United States in vehicle exports, and fifth in the number of vehicles manufactured.

The growth of transportation manufacturing in the state has produced a huge demand for highly skilled technical workers. Occupations such as team assemblers, aircraft mechanics, aircraft assemblers, welders, industrial machinery mechanics, computer-controlled machine operators, machinists, and many others have experienced significant increases in employment. Furthermore, advances in technologies, such as the wide use of robots for parts assembly, have raised the level of skills required to compete for these jobs. As a result, industry and workforce development leaders in the state joined forces to open a Robotic Maintenance Training Center in 2010. This facility provides industry specific training in robotic systems, advanced manufacturing, welding, and more at no cost to Alabama industries and their affiliates. In 2011, the advanced research and development center was added to the Robotics Technology Park. This facility is used by public and private entities that are engaged in research and development of robotic and automated technologies. The newest facility, set to open in early 2016, is the integration, entrepreneurial and paint/dispense training center. The entrepreneurial section will allow Alabama companies space to build and adapt automation for new and existing manufacturing processes. It will also allow the companies to train staff on equipment processes before moving that equipment into the plant. The paint/dispense division gives Alabama businesses the opportunity to train employees in both manual paint-spraying techniques as well as robotic dispense training. It can also be used for dispense process research and testing. This facility, as well as the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) Maritime training facility in Mobile, are providing invaluable training services to manufacturing employers across the state.

Health care makes up approximately 13.0 percent of the state's employment. While hospitals have maintained a fairly steady employment level over the last decade, the more specialized areas of the health care industry are showing rapid growth. Due to the rise in the age of the population, the demand for home health services and nursing care facilities has grown rapidly. Two of the largest occupations in demand in recent years, have become personal care aides and home health aides.

Although these are entry-level occupations, and the wages are very low, they provide those who are interested in health care as a career a wonderful opportunity to enter the field before their training is completed. Outpatient surgical procedures have become the norm due to advances in technology, and this has created a boom in outpatient care facilities, or rehabilitation facilities. The huge demand for physical therapists, physical therapists assistants, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists is a result of the increasing number of people who need assistance in order to function independently after medical procedures. The huge demand for health care has also created higher patient loads on physicians, which in the last decade has resulted in an increase in medical assistants, physician assistants, surgical assistants, etc. These professionals get trained to perform basic health care services, such as physicals, minor illnesses and health issues, and administer diagnostic tests, under the supervision of a physician. This frees the physicians to focus on the more serious medical problems. This is the trend throughout the health care industry. The number of

surgeons, physicians, dentists, anesthesiologists cannot alone handle the huge needs from a growing and aging population. This provides huge opportunities for people who are interested in working in a health care field and earning a sustainable wage without having to obtain advanced degrees. In Alabama, as in most of the states in the nation, specialized health care occupations dominate the high demand occupations. Half of the current list of the top forty occupations in highest demand are healthcare occupations, with nine requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry into the careers. Furthermore, looking at a list of the top 40 occupations in demand requiring less than a bachelor's degree, nearly half of those are also health care occupations.

(II)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends (continued)

The high demand occupations in the state are reflective of the industries that are showing a large potential for growth in the coming decade. Workforce development partners are dedicated to providing training to meet employers' demands for a skilled workforce in these high demand occupations. Furthermore, the goal to lift the state's economy is to provide its citizens with the necessary tools so that they are successful in careers that are high demand, fast growing, and also provide sustainable wages. The current top 40 high demand occupations in Alabama are based on the 2012-2022 occupational employment projections (Table 18). All three factors, demand, growth, and wages, are used to determine the occupations that fall into the category of high demand, or hot jobs, in the state.

Half of the occupations in high demand in the state are a result of the growing need for health care. With the demand for trained people in these careers comes a demand for instructors to teach. Oftentimes it is difficult to obtain instructors for health care specialties, because they earn higher wages working in the field than they would earn by teaching. Due to insurance costs and an increased number of the population needing health care, there are more demands for medical technician and assistant positions. Occupations such as physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physical therapist assistants, and others of this nature are increasing in demand to help physicians with the increased patient loads. Furthermore, the rise in the aging population is presenting needs in home health care and nursing care facility healthcare occupations. While the demand is high, so is the turnover; for these careers offer fairly low wages. This results in a very difficult situation to meet the needs of an aging population.

Approximately 25.0 percent of the high demand occupations are in what is being referred to as skilled trade occupations. These are normally occupations that appear in construction and manufacturing industries. Four of them, industrial machinery mechanics, engine and other machine assemblers, team assemblers, and computer-controlled machine tool operators, are a direct result of a fast growing transportation manufacturing industry in the state. While these are statewide demand occupations, the demand for skilled trade occupations in the state vary by region depending on the industry structure. This variability is reflected in the high demand occupations by region.

The remaining occupations that occur statewide in the high demand list are IT occupations, managers, and various financial and data analyst type occupations. This analyst demand is both a reflection of an aging population that is planning for retirement and also an increased emphasis on making effective and efficient decisions on production enhancement based on data analysis.

(II)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends (continued)

Most of these occupations require a bachelor degree or higher for entrance into the career. Due to the emphasis in WIOA on training beyond high school for entrance into high demand careers, the state also publishes the 40 high demand occupations that require less than a bachelor degree for entry (Table 20). All of these occupations except three can be classified into healthcare or the skilled

trade, construction or manufacturing, categories. A majority of them are projected to produce over 100 openings on average each year, based on both growth and replacement. The growth in these industries in addition to the high rate of older workers in both health care and manufacturing is expected to produce a large number of openings.

Table 18. Alabama High Demand Occupations 2012-2022

Table 18 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	1730	2460	41.87	3.58	100	\$124,456
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	2460	3310	34.46	3.01	120	\$108,163
Physical Therapists	2290	3080	34.66	3.01	135	\$83,459
Computer Systems Analysts	5840	7400	26.58	2.40	245	\$79,202
Nurse Practitioners	1750	2300	31.83	2.77	90	\$88,318
Software Developers, Applications	3740	4630	23.82	2.16	135	\$91,070
Physical Therapist Assistants	1870	2680	43.42	3.66	125	\$53,714
Management Analysts	5880	7120	21.03	1.93	215	\$90,315
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	10790	13270	22.92	2.09	365	\$55,989
Software Developers, Systems Software	3430	4180	21.82	2.00	120	\$96,298
Dental Hygienist	3050	3970	30.23	2.67	170	\$46,531
Cost Estimators	2590	3220	24.64	2.20	145	\$56,974

Table 18 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Computer User Support Specialists	7390	9310	25.85	2.34	305	\$45,150
Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	1370	1830	33.21	2.94	65	\$66,658
Logisticians	3880	4700	21.14	1.94	125	\$81,276
Personal Financial Advisors	1120	1430	28.18	2.47	50	\$101,706
Registered Nurses	45,970	54,620	18.82	1.74	100	\$55,869
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	2,380	3,010	26.6	2.38	95	\$58,334
Information Security Analysts	1030	1360	31.95	2.82	50	\$78,810
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2150	3440	59.84	4.81	165	\$35,687
Occupational Therapists	1140	1510	32.54	2.85	50	\$73,262
Medical and Health Services Managers	2420	2910	20.27	1.86	110	\$93,757
Construction Managers	4720	5590	18.55	1.71	160	\$89,682
Computer and Information Systems Managers	2930	3500	19.47	1.79	100	\$119,169
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1130	1630	44.59	3.73	65	\$47,758
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	9300	11140	19.74	1.82	455	\$48,790

Table 18 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14550	17960	23.38	2.13	695	\$35,178
Healthcare Social Workers	2520	3190	26.67	2.39	120	\$44,080
Physician Assistants	430	580	36.07	3.04	25	\$88,677
Anesthesiologists	680	850	23.54	2.26	35	\$245,745
Medical Secretaries	4450	6010	35.12	3.05	210	\$29,313
Carpenters	11160	13910	24.59	2.23	410	\$32,267
Team Assemblers	29770	36770	21.67	1.98	\$33,751	
Personal Care Aides	10730	15700	46.41	3.88	575	\$17,830
Home Health Aides	8340	11730	40.57	3.47	495	\$19,206
General and Operations Managers	27430	30970	12.91	1.22	865	\$119,850
Computer- Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	2060	2720	31.89	2.82	125	\$33,367
Pharmacists	5160	5890	14.11	1.33	195	\$119,015
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	2210	2820	27.74	2.47	120	\$35,849
Speech- Language Pathologists	1200	1480	23.09	2.12	45	\$65,139

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wages data is based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics

(II)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends (continued)

Twenty occupations were selected as the fastest growing in the state of Alabama for the 2012-2022 time period (Table 19). Each of these occupations was expected to have an average of nearly 3.0 percent growth each year during the period. Twelve of the twenty are health care related occupations, and six were primarily construction or manufacturing occupations.

Table 19. Alabama's Fastest Growing Occupations 2012-2022

Table 19 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2150	3440	59.84	4.81	165
Occupational Therapy Assistants	380	530	49.58	3.94	25
Personal Care Aides	10730	15700	46.41	3.88	575
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1130	1630	44.59	3.73	65
Physical Therapist Assistants	1870	2680	43.42	3.66	125
Computer-Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	2910	410	42.27	3.52	20
Helpers—Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and tile and Marble Setters	340	490	41.98	3.72	20
Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	1730	2460	41.87	3.58	100
Insulation Workers, Mechanical	550	770	40.62	3.42	30
Home Health Aides	8340	11730	40.57	3.47	495
Interpreters and Translators	360	500	38.55	3.34	20
Physician Assistants	430	580	36.07	3.04	25

Table 19 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment2022	% Change	AverageAnnual Growth %	AverageAnnual Openings
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	470	640	35.39	3.14	25
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	840	1140	35.19	3.10	40
Medical Secretaries	4450	6010	35.12	3.05	210
Physical Therapists	2290	3080	34.66	3.01	135
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	2460	3310	34.46	3.01	120
Helpers— Electricians	1860	2490	34.16	2.96	90
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	590	790	33.96	2.96	25
Physical Therapist Aides	540	720	33.58	2.92	30

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wages data is based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 20. Alabama High Demand Occupations Requiring Associate Degree and Under, 2012-2022

Table 20 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	AverageAnnual Growth %	AverageAnnual Openings	AverageAnnualSalary
Physical Therapist Assistants	1870	2680	43.42	3.66	125	\$53,714
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and	10790	13270	22.92	2.09	365	\$55,989

Table 20 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Extraction Workers						
Dental Hygienist	3050	3970	30.23	2.67	170	\$46,531
Computer User Support Specialists	7390	9310	25.85	2.34	305	\$45,150
Registered Nurses	45,970	54,620	18.82	1.74	\$55,869	
Engine and Other Machine Assemblers	2150	3440	59.84	4.81	165	\$35,687
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1130	1630	44.59	3.73	65	\$47,758
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	9300	11140	19.74	1.82	455	\$48,790
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14550	17960	23.38	2.13	695	\$35,178
Medical Secretaries	4450	6010	35.12	3.05	210	\$29,313
Carpenters	11160	13910	24.59	2.23	410	\$32,267
Team Assemblers	29770	36770	21.67	1.98	\$33,751	
Personal Care Aides	10730	15700	46.41	3.88	575	\$17,830
Home Health Aides	8340	11730	40.57	3.47	495	\$19,206
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	2060	2720	31.89	2.82	125	\$33,367
Medical and Clinical	2210	2820	27.74	2.47	120	\$35,849

Table 20 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Laboratory Technicians						
Electricians	10070	11880	18.02	1.67	370	\$43,197
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	3300	4220	28.05	2.49	180	\$29,374
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators and Tenders	1560	2060	32.12	2.82	90	\$34,727
Occupational Therapy Assistants	360	530	49.58	3.94	25	\$55,187
Machinists	6020	7220	19.92	1.83	260	\$38,512
Medical Assistants	6920	8800	27.06	2.43	320	\$25,598
Construction Laborers	12060	14860	23.25	2.11	540	\$26,614
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1960	2460	25.61	2.30	80	\$42,413
HVAC and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	4910	5890	19.89	1.84	220	\$39,170
Medical Equipment Repairers	660	870	32.32	2.80	40	\$44,244
Cardiovascular Technologists and	840	1100	30.60	2.73	40	\$44,696

Table 20 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Technicians						
Commercial Pilots	1180	1390	17.23	1.65	55	\$83,943
Radiologic Technologists	3550	4220	18.85	1.74	115	\$45,463
Helpers - Electricians	1860	2490	34.16	2.96	90	\$26,318
Surgical Technicians	1070	2500	27.25	2.41	75	\$33,994
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	1740	2210	26.93	2.42	65	\$35,145
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	39710	4800	20.98	1.92	145	\$31,982
Dental Assistants	3060	3720	21.51	1.97	130	\$30,809
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	840	1140	35.19	3.10	40	\$34,817
Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors	760	990	29.62	2.68	40	\$38,540
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	2750	3330	21.22	1.93	130	\$30,756
Merchandise Displays and Window Trimmers	4120	5010	21.80	1.98	200	\$24,986
Billing and Posting Clerks	6810	81090	18.87	1.74	255	\$30,390

Table 20 Occupations	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	% Change	Average Annual Growth %	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary
Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	25380	28340	11.66	1.11	790	\$63,394

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on three variables: growth, openings, and wages. May 2014 wages data is based on the May 2013 OES employment and wage estimate file.

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics

(II)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends (continued)

(II)(B)(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

In 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revised their assignment of educational and training categories to occupations. While these assignments represent a typical path to enter an occupation, more often than not additional training must occur to develop employees to perform more specified tasks. Using American Community Survey (ACS) and the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) data, BLS assigned every occupation an education and training category including three parts; typical education needed for entry, work experience required in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training.

Using these assignments, the training and educational level of the present workforce and future needs of the workforce was analyzed in Alabama using 2012-2022 occupational employment projections data. In 2012, only 30.0 percent of the people worked in occupations that required formal education beyond high school. In other words, only 30.0 percent of the jobs required at least some college or postsecondary award or certification to qualify them to enter employment. However, around half the people in jobs that didn't require formal training, high school diploma or less, were still required to successfully complete some level of moderate to long term training to learn the specific duties of the job. When looking at the projected employment through 2022, the state is expected to grow 10.4 percent. Analyzing the projected growth by formal training categories, jobs requiring an associate's degree are expected to grow the most at 18.9 percent, significantly higher than the state average. Furthermore, all categories from some college without a degree all the way through a doctoral or professional degree are expected to grow at a rate higher than the state average. This is the norm throughout the country. Those jobs only requiring a high school diploma or less are projected to grow near 9.0 percent over the period.

Looking at projected growth by on-the-job training requirements, jobs requiring apprenticeships are projected to grow twice as fast as the state average, at 20.3 percent. Statistics have always shown that education pays, and the data still holds true. But in 2013 in Alabama, the average salary for the

workforce in jobs requiring an associate degree, \$48,622, nearly equaled the state average salary for all occupations at \$48,723. The data also illustrates that work experience pays more; for people holding jobs that required work experience to enter the occupation, received higher than the average wages for all occupations in the state. Those requiring at least five years of work experience nearly double the salary of the state average.

In recent years, national attention has been drawn to skills requirements for jobs. Employers are telling workforce development officials that they cannot find people with the skills to fill their open positions. Often employers and public officials will use the term “high skilled jobs” or that they can’t find skilled people to fill these jobs. The understanding is that these gaps are often in skilled trade positions and jobs that do require training past high school, some more intensive than others, but don’t require as high as a bachelor degree to enter the job and be successful. Some researchers have begun using terms such as low skill, medium skill, and high skill jobs. Low skill jobs are jobs that require a high school diploma or GED or less and no further training to enter the occupation. High skill jobs require a bachelor’s degree or higher. Medium skill jobs have become the focus of workforce development efforts. These are jobs that may not require a degree, but do require at least some training after high school, whether it is extensive on the job training, or a certification, license, or apprenticeship, or maybe an associate degree. These are the jobs employers are experiencing difficulties filling. Over a third of the jobs in Alabama fall into this category. Furthermore, looking at the top forty occupations that ADOL determined to be high demand for the projection period of 2012-2022, not only are there more people currently employed in those high demand medium skilled jobs than the high and low skilled jobs combined, there will obviously be more openings due to growth and replacement in those jobs than the high and low skilled combined. Just the medium skilled high demand jobs alone were projected to create over 32,000 new jobs through 2022. According to the Alabama Department of Labor. Labor Market Information data projections for 2012-2022, there will be 143,696 medium skill high demand job needs; there will be only 21,218 low skill high demand job needs; and there will be 88,108 high skill high demand job needs. The medium skill high demand jobs are the jobs that are important to fill, for these are determined to be growing faster than average, produce a large number of job openings, and also provide a sustainable wage.

(II)(B)(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce (continued)

During the 2011-2012 school year Alabama’s high school graduation rate was 75.0 percent, higher than only ten states in the nation, with the national rate at 80.0 percent. Education and public officials in the state have worked tirelessly to improve the graduation rate, implementing PLAN 2020, with the goal of preparing all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school, and getting the high school graduation rate up to 90.0 percent by 2020. As a result, during the 2013-2014 school year, Alabama’s high school graduation rate was up to 86.3 percent, up from 80.0 percent the previous year. Furthermore Alabama had the nation’s second highest increase behind Delaware in the same time period. On January 14, 2016 the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) announced a graduation rate increase to 89 percent for the 2013-14 school year. Early data show that approximately 68.0 percent of the high school graduates met standards for college, work, or the military. Although the graduation rate has improved, the percentage of students enrolled in Alabama public colleges taking remedial classes has remained steady at 32.0 percent. Half of Alabama’s high school graduates enrolled in Alabama public colleges. Of these nearly 23,000 students, 15.0 percent of them took remedial math, 5.6 percent took remedial English, and another 11.4 percent took both remedial math and English in college. The large percentage of Alabama students required to take remedial classes beyond high school intensifies the gaps in decision making and problem solving skills. Alabamians who are weak in the basic math and English skills will be less likely to be able to apply these skills to everyday workplace decisions.

(II)(B)(iv) Skill Gaps

According to employers, the most apparent problem with the workforce in the state is a lack of soft skills. Skills such as work ethic, dependability, basic comprehension skills, ability to follow rules, critical thinking, and leadership are lacking in the workforce in the state. Alabama's Ready To Work program, provided at 63 sites, was developed to train students in basic skills requiring a 95.0 percent attendance and punctuality rate, a 70.0 percent score on the Alabama Certified Worker Examination, a minimum WorkKeys Assessment Level 3 on Applied Math, reading for information, and locating information, and others. The AIDT Maritime Training Center in Mobile reports that tardiness and absenteeism is the major cause of the industry's 38.0 percent turnover rate. A survey conducted by WDR 9, known as the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council, revealed that the main reasons for terminating employees were not lack of technical skills, but tardiness, absences, and lack of teamwork.

The Occupational Information Network (O*NET), divides skills into various categories, with basic skills being skills that all occupations require at some level. O*NET also uses additional categories of skills, such as complex problem solving, resource management, social, systems, and technical skills. For total openings projected for Alabama through 2018, the highest skills gaps are expected to occur in basic skills, obviously because these skills are present in all occupations. The most critical of these skills was reading comprehension, with active listening next. The resource management skill that will experience the highest gap is time management. The highest skills gap for systems skills was in judgment and decision-making, and the highest gap for technical skills was in equipment selection.

On closer examination of the required skills for Alabama's projected high demand, fast growing, and high earning occupations, a determination was made on the percentage of occupations that include a particular skill as primary, or ranked in the ten most important skills for the occupation (Table 21). Complex problem solving is a primary skill in 58.0 percent, judgment and decision making primary in 65.0 percent, and social perceptiveness in 55.0 percent of the high demand occupations. Technical skills that were prominent in the high demand occupations were operation monitoring (watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly) and quality control analysis (conducting tests and inspections of products, services or processes to evaluate quality or performance).

Table 21. Percentage of Selected Occupations for Which Skill is Primary

Skills	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
Basic Skill: Active Learning	38	35	54
Basic Skill: Active Listening	98	80	90
Basic Skill: Critical Thinking	98	90	90
Basic Skill: Learning Strategies	10	10	10
Basic Skill: Mathematics	8	5	18
Basic Skill: Monitoring	73	80	56
Basic Skill: Reading Comprehension	85	70	82
Basic Skill: Science	15	10	34
Basic Skill: Speaking	93	80	88
Basic Skill: Writing	53	30	60

Skills	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
Complex Problem Solving Skill: Complex Problem Solving	58	25	72
Resource Management Skill: Management of Financial Resources	3	0	2
Resource Management Skill: Management of Material Resources	0	0	0
Resource Management Skill: Management of Personnel Resources	8	0	12
Resource Management Skill: Time Management	35	50	12
Social Skill: Coordination	45	55	28
Social Skill: Instructing	23	35	14
Social Skill: Negotiation	0	0	8
Social Skill: Persuasion	8	10	12
Social Skill: Service Orientation	35	45	12
Social Skill: Social Perceptiveness	55	55	42
Systems Skill: Judgment and Decision Making	65	40	80
Systems Skill: Systems Analysis	10	5	8
Systems Skill: Systems Evaluation	5	0	2
Technical Skill: Equipment Maintenance	3	0	0
Technical Skill: Equipment Selection	3	0	0
Technical Skill: Installation	0	0	0
Technical Skill: Operation and Control	5	5	2
Technical Skill: Operation Monitoring	10	10	2
Technical Skill: Operations Analysis	3	0	8
Technical Skill: Programming	5	5	2
Technical Skill: Quality Control Analysis	13	15	0
Technical Skill: Repairing	3	5	0
Technical Skill: Technology Design	0	0	0
Technical Skill: Troubleshooting	3	5	0

Note: Rounding errors may be present. Source: O*NET Online and Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama

(II)(B)(iv) Skill Gaps (continued)

While data collected at the national and state level are helpful to identify very general skills that are lacking in the workforce, it is vital for workforce development partners to ascertain more specific information. Employers are experiencing firsthand the skills gap problems and are an excellent resource to determine the skills that are lacking in the workforce.

According to employers in manufacturing, utilities, and construction industries across the state, applicants are rejected often because they do not display essential skills rather than lacking technical skills. The 2013 Alabama Skills Gap Survey reported that 67% of respondents rejected applicants due to poor attitude or presentation. Employers also listed additional reasons for rejecting applicants such as lack of driver's license or reliable transportation, attendance history, employment history, and failed employment skills testing. When those employers were asked to identify weaknesses in their existing workforce, the overwhelming response was attendance problems. Over 800 employers indicated following directions, and approximately 750 employers chose time management as major deficiencies in their workforce. Employers were asked which of the three would be the most valuable training to improve the workforce between more education, occupational experience or skills, or soft skills. Employers indicated that training in soft skills would be most valuable to improve the workforce.

Youth in Alabama have the lowest participation in the labor force than any other age group. Youth who are participating in the labor force experience the highest unemployment rate of all age groups. Research conducted by the Education Testing Service reported that adults born after 1980 are weak in literacy, math, and problem solving in the present high tech environment. The data reports that this population in the U.S. is far weaker than other countries, and can hurt the economy in the U.S. According to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), over 3,500 students graduating in 2015 who enrolled in Alabama public colleges were required to take remedial math classes in college. Additionally, 30% of the graduates in Alabama's public colleges were enrolled in remedial math, remedial English, or both.

While youth in Alabama display gaps in math and reading skills, employers are concerned more about life skills. Youth are lacking fundamental skills which employers expect all employees to have; punctuality, good attendance, respect for superiors, and motivation. In addition, employers are concerned about skills involving teamwork and communication. The education system is addressing these skills with students enrolled in K-12 and in community colleges, but out of school youth need training in these essential skills that will allow them to be successful in the work place.

Adults face many of the same challenges as youth. As mentioned above, people born after 1980 that reside in this country are weaker in math and reading skills than those in other countries. As a result, even adults into their 30's need assistance in developing these skills. Many adults born before 1980 need additional training in using today's technology. Many older adults are not as computer literate as today's workplace requires. Burning Glass reported that 78% of middle-skill jobs in the country require computer skills, such as spreadsheet and word processing. In today's world, problem solving in the workplace requires an understanding of digital technology. Adults need computer skills to seek job opportunities, apply for jobs, develop a resume, at the very least, and a large number of adults in Alabama need computer applications training. More than a third of Alabamians lack internet access, either due to service area or choice not to pay for service. Many of these residents are low-income individuals, who need assistance to gain additional skills that can help them secure sustainable employment.

The TANF population all fall into the “Low Income Individuals” category. However, they may be represented in of several of the categories listed above. TANF clients are the larger welfare population while JOBS clients are a subset of TANF clients that participate in the TANF work program known as JOBS. Analysis and observations show the following:

- 20% of TANF clients lack a high school diploma or GED
- Majority of JOBS client lack a substantive work history
- Majority of JOBS clients lack reliable transportation
- Majority of TANF clients lack reliable/legal Child Care services

Soft Skills deficiencies for JOBS clients include:

- Attendance
- Attire
- Customer Service
- Communication
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving
- Computer knowledge
- Work Ethic
- Research
- Writing

The JOBS Program in Alabama referred 3,731 clients to job readiness classes during 2015 with the intention of developing and/or significantly improving the client's work skills, especially soft skills. From these, a total of 1,065 people acquired employment. Further investigation reveals that out of a total 233 new hires for the year, 138 remained employed for at least 90 days after their start date.

SNAP participants fall in the “Low Income” category. Many participants in this category face barriers to employment, especially ABAWDS (Able Bodied Adults without Dependents). There are approximately 14,729 ABAWDs in the state that are unemployed. There are an additional 86,881 SNAP participants that are not working for various reasons. Currently, ABAWDS in 10 counties are referred to partnering Career Centers for assistance to find employment. While there, participants may also receive assistance with skills gaps that are barriers to employment. Some of the skills gaps identified by the Career Centers are:

- Effective Communication skills
- Computer Skills
- Conflict Resolution skills
- Customer Service Skills
- Dressing for Success
- Interviewing Skills
- Resume Preparation
- Soft Skills (How to Maintain Employment)
- Coping with Change
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Effectively Dealing with Stress

- Work Ethics

The aforementioned gaps are confirmed with our Alabama Department of Labor Career Center partners, who work with our clients to meet these needs on a regular basis. Many Career Center locations hold workshops on location to cover these topics in an effort to educate the population that we serve with the overall goal in mind of improving a participant's employability. Approximately 10% of those referred are taking advantage of the services currently offered at the Career Centers but we are maximizing our efforts to increase that number to help ensure that all in need receive the best services afforded to them. Although only ABAWDS are currently referred to the Career Center, any SNAP participant may partake of the services that are offered at the various Career Centers located throughout the state. Through our many visits, it has been made known that many other SNAP participants do take advantage of the Career Center services offered, they simply are not ABAWDs.

Alabama's residents who are faced with some type of disability have additional barriers and unique skills gaps. Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and American Community Survey demonstrate that approximately 73% of working age Alabamians with a disability who wish to participate in the labor force are unemployed. While each individual with a disability's barriers to employment are unique, it may be observed that certain skill-gaps are quite common. Data on educational outcomes and skill attainment consistently show disproportionately lower outcomes among Alabamians with disabilities, particularly among those disabled at an early age. Educational qualifications appear to be of critical importance to Alabamians with disabilities as they pursue entry to the labor market. The positive effects of post-secondary training upon both labor force participation and lifetime earnings of persons with disabilities is firmly established within data from the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics. After reviewing consumer surveys, findings from public hearings, and VR's most recent Comprehensive Needs Assessment, ADRS identified the most common skills gap, or barriers to skills attainment, faced by ADRS consumers. They are as follows:

A. The majority of Alabamians with disabilities who are capable of post-secondary education require reasonable accommodations within the postsecondary setting. Yet many never receive these accommodations. VR's instruction in the self-advocacy skills needed to acquire academic accommodations has been proven effective in this regard. VR counselors also assist students with disabilities in their pursuit of academic accommodations by helping them obtain the necessary documentation that is required.

B. Alabamians with disabilities have a need for greater access to rehabilitation technology resources to include assistance in selecting the right solution, training in the use of these resources, and financial assistance to acquire them.

C. Because of the inherent limitations posed by some disabilities, Alabamians with disabilities must make informed choices regarding their vocational goal selection and subsequent career pathways in order to minimize barriers to employment and maximize success on the job. There are times when an individual with a disability may pursue a job goal for which, according to Alabama's labor market demand, little opportunity of job growth exists. To address this issue, ADRS will provide professional staff with a labor market "dashboard" that will make it clear and easy to recognize which occupations within the state show the most promising future. Training will be provided to staff to enhance their ability to use current labor market information to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities into higher demand jobs.

D. Alabamians with disabilities often experience delays in participating in employment opportunities and subsequently lack "soft skills" such as communication, team building, decision-making, time-management, etc. Furthermore, Alabamians with developmental disabilities have a "soft skills" gap

because of the nature of the disability and will require specific training geared towards addressing this “soft skills” gap.

E. Long gaps in employment history, due to absences from the job market either because of the onset of a disability or the intermittent need for medical treatment due to a disability, are often a source of concern among employers because there is a loss of skills that is typically be gained by workers who acquire specific skills-sets while working on-the-job over long periods of time.

Requested Revision(s)

Item partially addressed. Update State Plan narrative or Action Plan.

2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in Employers' Employment Needs above. This must include an analysis of –

A. The State’s Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.*

* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

(2) (A) The State’s Workforce Development Activities

Alabama devotes significant resources to education and workforce development at the local, regional and State levels. In 2014, Governor Bentley created and formally established the Alabama Workforce Council. The Council was tasked with advising and supporting core partners in Alabama’s workforce development and education system to include, but not limited to, reviewing ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State, evaluating regional workforce development and educational needs by promoting regional workforce councils and evaluating public/private partnerships (sectors) to create a feedback loop for industry and education.

The core programs including WIOA Title I–B, Wagner–Peyser, Adult Education and Rehabilitation Services provide a number of educational training activities through their respective programs. All of

these activities are represented on the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB). The AWDB also has cross representation from the private business sector membership on the Alabama Workforce Council.

The core programs previously under the Workforce Investment Act and currently under WIOA have participated and partnered in Alabama's One-Stop Career Center system since 2001. The core partner programs include WIOA Title I, adult, dislocated worker and youth training activities provided through a newly developing system within Alabama. In the proposed system there will be not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9) local workforce development boards and an appropriate number of administrative entities. The State level administrative entity for WIOA Title I is the Alabama Department of Commerce, that provides oversight and policy guidance through the Alabama Workforce Development Board for activities under WIOA Title I.

The yet to be determined workforce development areas provide career services, client assessment, case management, referral to Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work based learning. They also provide specialized employment and training activities for youth, including basic education, GED programs, occupational skills training, and work based learning activities.

The Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes the following programs and entities operated through the following agents.

- **Alabama Career Center System** – Operated as a partnership between the Alabama Department of Commerce ((WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Alabama Department of Labor (Wagner-Peyser) UI, TAA and Veterans). The Career Center System also collaborates with Adult Education, Rehabilitative Services, TANF, SNAP and Title IV of the Older Americans Act (SCESP). Statewide there are 26 Comprehensive Career Centers and 14 satellite and itinerant sites in the system. In PY2014 the Alabama Career Center System provided 352,837 individuals with Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services and 7,924 individuals with WIOA training services, serving low-income adults, youth, and dislocated workers. Wagner-Peyser funding for PY2014 was \$8,502,449 and Workforce Investment Act funds totaled \$32,090,579.
- **Adult Education Activities** – Adult Education services are offered through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) throughout the state. In Fiscal Year 2015 funding totaled \$20,154,737 and had enrolled approximately 20,000 full time and 26,000 part time students in adult education classes. Adult Education have been an active partner with the Alabama Career Center system since 2001 and will continue to expand services within the Career Centers under WIOA.
- **Alabama Department of Labor – Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services** – The Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) houses the Wagner-Peyser program (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services programs. ADOL Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I programs have been collocated as part of the Alabama Career Centers since 2001. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) is provided by the ADOL. Alabama Job Link is the online job seeker and employer registration system that provide job seeker skills, abilities and work history with employers posting job openings in the system. ADOL provides Trade Act services and Veterans employment representatives in the Career Centers. In PY2014 approximately 350,000 job seekers were registered in the AJL system.
- **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)** – The Department of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities to become employable. Services include skill assessments, counseling, training programs, job

placement, assistive technology and transportation. For Program Year 2014 funding for the VRS program totaled approximately \$25,000,000; and for the same period 31,244 job seekers with disabilities were provided services. Since 2001 the VRS has been an active partner in the Alabama Career Center System.

(2) (A) The State's Workforce Development Activities (continued)

Optional Partner Programs

- • **Alabama Department of Human Resources – TANF and SNAP** – The Alabama TANF Program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. TANF provide family assistance to provide income to low income one parent families needing support to provide basic needs for dependents. The welfare to work component of family assistance is known as the JOBS program. All clients receiving assistance are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. Individuals on family assistance determined to ready to engage in work activities will be placed in a work-related activity such as subsidized/unsubsidized employment, job search, job readiness classes, skills training or GED classes. The number of TANF clients in work activities for FY15 averaged 4,800 monthly and TANF expenditures for work activities totaled \$12,243,965.
- o **SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps)** also operated a work-related program through a contract with the Alabama Department of Labor for job search assistance. The number of clients provided services was 18,089 and expenditures totaled \$1,392,000.
- • **Alabama Department of Senior Services – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** – The Senior Community Service Employment program provides work-based job training for older Americans age 55 and up. For Program Year 2014 Alabama was allocated \$1,599,492 for the program to fund 165 slots for older workers through sixteen (16) subgrantees across the state.

Although not formal partner programs included in this plan, Alabama's community college system and K-12 public schools provide important support for the Alabama workforce system. Alabama's College and Career Ready standards for all high school graduates play an important role in preparing all students for college and workplace success. The Alabama Community College System is critical to the success of all workforce development activities in the state. Their specific programs for Career Technical Education in K-12 and the ACCS programs and activities are described in relevant sections of this plan.

B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

The strengths and weaknesses of Alabama's workforce development activities include the following:

Strengths:

- • **Strong support from political education and business leaders for workforce programs** across all agencies and programs.
- • **Business leadership within the Community College system** to align training programs with the needs of business and industry.

- • The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) with its network of 26 colleges and 89 instructional sites provides access to students throughout the State seeking career pathways and credentials to qualify for middle skills jobs.
- • Alabama has partnership between state level core program agencies that goes back to 2001. There is a culture of strong communication and collaboration that enhances services throughout the Alabama Career Center System.
- • The Alabama Career Center System that provides services to job seekers and employers at 26 comprehensive centers and 16 satellite and itinerant sites.

Weaknesses:

- • Limited data integration - Two of the core partner programs maintain separate data management systems for participant tracking and case management functions.
- • Limited awareness of the State and Local Workforce System as a brand by job seekers and employers. A unified and universal brand for the Alabama Workforce System needs to be created and implemented.
- • Lack of a P-20W statewide longitudinal data system to track how job seekers and students are using the Alabama Workforce System and competency job training programs from K-12 and postsecondary to employment.
- • The workforce system core and other partners must continue to emphasize soft shell training into all Alabama Workforce System supported training programs.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) currently consists of 25 community and technical colleges with over 100 sites to deliver education and training for the citizens of Alabama. The ACCS has over 150 Career and Technical Education credit programs that may lead to stackable short certificates, certificates, and Associate of Applied Science Degrees, with most having stackable, nationally recognized credentials as part of the program. The industry sectors that have the biggest enrollments are healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. The ACCS works very closely to with regional/local business and industry to support programs in high demand to meet capacity needs. The ACCS has several tools to offset potential capacity issues, such as utilizing labs at the partner secondary schools, mobile training units, employing adjunct faculty from business and industry, and etc.

The ACCS also has short term training programs at each of the colleges that target high demand, high wage careers on scheduled and on an “as needed or as required basis”. These programs have tremendous flexibility, and provide another avenue for those individuals needing a quicker setting for completing their training needs so they can move into their career pathway faster. This type of training leads to nationally recognized credentials or licensing and the curriculum provides a linkage for the individuals to potentially gain college credit should they choose to pursue additional training and education during their career.

Alabama’s workforce system capacity to provide services to both jobseekers and employers is shared by a number of agencies and program providers as summarized in (2)(A) of this document. The State’s network of Career Centers is a shared function among the Alabama Department of Commerce for WIOA Title I services, the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) for Wagner-Peyser, UI, Trade Act and Veterans’ services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services for vocational rehabilitation services and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) for adult

education (ABE) services. The network of twenty-five (25) comprehensive Career Centers and twenty-two (22) satellite and itinerant centers provides broad coverage in all sixty-seven (67) counties in Alabama. Also, the Alabama JobLink is an internet-based online registration system for jobseekers and employers.

The State agencies overseeing Alabama's WIOA core programs and optional partners not only share space and services throughout the Alabama Career Center System but also interact on a regular basis to share program opportunities to best deliver programs on a local and regional basis. Our agencies working off a solid background of sharing data and collaboration of program services are ready to serve the State's businesses, jobseekers, training seekers, and others with the most viable options to meet their needs. The Alabama Workforce System has implemented a number of recent changes including agency/program consolidation and industry led regional councils to ensure more efficient and comprehensive access to available services.

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. Vision

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Alabama will have a Workforce System that is aligned with the general and specific needs of Alabama business and focus on the alignment of programs to meet the skills gap needs of our workers (especially those with barriers to employment) and the economic strategies provided through the state's Accelerate Alabama 2.0 Strategic Plan.

2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single

parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

I.(b)(2) Goals

The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended and the Governor and Legislature have wholly adopted these recommendations as Alabama's goals:

1. 1. The State of Alabama will implement a Workforce System based on the Governor's Economic Development Strategic Plan (Accelerate Alabama 2.0) which is the second part of a two part plan to maintain the economic development momentum enjoyed by Alabama over the last several years.
2. 2. Provide a longitudinal data system as an integral part of the new Workforce System.
3. 3. Develop and implement a strong network of empowered Regional Workforce Councils that will play a central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain.
4. 4. Implement a streamlined funding system that enables each supply point to excel at meeting business needs and needs of citizens already in or preparing to be in the Alabama workforce.
5. 5. Create or identify streamlined funding channels for training with clear performance metrics.
6. 6. Develop and support a statewide education and training resource system that enables each resource to excel at meeting business needs effectively.

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce in Alabama include the following:

1. 1. To align and consolidate the programs and activities of the Community College system and Regional Workforce Councils with the state's vision and goals.
2. 2. To align the activities and programs of colleges, universities, and training agencies with the Accelerate Alabama 2.0 plan's three main tenets—Recruitment, Retention and Renewal.
3. 3. To ensure that all programs have strategies to serve individuals with barriers to employment. (The state has a very strong Department of Rehabilitation Services that works with many training and education programs. Our goal is to increase awareness of solutions for these individuals to be vertically integrated into all workforce programs.)

Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers in Alabama include the following:

1. 1. To implement a robust Regional Workforce Council System that provides direct feedback to education programs (Community and Technical College System, the K–12 Career Tech System, etc.) and to the Department of Commerce WIOA training providers.
2. 2. To align the activities and programs of local Workforce Investment Boards with activities and programs the state Regional Workforce Council system.
3. 3. To develop public/private partnerships that provide direct engagement between the public and private entities to increase capacity for meeting employers' workforce needs.

Alabama's core workforce development programs and WIOA partner programs are gathering and analyzing data on performance indicators to report for the 2014–2015 year. All programs will reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of this plan. To effect an orderly transition to the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA, the Departments will use the transition authority under WIOA Section 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators in the first plan submission. Alabama is

committed to collecting and reporting on all indicators as required by WIOA for current and future years using the reporting system prescribed.

3. Performance Goals

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Year: 2016 Year: 2017 Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) Adults 68.00% 72.30% 68.00% 75.30% Dislocated Workers 75.00% 75.00% 75.00% 78.00% Youth* (Education, Training or Employment 56.00% 50.00% 56.00% 53.00% Adult Education baseline baseline baseline baseline Wagner-Peyser 63.00% 63.00% 63.00% 64.00% Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Year: Year: Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) Adults 86.00% 70.40% 86.00% 73.40% Dislocated Workers 91.00% 72.00% 91.00% 75.00% Youth* (Education, Training or Employment 61.00% 61.50% 61.00% 64.50% Adult Education baseline baseline baseline baseline Wagner-Peyser 84.00% 66.00% 84.00% 67.50% Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Year: 2016 Year: 2017 Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) Adults \$2,459.00 \$5,250.00 \$2,459.00 Dislocated Workers \$3,888.00 \$6,000.00 \$3,888.00 \$6,300.00 Youth baseline baseline baseline baseline Adult Education baseline baseline baseline baseline Wagner-Peyser \$13,002.00 \$4,400.00 \$13,002.00 \$4,500.00 Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Year: 2016 Year: 2017 Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Credential Attainment Rate Adults 50.00% 52.80% 50.00% 53.80% Dislocated Workers 50.00% 52.50% 50.00% 55.50% Youth 50.00% 49.80% 50.00% 52.80% Adult Education baseline baseline baseline baseline Wagner-Peyser Not Applicable Not Applicable Not Applicable Not Applicable Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Year: Year: Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Measurable Skill Gains Adults baseline baseline baseline baseline Dislocated Workers baseline baseline baseline baseline Youth baseline baseline baseline baseline Adult Education 41.00% 41.00% 42.00% 42.00% Wagner-Peyser Not Applicable Not Applicable Not Applicable Not Applicable Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Year: Year: Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Proposed / Expected Level Negotiated / Adjusted Level Effectiveness in Serving Employers Adults baseline baseline baseline baseline Dislocated Workers baseline baseline baseline baseline Youth baseline baseline baseline baseline Adult Education baseline baseline baseline baseline Wagner-Peyser baseline baseline baseline baseline Vocational Rehabilitation baseline baseline baseline baseline Additional Indicators of Performance 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

Based on the Required Elements for Submission of the Unified and Combined State Plan Modifications Under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act released on February 18, 2016 the Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) Program will use baseline data for the first 2 years for all six of its indicators listed below and will therefore not submit expected performance levels for these indicators until this data has been established and can be used to negotiate adjusted levels of performance.

Employment in the second quarter

Employment in the fourth quarter

Median Earnings

Credential Attainment

Measurable Skill Gains

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

4. Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Assessment goals and goals for using assessment feedback to make improvements in programs and activities are as follows:

1. A longitudinal data collection and feedback system in the Regional Workforce Council regions will be implemented to report to and inform decision making by the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC). The State plans to begin implementation with state funds beginning in January 2017. Initial implementation will establish additional partner input and timelines.
2. The AWC will use the feedback/assessment data to make recommendations to the Governor, the Alabama Community College System Chancellor, the Alabama State Department of Education Superintendent, the Alabama Secretary of Commerce, and the Alabama Legislature to meet business needs and improve training/education activities and programs.
3. The WIOA Board and its leadership will ensure that 75% of the membership in each of the seven (7) Regional Workforce Councils are business and industry leaders and that each Region formally surveys, at least annually, these business professionals regarding the skill needs in each Region.
4. As the management of the seven (7) Regional Workforce Councils resides in the Alabama Department of Commerce along with the administrative support for the Governor's Alabama Workforce Council, there will be a natural and direct link between the Regional Councils and the Alabama Workforce Council.
5. The Department of Commerce will assist the Regional Councils and the Alabama Workforce Council in the formal reporting of the workforce needs from the regions.
6. The Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development has established formal communications regarding the workforce needs with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Human Services, and all other necessary agencies and entities that will have a direct impact on serving citizens that may have barriers to employment.
7. The Department of Commerce has formally established a working group of agency professionals for ongoing discussions related to the workforce data collected with a goal to establish action plans with goals and objectives directly related to the skill needs and the Accelerate Alabama Economic Development Strategic Plan that is facilitated by the Alabama Department of Commerce.

c. State Strategy

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). **“Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).**

(c) State Strategies to achieve goals

Alabama's strategies for achieving its strategic workforce development goals emerged from a two-year task force study by the Alabama Workforce Council appointed by Governor Robert Bentley on July 2, 2014. This study, by Alabama's leaders of industry, business, education and government, recommended these strategies in their report to the Governor on January 31, 2015:

1. Develop and implement a robust longitudinal data system (P–20W) for use by all stakeholders to inform decision-making and planning to meet changing workforce training and education needs. The P–20W data system will collect data from state education agencies, the Department of Labor, industries, and other parties to evaluate education and workforce trends. The system will serve as the centerpiece of the education and industry “feedback loop”.

2. Create and launch an awareness campaign to change generational misperceptions about long-term careers in the skilled trades and raise awareness about long-term career opportunities in Alabama. The campaign will serve as the marketing centerpiece for the state's workforce development efforts to educate students and adults about career pathways and opportunities, and to direct them to a one-stop-shop online resource for more information about educational programs, industry websites, and other workforce development programs.

3. Develop and implement a “One Stop Shop” online workforce information resource — a single online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities. Separate portals within the main site will deliver content relevant to each of the identified target demographic groups – (1) students, (2) adults seeking to re-enter the workforce, (3) parents, and (4) educators.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D)

Alabama's 26 Community Colleges (ACCS) has adopted a “1:2:7 Imperative” designed to better address the needs of students for whom a bachelor degree or graduate degree is not needed for employment. To assist these workers, ACCS's goal is to create a highly with multiple access points to provide educated, skilled workers reflecting the needs of regional businesses, thus improving both the local and state economy.

Alabama Community College System (ACCS) annually provides an entry to postsecondary education for approximately 150,000 students including credit, non-credit, and adult basic education. In order to meet the challenges of Alabama's current and emerging industries, ACCS is committed to providing the education and training to meet the skills demanded of the new and restructured jobs of the 21st century. Projections show an increasing number of those occupations, also known as middle-skill jobs, require a high school education coupled with some level of postsecondary training in career and technical education programs rather than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. It is projected that out of every ten (10) projected future occupations, one (1) will require a postgraduate degree, two (2) will require a bachelor's degree, and seven (7) will require a certificate, credential, and/or an associate's degree.

To meet these challenges, ACCS is implementing programs and strategies to:

- Cultivate partnerships and implement a modified "supply chain" approach;
- Create highways to completion (clear, defined steps to completion coupled with student-centered services and supports)
- Build capacity (acquire resources to accomplish the ACCS mission)
- Make data-informed decisions using a longitudinal data collection to evaluate progress and plan next steps.

Alabama's K-12 education system is also involved in workforce development and educating students for Alabama's high demand, high-paying jobs. Alabama public schools now (as of 2014) require all graduates to be college and career ready. Students enrolled in public high schools participate in career awareness courses and have opportunities to earn both college credit and career certifications while attending high school. All 12th grade students take the ACT WorkKeys assessment to provide prospective employers with information about their work place skills. In addition, all Alabama 11th grade students take the ACT to assess the achievement of academic skills.

Alabama's K-12 schools have a wide variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that allow students to pursue areas of interest for future employment. Career Pathways form a transit system for careers, mapping out the various routes workers can take to achieve their career and life goals. They serve as a recruitment and retention tool for industry sectors, clearly conveying the career pathways within the industry to incumbent and potential employees.

Businesses identify the career progression within occupations they need to prosper. The education system, with continued consultation with employers, organizes programs that allow job seekers to access the right amount of education and training to fulfill those job requirements and move up the career ladder throughout their lives.

The career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress towards the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways fully engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs. In turn, customers are encouraged to choose among a full range of education and work-based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the customer to a career pathway that taps their talents and leads to long-term economic security.

Career pathways are most effective when they are highly informed by businesses in a regional economy and, when they are supported by system partners. These pathways can offer a mechanism for those with barriers to employment to move more efficiently into jobs. The workforce development partners can identify potential participants and provide the support services for these job seekers to succeed in their education and training. Business input can help the education system better tailor and update curriculum based on regional industry needs and trends.

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) represents all schools in the state of Alabama, including 136 high schools. The ALSDE career and technical education (CTE) section is responsible for facilitating career, technical and academic education. Alabama organizes its CTE programs using the Career Clusters framework. Alabama CTE is offered through the following institutions: (1) Comprehensive high schools, (2) specialized CTE centers, and (3) Community Colleges. Alabama implements programs of study across all sixteen Career Clusters. Alabama has adopted the National Career Clusters Model and is implementing standards and programs across all 16 Career Clusters. The Alabama State Plan indicates that Career Cluster implementation will provide a smooth transition between secondary and postsecondary education and eliminate duplication of coursework. They will help students select a program of study that is academically and technically challenging that will also lead to postsecondary education opportunities or entry in to a high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupation. Alabama CTE leaders are working to align the state's CTE with the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations' top 40 high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations. This information is being used for all secondary CTE Courses of Study development.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D) (continued)

Programs of Study: Alabama maintains programs of study, secondary CTE standards and postsecondary CTE standards in each of the Career Clusters.

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Finance Career Cluster
- Government & Public Administration Career Cluster
- Health Science Career Cluster
- Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster

- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster
- Marketing Career Cluster
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Secondary to Postsecondary Transition & Alignment: Alabama offers dual enrollment and statewide articulation to ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary, namely through the Accelerated High School program, the Early College Enrollment Program and other dual enrollment opportunities.

Alabama has statewide articulation agreements in the following Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, AV Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster
- STEM Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Recognizing a major shortage of craft professionals within Alabama and a need for better career pathways for students, Alabama's legislature signed into law a requirement for all of ALSDE's CTE programs to have industry-supported advisory programs to ensure students are career ready upon graduation.

Industry Collaboration: In 2013, ALSDE created industry committees in response to new legislation requiring Alabama CTE programs to have advisory programs to ensure industry has influence on the training process. ALSDE identified representatives for the construction industry advisory committee by utilizing trade associations, like Associated Builders and Contractors and Home Builders Association. The construction advisory committee consists of a diverse group of industry stakeholders ranging from large contractors to state-led utilities to residential builders.

Feedback from all industry advisory committees indicated a strong demand for industry-recognized credentials, so the committees established Career Readiness Indicators, which equate to credentials or certifications that demonstrate a student is ready for career placement. The construction advisory committee strongly supported the use of NCCER curricula for the craft professions because committee members agreed NCCER provided the most widely recognized credentials.

The construction advisory committee meets twice a year to monitor Career Readiness Indicators, evaluate goals, validate curricula and ensure that students are learning in-demand skills. This routine observation and feedback allows industry to refine students' skills so that they are better suited for employment right out of high school.

Simulating the Workplace: In the fall 2015 semester, ALSDE launched the Alabama Simulated Workplace initiative that creates an environment modeled after the workplace. For example, students log their time and attendance and receive a simulated paycheck. The program is designed to build a student's real-world portfolio, and instead of receiving a letter grade, the student receives practical feedback on how to improve for his or her career. If a student's portfolio is weak, the student can even be fired.

The Simulated Workplace not only enhances instructional delivery and changes the culture of CTE, but also gives students the opportunity to take ownership of their individual performance. By 2018, every Alabama CTE center will become a simulated Alabama company. An essential component of the Simulated Workplace is feedback from industry advisory committees that inspect programs using industry-based rubrics as measurement tools. Each inspection team will review curriculum, interview instructors and students, and observe classroom environments, safety procedures and working processes.

Additionally, students graduating from ALSDE-endorsed workplaces receive not only a high school diploma, but also two credentials. The first credential is from ALSDE representing successful completion of an endorsed program, and the second is an industry credential that the curriculum is based upon. Students learning construction crafts earn NCCER Core or level credentials, which are also Career Readiness Indicators.

An important part of effectively delivering NCCER training to all of Alabama's CTE students was for the ALSDE to become an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor. Doing so allowed the ALSDE to establish each of its schools that offer construction programs as NCCER Accredited Training Education Facilities. This streamlined the process of delivering NCCER training and assessments, and made it easier for students to obtain NCCER credentials.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D) (continued)

Career Preparedness: To better facilitate career-based decision making among its students, ALSDE requires every student take a one-credit career preparedness course in ninth grade that focuses on academic and career planning prior to graduation.

The career preparedness course has three integrated areas of instruction: academic planning and career development, financial literacy and technology. Students define their career goals and plan their coursework through grade 12. This four-year plan is a dynamic document that can be updated, but it serves as a compass for students' career paths. The course allows students to spend a year looking at careers and what it takes to get there.

In addition, ALSDE employs 79 career coaches to better educate students on the options available to them. Career Coaches in Alabama high schools act as liaisons between industry, students and parents in each of ALSDE's schools. More students are earning in-demand industry credentials than ever before. From 2013 to 2014, NCCER module completions rose by nearly 90 percent and ALSDE expects to see even greater growth in when 2015 results are reported. The ACT WorkKeys assessment is administered to all high school seniors in Alabama public schools.

As baseline data for Alabama's CTE programs the following information for the 2014–15 school year is presented in Table 24 below.:

Table 24. Career Technical Education programs in Alabama

Item/Feature of CTE in Alabama	Number, Amount of Percentage
Number of public high schools	376
Number of public high school offering CTE courses	72
Students enrolled in public high schools	262,062
Students enrolled in CTE courses	170,448
Students identified as high school CTE concentrators	81,341
Number of public community colleges	26
Number of full and part-time students enrolled in public community colleges	125,477
Number of post-secondary CTE concentrators	39,932
Total Perkins funds received	\$ 19,175.065
Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to secondary schools	70 %
Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to post-secondary	30 %

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).

The Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division is dedicated to assisting the growth of Alabama businesses and the workers that sustain their operations. By directing individuals toward job skills improvement programs, education, and training, the Workforce Development Division equips workers with the tools and talents that employers demand.

At the center of the Workforce Development Division's mission is the Alabama Industrial Development Training agency (AIDT), one of the nation's top state workforce training agencies. AIDT offers comprehensive pre-employment selection and training, leadership development, on-the job training, and assessments — all specific to each company's needs. AIDT has worked with thousands of businesses and trained more than 600,000 workers.

The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce is responsible for several workforce programs formerly managed by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, including the Alabama Career Centers (funded by the Alabama Department of Commerce and managed by the Alabama Department of Labor) and various training programs. The division also oversees the state's seven (7) Regional Workforce Development Councils, which connect local business leaders with education officials to formulate strategies to ensure the job demands of the industry are being met.

Formally established in 2015 by the Alabama state legislature by Alabama Legislative Act No. 2015-450, the Regional Workforce Councils provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. The Councils are business-driven and business-led, and work with their member counties to develop a regional strategic plan and comprehensive workforce development system that supports local economic and job development activities.

Councils monitor the workforce needs of business and industry in their region, then develop and implement practical solutions. These range from hosting regional job fairs for immediate hiring needs, to addressing the short-term and long-term training needs of businesses. Regional Workforce Councils are a key mechanism in helping to ensure that there is an available pipeline of highly trained workers with relevant skills that Alabama companies want. Alabama's Regional Workforce Councils direct critical information and data to and from the Alabama Workforce Development Board.

To achieve the goals set by the Alabama Workforce Councils, Regional Workforce Councils, State WIOA Board and the Local Area Boards it is imperative that not only our core partners of the Combined Plan are fully integrated into the developing workforce system, but our optimal partners, as well. In the state legislation that created the Workforce Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce it clearly outlines that the Deputy Secretary of Commerce work directly with the Alabama Community College System Chancellor in developing joint process and rules for development and delivery of programs, such as the Regional Workforce Council Guidelines and the rules for developing the state's new Apprenticeship Alabama program. The point is, the Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Department of Commerce are working together on many levels and will continue that partnership as we seek to develop training for the populations to be served.

Adult Education in Alabama is managed within the Alabama Community College System and its leadership is included on our management team as well as on the Combined Plan writing team.

Currently, the Alabama Department of Commerce is actively involved with state agencies and institutions of Alabama's Rehabilitation Services to develop services for the populations they serve. Specifically, a Workforce Training Center has been established at the EH Gentry Campus of the Alabama Institution of the Deaf and Blind. This is an example of partnerships in action and the willingness and courage to continue developing pathways for populations that may have barriers to reach the workplace.

The Alabama Department of Labor manages the Alabama Career Center System that is funded by WIOA in Alabama. The respective staffs of these agencies are fully engaged and integrated as we serve the citizens.

The Combined Core Partners and Optimal partners have vowed to continue formally working together and developing strategy going forward as we learned the power we have when working as a team through this exercise of plan development. Our experience at the national convening meeting in Washington helped us see the value and we will continue working together through formal

meetings and joint activities aimed at our special populations. We have learned that leveraging our resources is very powerful.

In working with our core and optimal partners, to insure employment, the ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategies we have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program.

Core partners will be aligned through the guidance of the State and Local Workforce Development boards to meet the vision of a world class skilled workforce. Each core and additional partner will focus their services and resources to support the needs of jobseekers and employers.

The ACCS Adult Education Office is Alabama's eligible agency for adult education and is responsible for the administrative and programmatic oversight of the Title II AEFLA funds distributed to eligible, competitively selected providers. Under WIOA, ACCS Adult Education eligible providers' services may include all of the following:

- adult education and literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy;
- family literacy;
- English language acquisition;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation;
- integrated education and training.

ACCS Adult Education will focus on expanding low-skilled individuals' access to career pathways in high-demand occupations. With this focus, the integrated education and training (IET) activities and the contextualized curriculum and materials used for IET will be aligned to Alabama's College and Career Readiness standards for ELA/Literacy, science, and math. In addition, workforce preparation activities will align to OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework, and any occupational training components provided will be based on business and industry standards.

All low skilled jobseekers will have access to these Pathways through a "no wrong door" approach to career center services. The 1:2:7 Initiative that has been discussed in previous sections will allow guidance for all partners to focus alignment of resources to meet the objective of a trained skilled workforce.

Alabama's strategies for achieving its strategic workforce development goals emerged from a two-year task force study by the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) appointed by Governor Robert Bentley on July 2, 2014. This study, by Alabama's leaders of industry, business, education and government, recommended these strategies in their report to the Governor on January 31, 2015:

1. Develop and implement a robust longitudinal data system (P–20W) for use by all stakeholders to inform decision–making and planning to meet changing workforce training and education needs. The P–20W data system will collect data from state education agencies, the Department of Labor, industries, and other parties to evaluate education and workforce trends. The system will serve as the centerpiece of the education and industry “feedback loop.”

2. Create and launch an awareness campaign to change generational misperceptions about long–term careers in the skilled trades and raise awareness about long–term career opportunities in Alabama. The campaign serves as the marketing centerpiece for the state’s workforce development efforts to educate students and adults about career pathways and opportunities, and to direct them to a one–stop–shop online resource for more information about educational programs, industry websites, and other workforce development programs.

3. Develop and implement a “One Stop Shop” online workforce information resource — a single online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities. Separate portals within the main site will deliver content relevant to each of the identified target demographic groups – (1) students, (2) adults seeking to re–enter the workforce, (3) parents, (4) educators and (5) individuals with disabilities.

4. The Governor has directed that all actions related to job creation and workforce development are required to have a direct correlation to the Accelerate Alabama Plans that formally identify twelve (12) industry development sectors. The AWC recommendations mentioned here are all based on direct industry input, workforce data, and are connected through the Accelerate Alabama Plan. The Alabama Department of Commerce, through its Workforce Development Division, will insure alignment and full integration with all workforce system agencies, entities and citizens.

III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. State Strategy Implementation

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) was appointed by Governor Robert Bentley in November 2015 in compliance with Section 101(a) of WIOA. The AWDB carries out its WIOA required functions as provided in Section 101(d) of WIOA to ensure the alignment of Alabama’s workforce development programs. The Alabama Workforce Development Board meets quarterly and provides feedback on policies, programs and system effectiveness to core workforce partners and employers.

The Board has four (4) working committees in addition to the Executive Committee. The working committees are:

Strategic Planning Committee: The committee provides guidance and promotes strategies to strengthen partnerships among education, workforce partners and economic development efforts. Among other functions, the committee may also make recommendations regarding the alignment of programs and services within the Regions.

Performance Accountability and Oversight Committee: The Performance Accountability provides leadership and guidance regarding the development and continuous improvement of a statewide system of activities funded through WIOA and carried out through the one-stop career center system. The committee will also assist in assessing the effectiveness of the local Workforce Development Areas in continuous improvement of workforce development activities. **Communication and Marketing Committee:** The Communication Committee recommends ways to increase public awareness and promotes the services offered by Alabama's workforce development system. This Committee also recommends strategies to promote greater awareness of the system to business and industry.

Innovation and Opportunity Committee: The Innovation Committee assists the Board in developing a strategy to increase external growth and to leverage available existing resources to improve the quality of services.

The State Workforce Development Board's decision making process generally starts with the Board committees discussed above, State Board committees will meet between quarterly Board meetings to review recommended state policies, Department of Labor or Other Federal partner agency guidance and core partner staff proposals for operational guidance. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Committee or the full Board with recommendations for Full Board action via vote. State Board support staff may also provide policy recommendations and /or operational guidance recommendations electronically to the Board or Board committees for Board feedback and input. Any Board member may also present recommendations to the Executive Committee or the full Board for consideration and vote by the Board. All actions and recommendations by the Board are presented as a motion and a second before a vote is taken. All motions and the Board decisions via vote are maintained in the official Board minutes available on the Department of Commerce website (www.madeinalabama.com).

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The staff support for the Alabama Workforce Development Board will be provided by the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division; however, the Board and its Committees will also utilize core partner staff to assist in carrying out required Board functions outlined in WIOA.

Requested Revision(s)

2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. Core Program Activities to Implement **the State's Strategy**

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

The six (6) core programs under the major core components of WIOA are in four (4) different agencies: Title I is in the Alabama Department of Commerce; Title II is in the Alabama Community College System; Title III is in the Alabama Department of Labor; and, Title IV is in the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. These agencies, however, have partnered with each other since 1992 in providing coordinated or co-located services in the Alabama Career Center System. These agencies have met on a regular basis throughout WIA to provide and improve services to job seekers and employers through the system. WIOA has renewed these agencies to ensure coordinated and cooperative services.

Core program and optional plan partners' activities to carry out the state strategies identified in the plan are based on unique partnerships between the partners, the Alabama Workforce Development and the Governor's Alabama Workforce Council. All core partners participate at the executive level, the senior management level and the volunteers participating on the Board. The fact that sixty-five counties of Alabama's sixty-seven counties form one local area and the administrative entity/fiscal agent is the Alabama Department of Commerce ensures that activities are aligned across programs. Also the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the Career Tech programs within the Alabama Department of Education participates on the executive level meeting senior staff meetings and council and Board meetings. The activities funded to implement the State's strategies includes enrollments in Title I activities for adult, youth and dislocated workers, adult education activities provided in the Comprehensive Career Centers, Wagner-Peyser employment services and Rehabilitation Services staff referrals to any appropriate services.

However, the state has a plan to reorganize the local areas based on a newly developing plan being implemented currently that divides the state into 7 workforce regions. The 3 current local areas (Jefferson, Mobile and 65 counties) will be re-organized and developed into 7 local areas that match the workforce regions. The purpose is alignment across all the partners. Not only Core Partner agencies, but all sub-partners will have access to local data and strategic decisions will be made in each local area regarding solutions to workforce needs and especially those populations to be served. This reorganization should be fully implemented by July 1, 2017.

Five of the new local workforce development areas, which were formerly part of the 65 county balance of state will operate policy wise and with administrative support from the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division, which administered the 65 county local workforce development area. Policy support and the coordination of services will continue from the other core partners for the five new local workforce development areas in order to ensure continuity of established policies such as priority of services to public assistance recipients. Senior Level from the core as well as non-core partners such as DHR, will continue to meet and seek to continue services to targeted groups of job seekers as we have done for years. The five new local workforce development areas will not be without experienced senior level guidance and support. When there a problem serving either the job seeker or the employer, we fix the problem.

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SNAP E&T services will be expanded from 10 to 38 Alabama Career Center's across Alabama for FY 2017. The focused of the Career Centers will be on job search activities for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS). Referrals to the Career Center's come to Alabama Job Link electronically and allow for any SNAP E&T ABAWD to have access to services immediately at any of

those 38 Career Centers. The plan is to work with local DHR offices and Career Centers in those 38 counties to continue to establish policies, priorities and outreach for this population within the first quarter of 2017. SNAP E&T is also in the planning stages of a partnership with the Alabama Community College System Adult Education program. This partnership will start with a pilot program for 50/50 Administrative match program in Mobile County by January 2017. This partnership will include two community based organizations in this area as well as the local Career Center. The focus of this partnership is to look at barriers ABAWDS may have to employment in this area and match the services needed to overcome employment barriers and match them to the local workforce needs of that area. Once this partnership establishes protocols and policies we look to role this out statewide over FY 2017 and FY 2018

The TANF Program is a cash assistance and work program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). There are approximately 5,000 clients receiving TANF and participating in DHR's work program called JOBS. JOBS clients are required to register with Alabama Job Link (AJL). The plan is to create an interface with DOL whereby a record is automatically created or updated in AJL for JOBS clients. This will allow us to track TANF clients as they progress through the Career Center System and other workforce partner programs. The automated referral to DOL will expedite receipt of services for TANF clients as they will not have to go to another office to register in AJL and they will be clearly identifiable as TANF clients so they will receive assistance according to the mandated priority of service. As a result of the automated referral DHR will receive performance outcome data that will be used to modify policies and procedures as appropriate. In the interim, we plan for monthly contacts between the JOBS case manager and Career Center case manager to ensure TANF clients are receiving full benefit of work force services.

For clients that access the Career Center office first but may be interested in services provided by TANF, we will have information packets available at the Career Centers for any clients who inquire about the TANF program. Additionally, our long term goal is to develop an online application process for TANF which will be easily accessible by the client from ant computer.

Requested Revision(s)

B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

As noted above, the Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes programs and activities outside the Plan to include Perkins Act, Community Services, HUD and Reintegration Services. Coordination and collaboration for programs not included in the Plan, again is provided through a strong partnership supported by the workgroups such as the Alabama WIOA Roundtable Workgroups. Workgroups also have been formed around career clusters, registered apprenticeships, career pathways and career tech at the secondary levels, Executive senior management and council member level to ensure activities are not duplicated.

Alignment Actions:

1. The leadership of the four (4) core partners and the leaders of the optional partners have agreed to assemble the representatives that attended the "National Convening" in Washington DC to formerly and actively develop alignment steps. The group will be known as the "Partners Team." This

Team has collaborated to write our Combined Plan and have agreed to continue the work and insure the various Combined Plan components are successful.

2. Training and cross training of various partners is required for success as each partner works to understand the articulation between each and a formal “process flow” for citizens and clients is being developed for all employees and citizens can visually see where the individual is within the process.

3. In working with our core and sub-partners, to insure employment, the ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategies we have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program.

4. ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system.

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Customer focused services to individuals is a priority for the Alabama Workforce System. Enhanced services to individuals has and is occurring by providing major media market such as TV Job Bank programs, Career and Job Fairs in rural high employment areas and Hiring Fairs in labor shortage areas. The State is also looking at providing a website portal that will give any individual how to access partner services for Workforce or supportive services in a few mouse clicks. The Alabama Workforce Development Board and the Alabama’s Workforce Council are empathic that services to individuals are provided in an effective, efficient and responsive manner.

A “process flow” that identifies and visually communicates how individuals pass through the various processes will be developed. Based on where the individual enters the process they and each partner will know where the individual should go next and with what information or actions are required at each step.

All partner employees will be trained to assist individuals on the specific steps required and with no duplication of efforts by the individual. The main goal is a “user friendly” process and experience through each step and that the individual receives the needed and necessary assistance.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Alabama Workforce System partners will ensure that there is a coordinated, aligned, delivery model for services to employers. Partners, who meet on a regular basis, will continue to meet and align their resources and support to the local needs of employers. The melding of the partners and employers safeguards the coordination of educational and training services in alignment with the performance measures established by the boards and through each partner's governing authority under WIOA.

With this in mind, and in order to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs, and to achieve the goals of industry sector partners in the state, Alabama Work Force System (WFS) core partners will coordinate their activities and resources to determine a set of "core principles" in regards to the collaborative delivery of business services. The core principles will include the following:

1. WIOA Core Partners will serve as the lead, and equal, providers of services to business, particularly in each programs' area(s) of expertise
2. Business partner input will be an important consideration in the collaboration and alignment of services
3. No core partner will be excluded from direct interaction with the business customer, as needed and appropriate
4. Existing partnerships with business will be respected in order to address the preferences and needs of the business within the purview of that partnership
5. Whenever possible, collaboration and alignment will drill down to the local level but will consider recommendations from each core partner's leadership in regards to this focus.

WIOA core partners will form an executive level leadership team with a representative from each partner's program who have expertise in, and responsibility for, the design and delivery of services to business customers at the state, regional and local level.

- This executive team will meet quarterly to address collaborative strategies and alignment with business customers.
- This executive team will also identify agency local representatives with similar expertise to serve on regional or local teams that focus on collaboration and alignment of engagement with existing or potential business customers.
- This executive team will also initiate on-going cross training to enhance core partners' understanding of each partners' expertise so that the core partners are aware of the "go-to" agency to best address the unique needs of the business customer.

In order to make it easier for businesses to access these unique services, while developing and sustaining a trusted partnership, the Alabama Workforce System core partners will establish a "lead point of contact" from each core partner program with each business at the state and/or local level to build the capacity to be responsive to each business in a collaborative and timely manner in order to meet their needs. The following strategies will be used to engage in collaborative delivery of business services based on the needs of the business. .

- Identification of Business Services deliverable by each WIOA core partner.

- Facilitated quarterly meetings among each of the Core Partners at the state and regional/local level as noted above.
- Cross training internally for the regional/local business service representatives which will focus on:
 - o Familiarity with the business services deliverable by each core partner
 - o Consideration of the methodology of service delivery to business for appropriate referrals when special business needs arise with core partner business relationship
 - o Sharing of “subject-matter expertise” to acquaint core partners with the many resources available to businesses to meet their needs
- Jointly funded initiatives with Core Partners and businesses coordinated through each core partner’s representative on the executive team to ensure appropriate alignment and collaboration
- Customized services to employers based on special populations and core partner expertise to address new or emerging needs of business
- Other strategic approaches will be added to this list over time and will be generated by the collaborative engagement at the executive level core partner meetings noted above, along with input from the local collaboration gatherings.

MORE SPECIFICALLY:

Senior level management staff for the core partners, who have expertise in the delivery of services to businesses, will convene to identify specific business services offered by their program for each of the “Employer Services” enumerated in the “WIOA/Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report Template.” Those six (6) areas are:

1. Employer Information and Support Services
2. Workforce Recruitment Assistance
3. Strategic Planning/Economic Development Activities
4. Untapped Labor Pools Activities
5. Training Services a. Incumbent Worker Training Services
6. Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance a. Planning layoff response.

Because the above list is not all-inclusive of each partner’s regulatory requirements for business services, nor does it fully address the specific needs of business, it is imperative that each core partner reconciles the above list with the services they currently deliver to allow each partner to meet their regulatory requirements while meeting the needs of businesses collaboratively. The Core Partners will begin by reconciling the categories of business services on the report template with the more definitive services listed in the regulatory guidelines for each core partner. Once this has been reconciled by the executive team described earlier, each core partner will specifically identify the deliverable services they can offer to employers based on their statutory guidelines, particularly in relation to the targeted populations with which they work.

For Title I partners, the State and the State Workforce Development Board will continue to refine and assess how services to employers are carried out through the Career Center system. Also, the Alabama Workforce Council is a primarily employer led advisory council appointed by the Governor in 2013 to assist in coordinating all resources in Alabama to provide high quality comprehensive services to employers. The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended and plans are underway to establish a strong network of funded and empowered regional workforce entities that will be tasked with the central role of bridging business needs with a “talent supply chain.” These regional entities which will include representatives of the core partner agencies will report to a board of regional business, industry and education leaders. Plans are also underway to establish a new online “one stop” resource to serve clear and focused needs while being accessible by a number of users including employers.

Title II Adult Education programs will coordinate with all of the WIOA required partners to coordinate and align services to employers. As employment opportunities arise at the varied levels of qualifications, the Adult Education students will be informed and included in the pool of potential candidates to fulfill the workforce demands in their local labor market. In addition, if students gain employment, then they will have the opportunity to continue their Adult Education services via distance learning.

The Title IV Vocation Rehabilitation Program will work collaboratively with the WIOA required partners to provide effective services to employers on a state, regional and local level. In addition to the business services provided by the WIOA partners, there are additional categories of services that can be provided by ADRS as part of the collaborative effort to meet business needs. These services have been identified by our business customers and ADRS received input from our business customers in developing these services so that their needs would be met. One area is customized, but varied training related to disability issues, for example, Disability etiquette and Disability bias training; Awareness of specific disabling conditions; and Emergency Preparedness for employees with disabilities. With Federal legislation and specific mandates for compliance around disability matters, ADRS also provides relevant training on the successful methodology and resources for implementation. Retaining valued workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability has been a major concern by business and ADRS has customized stay-at-work and return-to-work services to increase the likelihood of that worker with a disability keeping their job. And finally, in looking at generic personnel issues related to the workforce, ADRS provides services to address personnel processes, job descriptions, website accessibility, targeted recruitment, and the use of the ADRS rehabilitation technology specialist team and, of course, the statewide Business Relations Consultants that provide all those services at the local level.

Whenever possible, the Core partners will continue to refine and assess how services to businesses can be delivered collaboratively to employers through the Career Center system. Variations will occur in the collaborative delivery of services when those services are unique to the expertise of the core partner and the targeted populations they are mandated to serve and in deference to the specific needs of the business.

For example, Alabama Career Center staff and Case managers have specifically developed internships and unpaid work experience slots for TANF recipients with employers under a TANF program known as Work First. Career Center staff (Business Services Representatives) have also developed dedicated OJT contracts with employers for TANF and other low income limited work history job seekers.

Alabama DHR senior staff meets regularly with Partner agencies' senior staff to discuss employment strategies for public assistance recipients since employers are seeking employees to hire from a limited labor pool as the economy continues to improve in the state.

Requested Revision(s)

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Core and non-core programs have strong partnerships with the Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Department of Education's Career Tech system. Representatives of both entities are members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board along with the Executive Director of the Alabama Commission of Higher Education (ACHE). Partner representatives from Alabama Community College System, Alabama Career Department also participate in quarterly WIOA Roundtable meetings which includes State Board staff, One-Stop Career Center regional management staff, Local Workforce area staff, and non-core partner staff such as TANF, SNAP and UI senior management. These Roundtable participants represent senior and mid-level management and have access to information related to activities of the core programs and opportunities for collaboration, coordination and partnering. At the regional level, there are quarterly Regional Workforce Council meetings that include business, local community college workforce development coordinators, local career tech directors, one-stop career center managers and economic development staff. The Community College and local Career Tech representatives at these meetings provide program updates and seek core partner and business input into training processes and equipment needs.

In Alabama the core and additional partners have a very close relationship with the state's ACCS. The Alabama Community College System not only provides the academic and technical training but also is the entity responsible for operating the Title II Adult Education grant. This allows for the full array of skills, from basic skills to specialized skills training. There are several Workforce Career Centers located on community college campuses and adult education is represented in all of the Comprehensive Career centers. This close knit relationship streamlines the process to move the jobseekers into training and supportive services for skill development and to connect with local employers. Core and additional partners are enabled to connect their customers to training that leads to the high demand occupations. Adult education provided additional state funding to local programs to increase partnerships with Career Technical Education to expand Adult Career Pathways. Core partners and additional partners such as TANF, SNAP, ABAWDS, veterans, English Language Learners and Senior Services will be placing jobseekers into the training. Alabama has adopted the dual enrollment adult career pathway model.

An increased focus will be placed on expanding short term training, Ready to Work, Bridge programs, and Adult Career Pathways that target high demand, high wage sector strategies in the regional areas.

For the state of Alabama Title II Programs, 93% of the providers are located on the campus of the community college system. This integration allows increased discussion, access and engagement within the state's educational system. In addition, most campuses also have transitional counselors that can connect students to additional educational opportunities

The ADRS will collaborate with all secondary educational institutions in the State of Alabama by providing Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services to students with disabilities (ages 16-21) to assist with transitioning into the state's workforce.

Pre-Employment Transition Services activities will focus on:

- Job exploration counseling

- Work – based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible.

- Counseling and guidance on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education

- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living •Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The ADRS has Transition Counselors assigned to each of the 136 high schools in our state. Through collaboration with each Local Education Agency (LEA), the ADRS will develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs.

- Summer work program – Job Exploration Training (JET) Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.

- Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.

- Jointly-Funded Job Coach - ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements.

- Career Interest Inventories – ADRS transition counselors will expand the delivery of career interest inventories to students with disabilities earlier in the transition planning process to assist with identify the student's interests, abilities, aptitude, and values.

The ADRS also has a liaison to two secondary educational institutions housed within the Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC). This liaison collaborates with DOC staff to ensure referral to ADRS is made within 90 days of release. The goal of this collaboration effort is to ensure that the inmates will have an appointment with a VR counselor within one week of community re-entry to avoid any delay in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Post-Secondary - The ADRS also collaborates with two-year colleges and universities across the state to provide college preparation programs to prepare individuals with disabilities in entering post-

secondary education. Typically, classes are held for one week on the college/university campus. Topics of discussion include note taking, finding your best study style, time management, how to better prepare for college tests, and how to access student support service.

F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers .

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Alabama's WIOA partners are working on a number of strategies to engage other education and training (including providers on the State's Eligible Training Provider List) as partners in the workforce system. These efforts include engaging the state funded training program for new and expanding businesses known Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) in short term training and referral to new jobs. We are working with AIDT to utilize the one-stop career centers in finding workers for their start-up projects entering the labor market from dislocation events.

The Alabama Technology Network (ATN), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, often provides Incumbent Worker Program Training as part of its role improving manufacturing processes.

The AFL/CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT) provides assistance to Registered Apprenticeship programs to be added to the State's ETPL.

The Construction Education Foundation of Alabama (CEFA) is a private non-profit training provider established by the construction industry to provide pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship training for skilled trades. CEFA's programs are on the State's ETPL

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) also works with other education providers to ensure students have the opportunity to choose a seamless pathway from secondary through the community colleges to four-year institutions with multiple entry and exit points.

ADRS currently engages the following educational and training providers as partners in the workforce development system in order to create job-driven education and training systems: Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, EH Gentry. These educational entities are focused on training individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments in curricula that are geared towards labor market needs. In addition to engaging with other educational entities, ADRS has partnered with other training providers, to include community rehabilitation programs and Alabama businesses to provide industry-specific training that is geared towards the learning styles of individuals with cognitive disabilities. ADRS will continue to seek out job-driven educational and training opportunities in order to enhance the skills attainment of individuals with disabilities and meet the workforce needs of Alabama's businesses. ADRS will also work closely with all education and training providers to assess the need for and provide accommodations for the successful completion of training programs.

G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has implemented streamlined Prior Learning Assessments for those individuals that have gained skills while on the job, military, or other means. This allows the students to earn college credit for the past experience, and accelerates their entry into their chosen career pathway. This program is also available for those Adult Education students that may have several years of experience and are looking to improve themselves and increase their earning capacity.

Our plan is to develop a working “focus group” of all the workforce resources within the state to develop strategy for leveraging the current funding sources and plan collaboratively how we can link our programs in a resource pipeline. The purpose, to assist our underserved populations get in the pipeline at the appropriate access point and exit when they reach their goal or where they are comfortable to exit with employment that provides a living wage for their family. The group meets now in various venues, but not formally for the purpose we propose. Our action step will be to formalize the “focus group” with specific tangible goals and objectives

Funding for ABE courses is distributed according to the targeted needs of an area and how many instructors are needed. Funding for ABE programs is provided through a competitive grant award and is based on the annual appropriation from ACCS Office of Adult Education. Grantees will be aligned with system-wide goals and labor market needs of local program areas and will have the capability to provide Career Pathway services throughout the state. ACCS community colleges also provide training through the state’s Workforce Development Fund.

The Alabama legislature currently allocates ten million dollars to the ACCS for CTE dual-enrollment scholarships for high school students. The ACCS workforce development division also has funds allocated for training special populations.

In FY 2017, the construction industry will be contributing financial resources for training Alabamians through the Construction Industry Craft Training Act. The new law will add \$1 per \$1,000 of project value onto the cost of building permits in the state. It is expected to raise between \$3 million and \$5 million each year, money that will be dispersed in the form of grants to qualified craft education programs such as community colleges, private schools and unions.

The Alabama Community College System’s Adult Education office will establish Adult Career Pathway models structured and developed by leveraging resources and support of the core and additional partners. The partners will expand the “tools in their toolbox” by working in a collaboratively manner to serve jobseekers. Partners can expand their presence in an area by taking advantage of career center partner facilities with a “no wrong door” approach to service. Cross training in intake procedures and assessment will be one of the many areas of leveraging resources. Adult Education has provided Online TABE assessment training to all Career Centers to assist in the proper educational placement of participants.

The ACCS - Title II-Adult Education programs are coordinating with all of the WIOA required partners to create formalized referral processes, local linkages to information and resources, as well as creating efforts for a uniformed intake and/or assessment process to streamline and expedite the provision of services. Title II Adult Education through the Alabama Community College System has created an educational and workforce skills path for Title I, SNAP ABAWDS, TANF, Rehabilitation Services and Senior Services. A participant will receive the basic academic skills, essential workforce skills, and specific technical skills needed to attain the stackable credentials which will allow them to compete for and attain employment. These participants will include any and all eligible populations as defined under WIOA for each of the core and additional partners. English language learners and participants with disabilities and/or significant barriers to employment will be targeted.

As a partner in the workforce development system, the Alabama Community College System - Adult Education (Title II) Programs will be administering integrated education and training career pathway opportunities. These opportunities will be available to all career center partners in a true one stop system of service. The implementation of career pathways programming throughout the state will be guided by local labor market information and reflective of the local industry needs. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) federal funds support the advancement of individuals into postsecondary education and work. The grants to eligible providers require states to consider “whether the eligible provider’s activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (Section 231(e) (8)). The integration of literacy instruction and occupational skills training is an allowable activity that states can use leadership and federal funds to support.

AEFLA funds may be used to support the portion of an Integrated Education and Training (IET) or career pathways program that provides instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, or English proficiency that is below the postsecondary level. This instruction in basic literacy skills and the English language should be contextualized to support the occupational skills portion of the program. Curriculum for a career pathways program should adequately address both the basic literacy skills and the occupational competencies needed for the participant to complete the program successfully. AEFLA funds may be used to plan, develop, and deliver the portions of the curriculum that address basic literacy skills.

H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

WIOA training services often lead to recognized credentials such as high school equivalency, Career Readiness Certificates, and certificates from partner community colleges. Local workforce development boards will determine strategies for credential attainment based upon area employer requirements.

An additional strategy is the ACCS is implementing an extensive expansion of stackable certificates. The ACCS is implementing and will continue to implement several strategies to improve access to postsecondary credentials. The ACCS has long been a nationally recognized leader in the number of articulated CTE courses between secondary and postsecondary, allowing high school students an edge in accessing college credentials. In addition to articulation, Alabama has become a national leader in providing high school students dual enrollment for dual credit in CTE and academic courses. Alabama has increased the numbers of students taking advantage of this opportunity each year, and has realized tremendous growth in the last five years as more students and parents learn of the significant savings that are available in terms of time and money. Tremendous momentum is in place and should continue as more systems, parents and students learn of the advantages of these opportunities. Our funding for CTE dual enrollment scholarships has tripled in the last three years and we anticipate increased funding so students will have greater access to post-secondary credentials.

The ACCS is seeing extensive expansion of stackable certificates (awards) within CTE Programs. Students may earn several short certificates (minimum of 9 semester hours for each certificate) that lead to a Long Certificate or AAS Degree, depending on the program. This also includes advanced

short certificates that may be beyond the Long Certificate or AAS Degree for those individuals needing advanced training and/or credentials. This structure allows for multiple entry and exit points for students, and allows them to gain a significant credential when they exit a program. Within these awards, stackable, nationally recognized credentials are built into the structure, such as NCCER for construction and maintenance related sectors, NATEF/ASE certifications in a transportation sectors, and etc.

The Alabama Legislature passed an apprenticeship tax credit for Alabama companies who have a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship. The Alabama Community College System and other eligible training providers will be a critical component of the rapidly growing apprenticeship program across the state. The legislation, specifically, directs the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System to work directly with the Deputy Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce to develop the rules and procedures for the new apprenticeship program. Alabama will start its new program focused on five target areas, manufacturing, healthcare, construction, information Technology, and logistics/transportation. Each of these target areas have hundreds of possible apprenticeship paths that will lead to journeyman status and various levels of post-secondary credentials.

The ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategy we currently have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any new CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program. We will be working to transition the current Work Based Learning programs into registered apprenticeships.

ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system. We anticipate implementation in the fall of 2016.

In Alabama, registered apprenticeship programs will be an extension of the other educational means to prepare the workforce.

Utilizing the aforementioned structure, ACCS will be able to develop the educational pipeline by enrolling more low skilled jobseekers through the various core and additional partner access points. A strong statewide apprenticeship program will be made possible through the leadership of the education and training community, employer community and the commitment of the core partners. Workforce development requires an enriching learning experience which will allow participants to obtain the necessary skills to be effective in the workplace. This is why the ACCS, adult education, and all of the core and additional partners will braid resources and provide the skill development training and apprenticeships to be successful.

I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies.

The Department of Commerce will take the following Action steps;

1. Through a new marketing/branding program currently being developed by a 3rd party, Commerce will disseminate current workforce information and program along with projected long term programs in the future through a monthly newsletter.

2. The Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development is a standing member of the Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA) Board and through various meeting reports and EDAA newsletters and email blasts, communicates across the entire state.

3. The Department of Commerce manages and coordinates the state's economic development strategy,

Accelerate Alabama. Accelerate Alabama, the economic development strategic plan for the state, was developed during a six-month period led by the Alabama Economic Development Alliance (Alliance), created by Executive Order of Governor Robert Bentley. Accelerate Alabama is meant to provide direction for Alabama's economic development efforts over the next three years. Eleven targeted business sectors, along with areas of focus for each, have been identified for the state of Alabama to focus its recruitment, retention and renewal efforts. The determination of the targets identified for Accelerate Alabama involved thorough research, including the review of the current business/industry base in Alabama, current targeted sectors of state, regional and local economic development organizations in Alabama, as well as the various power providers, recent project activity, and other emerging sectors that have shown growth at the national, state and possibly local level. The strengths of Alabama related to each sector were also considered. The targeted sectors and areas of focus are outlined to the left.

The Alliance was created to organize and direct the preparation of a strategic economic development plan for the state to ensure the recruitment, retention and renewal of business and industry in Alabama. These three economic development drivers serve as the basis for recommendations included in the Accelerate Alabama plan. These drivers are defined as follows:

Recruitment: Programs that focus on the attraction of new business and industry.

Retention: Programs that focus on the retention and expansion of existing business and industry.

Renewal: Programs that focus on job creation through innovation, entrepreneurship, research and development, and commercialization.

In order to successfully compete for the jobs of tomorrow in each of the targeted business sectors, the state must diversify its economic development efforts through a balanced emphasis on recruitment, retention and renewal. Each recommendation in the plan is designed to accelerate the state's economic development efforts with each tactic providing a path to success. The accelerators are organized within the context of the three economic drivers, but most will require collaborative efforts across the full spectrum of Alabama's economic development community. There are some economic development accelerators that transcend the three primary economic drivers. These recommended initiatives have been presented after the three drivers in an "Other" category. Following are the economic development drivers and accelerators associated with each in the plan:

Recruitment RECRUITMENT: Provide a Workforce with Skills Aligned with Prospect Needs

Ensure Availability of Sites and Infrastructure that Meet Prospect Criteria

Determine Competitiveness of Financial Assistance

Proactively Reach Out to Suspects/Prospects

Build Capacity and Recruit Entertainment Production

Develop Global Lead Generation Strategy

RETENTION: Align Workforce Services Develop ACCS Strategic Plan

Strengthen the Training for Existing Business and Industry

Develop Small Business Assistance Initiative

Implement Education/Workforce Services Communications Program

Increase Exports

Support Military Assets and Contractors

RENEWAL: Create Statewide Organization for Innovation

Coordinate and Increase Commercialization Efforts

Develop Legislative Agenda for Innovation

Build Research and Development Capacity

Support Existing Industry

Develop the Information Technology Sector

Foster Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

Provide Financial Support for Commercialization

OTHER: Support Rural Development

Enhance State Economic Development Brand

Inventory and Understand Sustainability Efforts

Support Downtown Redevelopment Programs and Other Related Initiatives.

Governor Bentley has directed the Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce to implement the plan with the assistance of the Economic Development Alliance. The Plan is currently in its 3rd year and an updated Plan is about to launch that will continue the work outlined in the original Plan with appropriate updates.

4. The Made in Alabama website is currently the “go to” site for all things economic development within the state of Alabama.

5. The WIOA partners will be working closely with our economic development partners to determine labor supply in specific industry sectors to include student enrollment. Part of our strategy is to provide a balance to meet labor supply and demand on a regional basis.

In Alabama, Adult Education programs are coordinating with the economic and workforce development strategies by providing an entry way for individuals to become part of the state’s workforce pipeline. Jobseekers and low skilled participants can gain the skill level to become gainfully employed through Career Pathway, Bridge programs, and Ready to Work programs that offer industry recognized credentials and certificates in a stackable format. The One Stop Career Center partners will provide the support service required for successful completion.

b. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in Section II Strategic Elements . This includes—

1. The State operating systems that will support the **implementation of the State’s strategies. This must include a description of—**

A. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

The Longitudinal Data System (LDS) funding for development and implementation is in the Governor’s budget, fully funded for four years. Negotiations with the legislative budget chairs and legislative leadership are underway, and all indications are that we will be successful in getting the funding. This LDS will meet all requirements for integrated data collection and reporting to support the coordinated implementation of State Strategies. It will integrate data collection, reporting, and analysis of labor market information systems, data systems, communications and case—management systems, job banks, and all related data to inform decision making and to facilitate evaluation of programs, activities, and strategies.

B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers*.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor’s Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

Data collection and reporting processes for Title I and Title III programs is through the The Alabama Job Link system for participants through the one stop centers . Participant data for Title I adult, dislocated worker and youth programs are is uploaded nightly to the Alaworks data collection programs used by the Department of Commerce for Title I programs . Adult Education and Rehabilitative Services use programs developed to facilitate reporting requirement from their respective funding agencies

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators .

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the **State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate)**. In addition, describe the **State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B)**. Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines .

The State Plan WIOA partners is intending to implement a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture demographic participant information for the four core programs and additional partners as requested. The system will align accountability measures and generate automatic referrals among programs. The system will begin to be developed in early 2017 and have a target date of late 2017 or early 2018 for implementation.

As of August 2016, each partner has its own data accountability and performance system. Memoranda of Understanding are in place, but being revised, to allow for data matching of participants to collect the required common measures and partner specific information for reporting.

State-developed guidelines for State-administered One-Stop partner programs' contributions to the One-Stop delivery system were via Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive Number PY2015-10 on January 20, 2016. This Directive requires each local area, the Local Board, chief elected officials and One-Stop partners to come to an agreement regarding the methodology for determining One-Stop infrastructure cost contributions per WIOA 121(h)(1)(B). If local officials are unable to reach consensus, they will be required to use the infrastructure funding methodology determined by the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division on behalf of the Governor.

Funds for infrastructure costs must come only from the administrative funds (when no consensus has been reached) of each respective program (per WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(D)(i)(I)) and shall be subject to the program's limitations with respect to the portion of funds under such program that may be used for administration. Limitations are also placed on how much each partner can contribute to infrastructure costs. These limitations are as follows, by program:

*Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth: Shall not exceed 3 percent of the federal funds provided to the State for a full program year.

*Wagner-Peyser Act: Shall not exceed 3 percent of the federal funds provided to the State for a full program year.

*Vocational Rehabilitation: Shall not exceed .75 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the second full program year; 1 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the third full program year; 1.25 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the fourth full program year; 1.5 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the fifth full program year and in each succeeding year.

*Other Partners: Shall not exceed 1.5 percent of the federal funds provided to the State.

Subject to the above limitations, those local areas in which the local board, chief elected officials, and One-Stop partners fail to reach a consensus agreement on methods to fund the infrastructure of the One-Stop Career Centers in the local areas beginning on July 1, 2016 and thereafter, the Governor, after consultation with chief elected officials, local boards, and the State Board, shall determine the portion of funds to be provided by each One-Stop Career Center partner. In making such determinations (for the purpose of determining funding contributions), the Governor shall calculate amounts for the proportionate use of the One-Stop Career Centers in the State consistent with Chapter II of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) taking into account the costs of administration of the One-Stop delivery system for purposes not related to One-Stop Career Centers for each partner.

The Governor shall exclude from such determination of funds the amounts for proportionate use of one-stop centers attributable to the programs of one-stop partners for those local areas of the State where the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers are funded under the option described in WIOA Section 121(h)(1)(A)(i)(I), e.g. funding methods agreed on by the local board, chief elected officials, and One-Stop Career Center partners (and described in the memorandum of understanding described in WIOA Section 121(c)). The Governor shall also take into account the statutory requirements for each partner program and the partner program's ability to fulfill such requirements. Per WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(C) in a State in which the State constitution or a State statute places policymaking authority that is independent of the authority of the Governor in an entity or official with respect to the funds provided for adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II, postsecondary career and technical education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), or vocational rehabilitation services offered under a provision covered by Section 3(13)(D), the determination with respect to the programs authorized under that title, Act, or provision shall be made by the chief officer of the entity, or the official, with such authority in consultation with the Governor.

Pursuant to WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(E), the Governor shall establish a process, described under WIOA Section 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(IV), for a One-Stop partner administering a program described in WIOA Section 121(b)(1) to appeal a determination regarding the portion of funds to be provided by the One-Stop partner. Such a determination may be appealed under the process on the basis that such determination is inconsistent with the WIOA requirements for One-Stop partners' contributions for One-Stop Career Center infrastructure costs. Such process shall ensure prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of WIOA Section 182(e).

3. State Program and State Board Overview

A. State Agency Organization

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

The Governor of Alabama leads state workforce efforts and organizations for the entire state. In the organizational chart for WIOA organization shows the Governor at the top. Two entities, the Alabama Workforce Council and the WIOA State Board, report directly to the Governor to recommend actions, legislation, initiatives, and operations. These two entities are made up of respected and experienced leaders from all regions of the State. The Alabama Workforce Council has been in place for many years, and its members represent local councils, providing communication and information on local and regional needs and opportunities.

The WIOA State Board, created in accordance with the newly-established WIOA guidelines, reports directly to the Governor and has direct lines of responsibility and communication relationship with all WIOA partner organizations and agencies, namely the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Labor, the Alabama Community College System, the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

On the WIOA organizational chart of relationships for WIOA Alabama, these six (6) departments, in turn, oversee their respective programs and agencies and, receive input, data, and information for decision making from local constituencies, citizens, businesses, industries, employers, and members of the current and potential workforce.

The Alabama Department of Senior Services implements Alabama's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services implements Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Alabama Department of Labor is the agency administering Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trace Act, and Veterans programs. The Department of Labor is also the lead agency for the operation of Alabama's Career Centers (One Stops). The Alabama Community College System administers all Adult Education programs for the State. The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce administers the WIOA Title I programs, organizes and assists the regional workforce councils, and organizes and assists local WIOA area boards and their participants. The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce also shared has operational and oversight responsibilities with the Alabama Department of Labor for Alabama Career Centers (One Stops). The Alabama Department of Human Resources operates the workforce development and employment assistance components of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment Training (SNAP-ET) programs for eligible families.

The essential collaborative relationships of representative boards, councils, State departments, agencies, and programs in Alabama are well established. All of the above-described entities participated in the planning of the Alabama WIOA plan and continue to work toward shared data, resources, and personnel to efficiently and effectively serve the employers, employees, and those seeking employment in Alabama. The collaborative planning process has focused attention on those with barriers to employment, to those who may be underemployed, and to the newly-identified growth areas for workforce development. New lines of communication, opportunities and technologies for data sharing, and the focus and energy of the WIOA Board members are resulting in greater opportunities and resources for the Alabama workforce.

Local level activities and programs are provided through the Alabama Career Center Systems One-Stop Career Centers. There are currently three local workforce development areas. Jefferson County, Mobile County and the remaining 65 counties as one balance of State.

Jefferson County Workforce Area is administered by the Jefferson County Office of Community Services and Economic Development. Mobile County is administered by Mobile Works, Inc., a city/county partnership. The 65 County Balance of State is administered by the Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board in June approved a plan to realign five (5) of the Balance of State counties with Jefferson County, eight (8) of the balance of State counties with Mobile County and the remaining fifty-two (52) counties will be organized into five (5) new local areas with Local Workforce Development Boards governing WIOA activities. This realignment will take effect on July 1, 2017.

B. State Board

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

The State Board shall include The Governor (WIOA Sec 102(b)(1)(B)). The Alabama State Board includes the Governor, Robert Bentley. The State Board shall include a member of each chamber of the State legislature (to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber; therefore, the Alabama WIOA Board includes Representative Terri Collins of the Alabama House of Representatives and Senator Clay Scofield of the Alabama Senate. The Board must contain a majority of representatives of businesses in the State appointed by the Governor. These members must be owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a local board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i); must represent businesses (including small businesses), or organizations representing businesses described in this subclause, that provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations. In accordance with these categories of business leaders, the appointed business representatives of the Alabama WIOA Board are George Clark (President of Manufacture Alabama), Ronnie Boles (President of General & Automotive Machine Shop, Inc.), Joseph Brown (Area Manager of Alabama Power Company), Glenn Camp (Human Resources Director of HB&G Building), John Carroll (Senior VP of Phifer, Inc.), A. J. Cooper, (Attorney of Cooper Law), Bobby Humphrey (VP of Bryant Bank), Jason Long (Human Resources Director of Thompson Tractor Company, Inc.), Mike Reynolds (President of BroadSouth Communications, Inc.), Wayne Silas (President of Silas Electric and Tree Service LLC), Perry Hand, President/CEO of Volker, Inc), Sandra Koblas (Human Resources Director of Austal USA), Patrick Cagle (Executive Director of JobKeeper Alliance), Cleveland Poole (VP of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc.), Kasey Myers, (Manager of CSP Technologies), Jessica Horsley (Director of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce), Sherry Vest (a self-employed executive), Ashley Ramsay-Naile (VP of Crowder Gulf), Bruce Willingham (President of Mach III, Inc.), Ronnelle Stewart (Human Resources Officer of Brookwood Medical Center), Tony Woiciechowski (Human Resources Manager of Hyundai Power Transformers USA), Steve Hildebrant (Manager of Alabama Power Company), Donny Jones (Chief Operating Officer of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama), Anne Savage (Controller of American Buildings Company), Jim Searcy (Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama), and Ken Tucker (Director of The Boeing Company). Not less than 20 percent (20%) of the members of the Board shall be representatives of the workforce within the State who shall include representatives of labor

organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations; 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 joint program exists in the State, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the State; may include 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 that provide or support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and 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. Alabama Board members meeting the above-listed criteria include Mike Fields (Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO Executive Board), Bren Riley (President of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Mary Albritten (Project Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Donnie Stanley (President of the Alabama State Building and Construction Trades), Frank Coiro (Center Director of Montgomery Job Corps), William Webb (President of Still Serving Veterans), Jason Phelps (Executive Director of Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute, Lynne Stokley (CEO of Easter Seals of Alabama), and Sydney Raine (President of Mobile Works, Inc.)

The balance of the members of the WIOA Board shall include representatives of government who shall include the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and shall include chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate); and may include such other representatives and officials as the Governor may designate, such as the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners not specified in subclause (I) (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any); State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State; individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The required WIOA Core Partner Board members for Alabama include Fitzgerald Washington (Secretary of Labor, Alabama Department of Labor, representing Title III), Ed Castile (Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development, Alabama Department of Commerce representing Title I), Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services representing Title IV), Mark Heinrich (Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System representing Title II).

The required county elected official on the Board is Merceria Ludgood (Commissioner of Mobile County). The required city elected official is Alberto (Butch) Zaragoza, Jr. (Mayor of the City of Vestavia Hills). Other members of the WIOA Board under this classification include Nancy Buckner (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources), Gregory Fitch (Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education), Philip Cleveland (Interim State Superintendent of the Alabama Department of Education), and Alan Baker (Member of the Alabama House of Representatives).

1. Membership roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

The State Board shall include The Governor (WIOA Sec 102(b)(1)(B)). The Alabama State Board includes the Governor, Robert Bentley. The State Board shall include a member of each chamber of the State legislature (to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber; therefore, the Alabama WIOA Board includes Representative Terri Collins of the Alabama House of Representatives and Senator Clay Scofield of the Alabama Senate. The Board must contain a majority of representatives of businesses in the State appointed by the Governor. These members must be owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of

businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a local board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i); must represent businesses (including small businesses), or organizations representing businesses described in this subclause, that provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations. In accordance with these categories of business leaders, the appointed business representatives of the Alabama WIOA Board are George Clark (President of Manufacture Alabama), Ronnie Boles (President of General & Automotive Machine Shop, Inc.), Joseph Brown (Area Manager of Alabama Power Company), Glenn Camp (Human Resources Director of HB&G Building), John Carroll (Senior VP of Phifer, Inc.), A. J. Cooper, (Attorney of Cooper Law), Bobby Humphrey (VP of Bryant Bank), Jason Long (Human Resources Director of Thompson Tractor Company, Inc.), Mike Reynolds (President of BroadSouth Communications, Inc.), Wayne Silas (President of Silas Electric and Tree Service LLC), Perry Hand, President/CEO of Volker, Inc), Sandra Koblas (Human Resources Director of Austal USA), Patrick Cagle (Executive Director of JobKeeper Alliance), Cleveland Poole (VP of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc.), Kasey Myers, (Manager of CSP Technologies), Jessica Horsley (Director of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce), Sherry Vest (a self-employed executive), Ashley Ramsay-Naile (VP of Crowder Gulf), Bruce Willingham (President of Mach III, Inc.), Ronnelle Stewart (Human Resources Officer of Brookwood Medical Center), Tony Woiciechowski (Human Resources Manager of Hyundai Power Transformers USA), Steve Hildebrant (Manager of Alabama Power Company), Donny Jones (Chief Operating Officer of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama), Anne Savage (Controller of American Buildings Company), Jim Searcy (Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama), and Ken Tucker (Director of The Boeing Company). Not less than 20 percent (20%) of the members of the Board shall be representatives of the workforce within the State who shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations; 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 joint program exists in the State, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the State; may include 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 that provide or support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and 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. Alabama Board members meeting the above-listed criteria include Mike Fields (Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO Executive Board), Bren Riley (President of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Mary Albritten (Project Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Donnie Stanley (President of the Alabama State Building and Construction Trades), Frank Coiro (Center Director of Montgomery Job Corps), William Webb (President of Still Serving Veterans), Jason Phelps (Executive Director of Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute, Lynne Stokley (CEO of Easter Seals of Alabama), and Sydney Raine (President of Mobile Works, Inc.)

The balance of the members of the WIOA Board shall include representatives of government who shall include the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and shall include chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate); and may include such other representatives and officials as the Governor may designate, such as the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners not specified in subclause (I) (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any); State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State; individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The required

WIOA Core Partner Board members for Alabama include Fitzgerald Washington (Secretary of Labor, Alabama Department of Labor, representing Title III), Ed Castile (Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development, Alabama Department of Commerce representing Title I), Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services representing Title IV), Mark Heinrich (Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System representing Title II).

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2. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The Governor appoints members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) and designates the Chairperson. The State Board through its bylaws will establish working committees to assist the Governor and the full Board in carrying out the functions and responsibilities in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These working committees include, but will not be necessarily limited to, an Executive Committee, a Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committee, and a Communication and Marketing Committee. The Chair will also appoint short-term subject-related task forces to address issues such as (1) the development and continuous improvement of the workforce system in the State, (2) the development and improvement of the one-stop services delivered to workers, job seekers, and employers, and, (3) the development of such other policies to promote and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the State. Both committees and task forces will have Alabama Department of Commerce staff and/or staff from the required core partners as designated resources to assist in completing committee and task force objectives as they carry out the responsibilities of WIOA Section 101(d).

In 2014 the Governor also created the Alabama Workforce Council to enhance industry and education collaboration on an on-going basis and to review ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State. A number of the members on the Alabama Workforce Council have also been appointed to the Alabama Workforce Development Board to provide continuity and to develop common recommendations on policy and workforce alignment needs. State Board meetings will be held quarterly. Committees and task forces will meet every other month to consider recommendations and initiatives for submission to the full Board. All Board meetings are subject to the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

A. Assessment of Core Programs

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

At a minimum, core workforce system partners program services included in the WIOA State Plan, will be assessed using the common measures as provided in WIOA Section 116(b). Performance will be reported on the State and Local Workforce area level. Each Core Partners' performance in each of the primary indicators of performance will be a start point for the further evaluation of quality, effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. Each core partner program will submit their performance metrics in a statewide dashboard report on a quarterly basis. The quarterly dashboard report will be provided to the State Board's Performance Accountability Committee with accomplishments, plans and strategies to continue successes or make improvements, as necessary, how partners address areas that are not being met and the identification of resources or supports needed to move forward.

The state and local workforce development areas providing Title I-B, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs will be assessed based on a comparison of actual performance levels with the negotiated / adjusted levels of performance each quarter and annually. The following definitions will be utilized by the federal agencies in determining if the State met performance. Additional federal guidance is pending which may require adjustments to performance levels later in 2016 or early 2017.

Levels of Performance:

"Exceeds" Goals: If the actual performance in any indicator is greater than 100 percent of the negotiated level.

"Meets" goals: If the actual performance in any indicator in 90 percent or more and up to 100 percent of the negotiated level.

"Failed to Meet Goals": If the actual performance of any indicator is less than 50% of the negotiated level this measure will "fail" the proposed threshold outlined in Section 677.190(d)(2) of the WIOA regulations. Sanctions based on performance failure will be applied only after all indicators have at least 2 years of complete data not including Program Year 2016. The State intends to issue State policy regard local area performance failure by the end of the second quarter in PY2016. Sanctions based on performance failure will be applied to local areas if two consecutive years a (after 2016), the local area fails to meet:

o 90 percent of the overall local area program score for the same core program; o 90 percent of the overall local area indicator score for the same primary indicator; or 50 percent of the same indicator or score for the same program.

B. Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Alabama WIOA Partner Programs for Title I-B adult, dislocated worker and youth programs and Title III Wagner-Peyser activities will report quarterly to the State Workforce Development Board and the Board's Performance Accountability Committee. These quarterly reports will compare planned performance goals vs. actual performance. The Performance Committee will assess actual performance against planned goals for these partners and ask the Title I and/or Title II entities to submit corrective actions as needed to address any performance issue. The Performance Committee will then make recommendation to the full Board at six months and nine months into the

program year. Local Area Board Chairs and signatory officials will also be provided quarterly reports for Title I and Title III partner services and any State Board recommendations regarding suggested corrective action.

Title Adult Education and Title IV Rehabilitation services partners will report actual performance measures to the Boards' Performance Committee at six months and nine months into the program year. The Performance Committee will then make any recommendations to the full Board prior to the beginning of the next full program year.

Combined Plan non-core program partners will provide performance reports prior to the beginning of the next full program year and will be asked to address any corrective actions as needed to the full Board.

C. Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The State Workforce Development Board Performance Accountability Committee will adopt policies and procedures to review performance and assessments for PY2016 and PY2017. The review process will include recommendations to improve or enhance performance outcomes at the regional and local levels.

D. Evaluation

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

On an annual basis, the required partners in each local workforce area will work with the Commerce - Workforce Development Division to reach agreed upon levels of performance that apply to Focus Area 1 and with the Commerce - Workforce Development Division to reach agreed upon continuous improvement goals that apply to Focus Area 3.

The chair of the local board shall be copied on all local plan quarterly and annual reports provided to Commerce - Workforce Development Division so that the Commerce - Workforce Development Division can maintain data on an ongoing basis. At the request of a local board, when it engages in the certification process for the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system, the Commerce - Workforce Development Division will provide to the local board a summary of the performance data that has been provided to the Commerce - Workforce Development Division on the above criteria. The state agencies of required partners shall forward quarterly or annual reports to the Commerce - Workforce Development Division so that data on partner programs can be maintained and shared with local boards during the assessment process. Local boards should contact Commerce - Workforce Development Division to obtain information on WIOA performance measurements.

Local boards are responsible for assessing the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system with these criteria and submitting a record of the assessment and certification determination to Commerce - Workforce Development Division within 10 days of completing the certification determination. Local boards are required to have policies and procedures in place for assessing the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system.

The policies and procedures:

- Must include the criteria outlined;

- May include additional criteria beyond the items outlined by state policy;

- Must be submitted to the Commerce, Workforce Development Division for review prior to approval by the local board;

- Will be incorporated into the compliance review procedures conducted by the State Program Integrity Unit.

5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I programs

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

1. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

The State of Alabama will apply the “alternate” Section 128(b)(3)(B) Youth allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The “alternate” procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The “alternate” Youth formula applies seventy percent (70 percent) weights to the basic Section 128(b)(2) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. thirty percent (30 percent) are comprised of local area “excess poverty” and “unemployment above the State average”.

The excess poverty “alternate” allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies “above 7.5 percent of population” to capture the “excess poverty” for WIOA Youth “alternate” allocation formula components.

The WIOA alternate formula “Unemployment above State average” component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula “excess unemployment” component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines “excess unemployment” as that above 4.5 percent of the labor force; “unemployment above the State average” is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above “alternate” 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of

available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a 75 percent weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a 25 percent weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the “alternate” formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur. Youth funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years.

2. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

The State of Alabama will apply the “alternate” Section 133(b)(3)(B) Adult allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The “alternate” procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The “alternate” Youth and Adult formulas apply 70 percent weights to the basic Section 133(b)(2)(A) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. 30 percent are comprised of local area “excess poverty” and “unemployment above the State average.”

The excess poverty “alternate” allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies “above 7.5 percent of population” to capture the “excess poverty” for WIOA Adult “alternate” allocation formula components.

The WIOA “alternate formula “Unemployment above State average” component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula “excess unemployment” component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines “excess unemployment” as that above 4.5 percent of the labor force; “unemployment above the State average is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above “alternate” 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a seventy-five percent (75percent) weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a twenty-five percent (25percent) weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the “alternate” formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur. Adult funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years.

3. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

Dislocated Worker funds annually allotted to the state are formula allocated among the local areas. This allocation is accomplished using the six-part formula prescribed at Section 133(b)(2)(B)(ii).

Table 23. Dislocated Worker Allocation Formula Weights

Allocation Factor	Weight Assigned in Formula	Data Source(s) and Time
Average Monthly U.I. Beneficiaries (“Insured Unemployment Data”)	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information – 10/2013 – 09/2014
Excess Unemployment (“Unemployment Concentrations”)	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information – 10/2013 – 09/2014
Estimated Layoffs (“Plant Closing/Mass Layoff Data”)	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information – 10/2013 – 09/2014
Jobs Lost (All Industries) (“Declining Industries”)	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information – 10/2013 – 09/2014
Farm Operators Change (“Farmer–Rancher Economic Hardship”)	5%	2012 & 2007 Census of U.S. Agriculture
Unemployment Compensation Exhaustees (“Long–Term Unemployment Data”)	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information – 10/2013 – 09/2014

Dislocated Worker funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years.

Draft allocation policies and methods, along with the funds allocation information are presented to the Board for review, comment and approval on an annual basis. The staff who perform the calculations are always available to respond to questions. Questions regarding these processes have been asked and answered at State Board meetings. Local areas are notified of the outcomes in terms of funding as well as the procedures for the allocations. Local elected officials are provided drafts of allocation policies and are asked for their review and comment. This assures that time is allowed for comments prior to the time the directive is published as policy.

B. For Title II:

1. Multi-year grants or contracts

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education state office will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding to determine the eligible providers that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017. This process will apply to applications for all funds (231, 225, and 243). The review of the applications will include rating responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA.

The following is a timeline that will be used for the competition:

- February 2017: ACCS Adult Education (ACCS/AE) state office publishes three-year federal AEFLA Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Combined Plan.

- February–March 2017: ACCS/AE state office provides Technical Assistance Workshops and continued technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers.
- February–March 2017: ACCS/AE state office recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- March 2017: Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
- March–April 2017: Reviewers review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- April 2017: ACCS/AE state office conducts review of budgets and other grant requirements and develops a rank-ordered slate based on applicant scores.
- April–May 2017: ACCS/AE state office announces AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding.
- July 1, 2017: AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education state office will allocate adult education funds to all competitively selected, eligible providers servicing the 67 counties of the state. The funds will be distributed by county, through a needs–based funding formula. If a county is served by multiple competitively selected, eligible providers, the funds will be distributed based on the adjusted share of need within the provider's proposed service area. The funding formula will use the population in need for each county, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5–year estimate. The population in need in a county is defined as 18 and older without a high school diploma or high school equivalency. The award period for the AEFLA funds will be for a three-year period. An award letter stating the funding amount based on need will be sent to each eligible provider selected through the competitive bid process. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment–related supports in the area.

To determine organizations of demonstrated effectiveness, prospective providers will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults in the applicable academic areas related to the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP). Prior recipients will use data from the state data collection system, referred to as Alabama Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) to show how they met state assigned performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English language learners. New prospective providers will address within their proposal how they have been successful in providing educational and literacy services, including services to low-literacy level and English language learners. Each application will be required to demonstrate its record of improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to postsecondary education, skills training, or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition.

The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following:

1. Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of adults with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, individuals with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law).
2. Provide a description of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation).
3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs.
4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance. The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve:
 - a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment after program exit;
 - b. Median earnings of program participants;
 - c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting;
 - d. Effective service provided to employers.
5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One-Stop Career Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for Career Center participant, with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One-Stop Career Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to participants.
6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met.
7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFP that are listed below.

Assessing the RFP The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following:

1. The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier.

2. The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability.
3. The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals.
4. The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan.
5. The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself.
6. The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices.
7. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance.
8. The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship.
9. The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance.
10. The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/business partners, and workforce boards.
11. The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as childcare, transportation, and mental health services.
12. The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting.
13. The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

2. Ensure direct and equitable access

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Office of Adult Education, will hold a full and open competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. All eligible agencies will be granted direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. The following steps will be initiated to ensure direct and equitable access:

An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of Title II of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2014, will be circulated in various professional publications, newsletters, and newspapers, in order to provide the widest possible state coverage.

The same announcement, grant and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state in sections 221, 225, 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals will be used for all eligible providers. The application processes will be designed so that direct application to the State eligible agency is clearly evident, customary, and nonnegotiable. Direct application will be the norm regardless of whether an applicant, if awarded funds, would be considered a grantee or a contractor.

Technical assistance workshops will review the entire process and provide information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Dates, times, and places of these workshops are included in announcements and the Request for Proposal.

The announcement will contain information pertaining to:

- Type of grants available.
- Contact person to obtain RFP guidelines.
- Timeline with grant application due date included.
- Other pertinent WIOA required information.

C. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is a combined agency housed within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Therefore, funds for services provided to individuals who are blind are from the same federal and state funds used for all individuals served. Internally, Blind and Deaf Services is a separate division from the General VR division and, each year, the amount of money allocated to the two divisions is based on the amount of funds needed for each program.

6. Program Data

A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

1. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

Two of the core partners in Alabama have interoperable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner–Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Interagency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

The State plans to appoint a management information systems/data integration committee to develop a plan to ensure alignment of data for the core partners. The Alabama Legislature has recently introduced legislation to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to provide for the operation of a system to track performance and workforce data throughout Alabama's education systems. The core program partners will continue, however, to work together over the coming months to implement the exchange of common data elements over all six core program activities.

Alabama's core partner program entities will continue to work throughout Program Year 2016 to fully streamline intake and service delivery to track participation across the core and optional programs. Management will require data collection and reporting staff to meet quarterly (at a minimum) to develop plans and recommendations to ensure this occurs. As mentioned previously Title I and Title II programs currently have common intake.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

2. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

Two of the core partners in Alabama have interoperable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner–Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Interagency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

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3. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

Legislation has been introduced and has the support of the Governor to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to be developed, operated, and maintained by the Alabama Office of Education and Workforce Statistics within the Department of Labor. This data system will match information about students from early learning through postsecondary education and into employment. The purpose of the system is to generate timely and accurate information about curriculum performance that can be used to improve the education system of the state and guide decision makers at all levels. The system will facilitate the enhancement of college and career ready students through the collection and analysis of performance and workforce data.

An advisory board to the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics is created by the legislation. This board will oversee the development and operation of the system and will establish the research

agenda of the office. All student information collected from participating education and workforce authorities shall be protected, safeguarded, kept confidential, and used only by appropriate educational and workforce authorities in order to serve the best interests of students in accordance with state and federal law.

The advisory board consists of the following members:

- The Commissioner of Labor
- The Secretary of Information Technology
- The Governor's Education Policy Advisor
- The Chair of the Senate Education Budget Committee
- The Chair of the House Education Budget Committee
- A representative of the State Board of Education
- The State Superintendent of Education or his/her designee
- A representative of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees
- The Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System
- The President of the Alabama Council of College and University Faculty Presidents or his/her designee
- The President of the Alabama Association of Independent Colleges and Universities or his/her designee
- The Chair of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education or his/her designee
- The Secretary of the Department of Early Childhood Education or his/her designee
- The Secretary of Commerce or his/her designee
- The State Service Commissioner of the State Department of Veterans Affairs or his/her designee
- The Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama or his/her designee
- The Chair of the Alabama Workforce Council or his/her designee
- One information technology expert representing private industry with expertise in large data systems and data security
- One representative of the local school system superintendents
- One representative of the public

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

4. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future

guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Alabama utilizes UI wage rewards to track participant success for WIOA Title I and Title III programs for entered employment, employment relation and median wage measures. Agreements for Title II, (Adult Education) and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation participants tracking for these three measures will be effected in order to track measureable employment and wage activity.

For the measures relating “Evidential Attainment”, “Measurable Skill Gains” and “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” the core partner agencies will utilize extensive call management through the Alabama Career Center System data on these measures.

The Alabama Longitudinal Data System (ALDS), once it becomes operable in 2017, should provide information on all students in postsecondary education and below. The purpose of the ALDS includes the timely and accurate information about education performance that can be used to improve the education system of all education providers and guide decision makers at all levels, to facilitate the enhancement of the performance data and workforce data. The ALDS will require the primary users of data on educational attainment, including the State and Local Workforce Development Boards to address deficiencies in the delivery of educational programs throughout the system.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Alabama will continue to utilize quarterly State UI records wage data as well the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) which facilitates the exchange of wage data among participating States in order to measure progress and performance accountability for State and local area performance measures. This wage data also assists in evaluating and accessing workforce and local labor market information. Currently, the Alabama Workforce Development Division has a data sharing agreement with the Alabama Department of Labor (State UI records) and with WRIS. These data sharing agreements are modified as necessary to reflect changes in staff and/or federal or state law. Safeguards are in place to ensure wage data stored for reporting purposes is deleted after ETA reports have been generated.

The Alabama Department of Labor's Unemployment Compensation Division will share specific bits of data as it relates to an individual's wage history in keeping with 20 CFR part 603 and the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law, Code of Alabama 25-4-118 (d) “The director may, at his discretion, release information regarding employment, wages, wage rates, and unemployment to

institutions of higher education of this state, or a federal governmental corporation upon payment of a reasonable cost therefor, for the purpose of making economic analyses; provided, that such institution or corporation agrees that information so obtained will not be published or released by it to any person or persons in such a manner as to permit the identification of any specific individual or employing unit.” The bits of information that are provided will require the Department of Education to garner a release from each student and maintain a copy of such release in their file.

D. Privacy Safeguards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State’s workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Data collection and data analysis for decision-making and planning for Alabama’s workforce development and education programs shall conform to privacy safeguards established in state and federal law. The longitudinal data system described above in III. (B) (6) (A) (ii) will be operated and maintained by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics. This office is considered an authorized representative of the State Department of Education under applicable federal and state laws for purposes of accessing and compiling student record data for research purposes. The Office will develop de-identification standards and processes using modern statistical methods. The Office is responsible for the protection and the maintenance of confidentiality of collected student data, including compliance with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all other relevant state and federal privacy laws, including rules and policies established by the advisory board that are not in conflict with existing state or federal laws or rules or regulations.

7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

In affiliation with the American Job Center (AJC) network, the Alabama Veterans’ Services Program within the Alabama Career Center system shall offer comprehensive employment and career placement service to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of self-service Internet-based job services and direct assistance at AJCs throughout the state.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) system, as a point of entry for self-service registration, provides a priority service notification to veterans and covered persons at the Alabama Joblink website.

Veterans and persons entitled to priority services and training complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for priority services and training at the point of entry into the workforce development system.

Veterans who can use AJL competently are encouraged to self-register and make maximum use of the automated access to resources. As a core service, career center specialists review applications and resumes submitted by veterans and covered persons who register for employment using self-service, to ensure that veterans’ applications clearly state job objectives and show meaningful information with regards to work history, education and training. Because veterans’ resumes are

listed first in the search results and are annotated with an American flag, employers can quickly locate qualified veterans for job openings. To ensure that veterans' receive priority in referral to job openings, the Alabama Job Link system provides 24– hour email alerts to veterans for any job listing that matches their resumes. The automated system to select qualified candidates for job openings is programmed to refer only qualified veterans in the first 24 hours of the listing, unless no qualified veterans are available.

Priority service is also provided when veterans, or others eligible for priority, are identified at intake when registering for services at any AJC, or other service delivery points. Career center specialists will ensure that each veteran completing a full application will have properly recorded their skills, education, training, job or career interests, work experience, licenses or certifications, employment availability, contact information, and other vital information.

Additionally, AJCs will use signage, graphics, and displays to inform veterans and Covered Persons of priority service (as described under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 42 and 20 CFR Part 1010) and as applicable to all US DOL–funded employment services and training.

Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans' Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans' Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons.

All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans' Priority in the State WIOA and Wagner–Peyser Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans Program Letters addressing DVOP–LVER Roles and Responsibilities.

The Alabama strategy leverages improvements in technology to enable career center specialists to locate and review the resumes of veterans using on–line self–services for the purpose of offering helpful advice or suggestions on presenting their skills and abilities to prospective employers, because the AJL data system is designed to support employers searching for key words, then automatically flags the resumes of veterans and Covered Persons who are identified as qualified candidates within the parameters entered by the employer. This advantage offers veterans and Covered Person a Priority in Service and enables an employer to contact them directly, with or without a referral through a posted job order.

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE):

Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job center (AJC) network will provide comprehensive employment, training, and career placement services to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of Internet–based job services and personal assistance at Alabama Career Centers in the statewide AJC network. Alabama has more than 32,000 residents currently serving in the Armed Forces and of that nearly 13,000 in the National Guard and Reserve component. Alabama National Guard ranked fifth in numbers of troops deployed

The Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network operates under the auspices of the Alabama Department of Labor, the state agency responsible for providing employment services and related services to veterans, and is authorized by the Governor to make application for funds to carry out the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) to carry out the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) enables veterans to use self-services, including registration. Upon entering the Career Center, these self-service Veterans will have an initial assessment performed by Wagner- Peyser staff. Alabama DVOP specialists prioritize their efforts with veterans who are facing significant barriers to employment (SBE) in securing employment, including veterans who appear to be having difficulty in using the Alabama Job Link (AJL) automated system. The assignment of DVOP specialists at specific Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network is based on a strategy to ensure veterans with SBEs are priority customers in the Alabama Workforce Development system. Although many veterans can and will use the internet-based self-registration and various self-service features, veterans with SBEs are provided intensive services. Veterans who enter the Alabama Workforce Development System at an AJC (Alabama Career Center), are served initially by career center specialists. For veterans who appear to have an SBE, career center specialists will offer additional services, to include referral to a DVOP who will provide intensive services and case management services to veterans having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), as defined by Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03-14, VPL 03-14 chg. 1&2 VPL 04-14 and any future VPLs providing guidance on SBEs:

1. All veterans enrolled in the Five-track Employment Program administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. As covered in a separate agreement with VR&E, a client determined to be "Job-Ready" by VR&E will be referred by a VR&E Employment Coordinator to the state's Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), who will refer the Job Ready VR&E client to an appropriate AJC manager for case management and job placement services.
2. A Special Disabled Veteran or Disabled Veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1). Special Disabled and Disabled Veterans are those who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or, were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability.
3. Veterans in the categories above will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual's employability planning.

Locating Priority Group Veterans:

Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

III. (B) (7) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System

Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) prohibits discrimination against individuals who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities that receive financial assistance from DOL, or, under certain circumstances, from other Federal agencies or are otherwise part of the American Job Center delivery system. Section 188 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, among other bases. [Section 188 of WIA, 29 U.S.C. § 2938; Section 188 of WIOA, 29 U.S.C. § 3248] Section 188 also requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances. On July 22, 2014, the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In general, WIOA took effect in July 2015, and supersedes WIA. Section 188 of WIOA contains provisions identical to those in Section 188 of WIA.

In 2005, a team of persons with disabilities and others reviewed each Alabama Career Center for physical and programmatic accessibility using a survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIA. A re-survey of Career Centers (including satellite centers) is being done in FY 2016 to check physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, services, technology and materials using a DOL survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIOA and a policy checklist. The surveys also measure compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. This re-survey is being conducted by a team of persons with disabilities and others that includes assistive technology experts on deaf and blind needs. All of these surveys measure physical access from parking to entrances to where services are provided as well as accessibility of bathrooms, telephones, tables, and water fountains. Policies are also being evaluated to ensure that they do not exclude individuals with disabilities. Computers are being evaluated to ensure access for those with disabilities affecting hearing, vision, and manual dexterity.

At the completion of surveys of the Career Centers, a summary report will be compiled which will list all physical and programmatic barriers, if any, and suggested strategies to remove those barriers. New policies to ensure access may also be suggested. Responsibility for implementation of barrier removal strategies will be divided between the one-stop delivery system partners. Staff training may be developed where necessary to ensure that they have the knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness to address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Needs of English Language Learners at Alabama's One-Stop centers are met in a variety of ways, depending on the individual client's needs. One-Stop centers are equipped with computers and software that translates documents from English into a variety of languages. Staff training will include methods for obtaining translators, use of language translation software, and procedures for securing assistance from partner and outside agencies for clients who are English Language Learners (ELLs). The non-English speaking and limited-English proficient population in Alabama is growing rapidly. All public school systems and Alabama's community colleges comply with all federal guidelines in serving ELLs and have many resources that can be accessed by the One-Stop centers and WIOA partner programs to meet the needs of ELLs who need workforce training or related services.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Coordinated planning for all Alabama core and partner programs will be centered in the Alabama Department of Commerce. The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies.

Regional Workforce Councils in the workforce regions of the state are also, the responsibility of the Department of Commerce will serve as the foundational information gathering entities that provide data and recommendations to the Alabama Workforce Board. The Workforce Board quarterly meetings and the meetings of its committees will bring forward needs, recommendations, data analysis, and initiatives to improve workforce development and to meet the needs of Alabama's current and emerging industries.

The Partners Team is defined as the Alabama Team that attended the "National Convening" in Washington a few months ago. This team developed the original Alabama Combined Plan and continues to work as a team to edit and expand the Combined Plan to resolve the identified conditions received from USDOL. This team represents the working group of several Cabinet level Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors that have directed the team to align, leverage, coordinate and lead the Combined Plan. The Governor, through these Cabinet members has directed the agency coordination.

The Partners Team will formally plan and set up coordination strategies that will be disseminated to all the Career Centers and Career Center staff to insure all plans and actions that guarantee citizen success is placed into action. Basically the partnership team sets the policies and the Career.

V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes
10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

a. General Requirements

1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

Alabama for a number of years has been, and is currently divided into, three local Workforce Investment Boards. The local WIBS include Mobile county, Jefferson county and the balance of 65 counties. While this may have made sense at the time these decisions were made, we are in the process of developing a new and improved approach to serving Alabama citizens. Based on the changing dynamic and continued growth among the business sectors within the state, the fact that rural Alabama has been underserved and to ensure that all citizens are served effectively and appropriately we will be changing the areas designated to a number not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9). It is our intent to get these changes made, local boards established and services underway within the next 10 to 12 months. Maps are being finalized at this date and will be revealed as soon as the Governor approves. Alabama is undergoing dramatic and important changes that will better serve our citizens.

B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures **for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance** with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

The Department of Commerce has for many years worked directly with practically every business and all the business sectors within the state. Commerce is involved with small business development, export/trade, film/entertainment, industry recruitment and workforce training in all 67 counties. Commerce is involved with large municipalities and very rural communities statewide to include county commissions, city councils and mayors. Whether it is business leaders or community leaders and they are sending a very clear message, the current three local area designations are not

working and citizens are not being served adequately. These leaders have been quoted as saying we do not know how to access WIOA to assist our local citizens.

Alabama Governor Robert Bentley appointed a business led, CEO level Workforce Council two years ago and they have made many recommendations. This group of business professionals represent all areas of the state and are a cross section of health care, manufacturing, banking, construction and government leaders and in their very first set of recommendations made in January of 2015 they recommended reviewing and changing the current WIOA (WIA at that time) Workforce Boards to better and more effectively serve the citizens of Alabama. They recommended the Governor hire an outside independent third party vendor to survey state wide business leaders, employed workers, college students, unemployed workers and all potential stake holders related to the Alabama workforce and workforce programs. In 2015 companies from Orlando, Florida, The Ideas Group and an Alabama Company, Direct Communications were hired to perform this task over a several month period. As predicted the recommendation was made by these companies in their report to Governor Bentley, to implement “a strong network of effective empowered regional workforce regions who should own the central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain.” In addition, the vendors recommended the Workforce System be driven by business and industry demand and criteria. In other words the decisions for workforce initiatives should be made locally and a 65 county local area of a 67 county state does not allow appropriate local representation or decision-making. Governor Bentley and the Department of Commerce, The Alabama Community College System, Alabama Department of Labor and the economic developers of Alabama agree that the state should introduce a seven (7) to eight (8) region, local area designation for all workforce issues to include WIOA resources with decisions made at the local level by local business and concerned citizens.

Governor’s Workforce Innovation Directive PY2014–05 and PY2014–05, Change 1 (See appendix 2) provided local areas the process for submitting local area designation requests. The policy was posted on the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs website for public comment. Change 1 to the policy was also posted on the Alabama Department of Commerce website for public comment. Change 1 to GWID PY2014–05 defined “performed successfully” as the local area met or exceeded the levels of performance the Governor negotiated with local Board and Chief Elected official, and the local area has not failed any individual measure for the last two (2) consecutive program years before the enactment of WIOA. Sustained fiscal integrity means the secretary nor the Governor has not made a formal determination during either the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that neither the grant recipient nor the administrative entity of the local area misspent funds under the Workforce Investment Act, Title 1 due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. State WIA Reporting and Fiscal staff verified performance measures and fiscal integrity for each local area that submitted a request for initial designation.

C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

A local area that applies for local area designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) (initial designation) or Section 106(b)(3) (subsequent designation) and is not granted designation may submit an appeal to the State Workforce Development Board. The local area must file notice of intent to appeal and within ten (10) working days must submit their rebuttal package stating the grounds for the appeal and the reasons why the appellant should be initially designated. The rebuttal must be sent via certified mail to the Alabama Department of Commerce c/o State Workforce Development Board, Post Office Box 304106, Montgomery, Alabama 36130. The appellant may be asked to provide additional information and documentation. State WIOA staff will work in conjunction with the State

Board to expedite the appeal and schedule a formal hearing before the Board. The goal for any appeal is to be resolved within 30 days of the filing of the appeal. If the appeal to the State Board does not result in designation, the appellant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor. (See appendix 2 GWID, PY2014–05, Change 01.)

D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

State partner agencies responsible for the administration of Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Rehabilitative Services have agreed to physically co-locate in all comprehensive one-stop career centers in each local area. The State is in the process of developing a WIOA policy to establish an appeals process related to determinations of infrastructure funding by the Partners. The appeals process will be incorporated in the State's WIOA one-stop certification policy.

2. Statewide Activities

A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

Alabama WIOA statewide policies and guidance for the Statewide Workforce Development System are developed and officially issued to the local areas and core partner agencies as applicable by issuing Federal Department of Labor ETA policies (TEGL's, TEN's, etc.) via Governors Workforce Innovation Directives (GWIDs). State initiated GWID's are also issued to provide guidance from the WIOA statute and the WIOA implementing regulations issued on June 30, 2016. The Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) will provide an opportunity to review state policies and guidance to the Workforce Development System beginning the second quarter of PY2016 to make recommendations and provide partner and business member input to required federal and state policies.

The GWID's are posted on the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division website section and at the time of posting to the website (<http://madeinalabama.com/divisions/workforce-development/governors-workforce-innovation-directive/>), an email is sent to local workforce development areas and to workforce partner agencies as well as to other workforce system personnel to notify them a new or revised policy has been posted on the website. Policies cover all areas of compliance both fiscal and programmatic in compliance with the Act and final WIOA regulations.

State of Alabama general funds are allotted to the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division (Title I-B Administrative Entity). These funds are governed by State Legislation and expenditures are used to enhance programs and activities for capital improvements or equipment that promote literacy, adult education, public health and welfare and mental health. The uses of these funds governed under the code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-23-3.

B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

The State has an established and approved budget for the use of WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds. The required state level activities for oversight and monitoring, grant administration, reporting to the USDOL, incentive awards to local workforce development areas, pre apprenticeship project, etc. are included in the approved budget. Also, allowable activities such as incumbent worker training projects funded with Governor's Set Aside funds are included in the approved budget. The Title I-B administrative entity also provides funds for operational costs to include the costs for the driver/operator for the State's Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) with Governor's Set Aside funds as well as Rapid Response funds when the vehicle is being used for a Rapid Response related layoff event. The State has administered a successful incumbent worker training program since 2001, which was funded with Workforce Investment Act, Governor's Set Aside funds. If necessary, the budget may be submitted to the State Workforce Development Board for approval of an amendment should other allowable statewide activities be considered for funding with WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds.

Rapid Response activities in Alabama are the responsibility of the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce. Rapid Response staff responds to WARN and non-WARN events immediately upon notification of pending layoffs or business closures. Rapid Response staff will contact the designated contact person for the company or business to provide an overview of services and material available to the affected employees. If the affected employees are part of a union, a representative of the AFL/CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT) is also included in the meetings. Once Group Employee Meetings (GEM) dates are established, the Rapid Response Unit immediately notifies the local Career Center, UI, Community Based assistance agencies and others that can provide support and information to the affected workers.

The State has a newly established "layoff aversion team," whose purpose is to provide assistance to "at-risk" companies should those companies contact the team prior to it being too late to avoid layoffs. The purpose of this team, which is composed of staff from several workforce partner agencies, is "lay-off aversion." Each agency funds its own staff members for this team, so there's no additional cost to the WIOA Title I-B administrative entity. One example of assistance might be incumbent worker training, if that is determined (by the team and the employer being assisted) to be the best route to avoid layoffs.

C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

The Alabama Dislocated Worker Unit, Rapid Response section is part of a state Level team that initially will meet to discuss assistance to any area of the state designated as a national disaster area. The Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division provides the Governor's Office with information regarding available Rapid Response resources. State partnerships then includes the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) to provide the initial links for communication to FEMA as well as county level emergency management personnel. Rapid Response staff members also coordinate with the Alabama Department of Labor's Career Centers to ensure State and local partnerships coordinate services to employers and workers affected by natural disasters.

The Rapid Response activities and coordination of services to be provided are the Governor's initial part of Emergency Response Task Force to ensure information can and will be provided with agencies and contacts that will assist in meeting the needs of impacted individuals through the various agencies.

D. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.

Early intervention for possible TAA-eligible workers is provided by the State Rapid Response Unit assisted by local Career Center staff that, together, comprise the Rapid Response team. Customers attending Rapid Response General Employee Meetings are provided a general outline of available TAA services and instructed to report to their local Career Center upon receipt of their TAA eligibility notice. Available to assist in early interventions efforts are the Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) providing internet access to areas removed from Career Centers and ten (10) Portable One-Stops each offering ten (10) PCs with internet access.

b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements

1. If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, **describe the State's** strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Governor's set aside funds are utilized to assist in funding a position in the State AFL/CIO office to assist in facilitating a registered apprenticeship program being added to the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The State Workforce Development Board will also strongly encourage local workforce development areas to set aside a dedicated sum of local Title I-B funds for Registered Apprenticeship training slots. (see III.a.2.H)

Alabama utilizes the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) with WIOA state set aside funds as authorized in section 134(a)(A)(i). The IWTP is designed to provide skills training upgrade to full time, permanent workers. The training must be a business necessity that will enhance companies' ability to compete in global economies, expand present markets and help ensure the permanency of businesses in the state. For the workers, the training will upgrade present work skills, heighten job security and increase the possibilities of higher wages and promotional opportunities.

Local Workforce Development Areas/Boards are also highly encouraged to utilize a portion of their funds for work based training models through on-the-job training, transitional jobs, work experience and customized training.

2. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

The Alabama Department of Commerce, in the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature, was directed to develop a robust apprenticeship program for the state and include a state income tax credit for eligible Alabama employers. The intent is for Commerce to develop along with the USDOL Apprenticeship a new apprenticeship model that will be inclusive and appealing not only to manufacturing but four other sectors to include health care, information technology, construction and logistics/transportation. The legislature wants a specific focus on small business and minority owned business.

The newly forming section within the Workforce Division of Commerce will be known as Apprenticeship Alabama. The staff will rely on USDOL program requirements for all new apprenticeships as the tax credit will apply only to registered apprenticeships and the staff will work closely with the Alabama Department of Revenue for the income tax credit. Apprenticeship Alabama staff will work closely with Alabama companies to develop an apprenticeship, with eligible training providers for required instruction and with individual apprentices as they seek more skills.

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As the Apprenticeship Alabama staff and the WIOA state staff are located within the Alabama Department of Commerce and both sections report directly to the Deputy Secretary of Workforce programs there is a built in alignment, which was the actual goal of the Governor and Legislative Leadership.

Included in the apprenticeship legislation is a directive for the Deputy Secretary of Commerce to work closely with the Chancellor of the Community College System in develop the rules and apprenticeship process. The development is underway and the Community College System and Department of Commerce are jointly developing the rules, process and program.

The ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategy we currently have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any new CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program. We will be working to transition the current Work Based Learning programs into registered apprenticeships.

ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system. We anticipate implementation in the fall of 2016.

In support of these strategic and initiatives to incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into Alabama's WIOA strategy and services and to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities to Alabama's communities, business, and constituents served by the state and the business sector, the Alabama Department of Commerce-Workforce Development Division under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce has engaged with leaders from Governor's Office, ADOL, ALSDE (K-12), ACCS, Veterans Affairs, Related Labor Organizations, Industry Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, other Apprenticeship Training Organization in the implementation ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant. The key component of this accelerator grant opportunity is the completion of the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant Action Planning Tool. The Strong collaboration between the partnering agencies in the completion of the self-assessment tool has yielded a strategic path forward to expand statewide apprenticeship

opportunities by utilizing and leveraging WIOA Title I, II, and, III resources. In addition, the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant Action Planning Tool is being used to design and develop a USDOL ApprenticeshipUSA Expansion Grant. These two critical planning initiatives along with the partnerships from the Governor's Office, ADOL, ALSDE (K-12), ACCS, Veterans Affairs, Related Labor Organizations, Industry Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, other Apprenticeship Training Organizations will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into Alabama's state WIOA strategy and services. The WIOA state apprenticeship goals, strategy, and services are in direct alignment with the USDOL Department's goals for ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion. The following are the three priorities: .

1) To advance the State's Registered Apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy and post-secondary education career pathway that will expand and create, adaptable, and highly skilled workforce.

2) To integrate, Statewide apprenticeship strategies and increase Alabama's capacity to engage industry and meet the demand for new programs in both traditional and non-traditional industries such as IT, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Building Trades, Cybersecurity, and Business Services.

3) To advance the State's innovations to significantly increase apprenticeship opportunities for all Alabama's workers, particularly low-income individuals and underrepresented populations in apprenticeship including youth, women, communities of color, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities, and take steps to facilitate their successful completion of apprenticeship programs.

By designing, developing, and implementing the Alabama Department of Commerce - Workforce Development Division Apprenticeship Alabama State Expansion initiative, the Department is helping the business and community stakeholders to bring together the right partners to strengthen Alabama's apprenticeship systems under the WIOA State Plan for the State of Alabama.

3. Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

The Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division issued Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive Number PY2015-03, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Provider Policy on September 11, 2015 (See attachment 2). This policy described the process and procedures required by local workforce development areas and interested training providers to apply for and maintain eligibility on Alabama's WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Registered Apprenticeship programs need only submit a letter requesting to be included on the ETPL with information about occupations included, name and address of program sponsor, location of related instruction and method and length of instruction. Apprenticeship sponsors will not be required to meet the State's minimum performance goals and will be granted automatic approval to the list.

4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the

requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funding by the Adult Formula program.

As mentioned in other sections, Alabama's approach to economic and workforce development begins with a base principle to ensure that all populations, especially the basic skill deficient, economically disadvantaged, physically, mentally, and verbally challenged participants are provided the services to assist in attaining gainful employment. The Career Centers partners and the regional workforce development boards must put together local plans based on the requirements outlined in WIOA for each core partner and allowable additional partners.

WIOA specifies that services for adults will be provided through One-Stop Career Centers. Service such as career guidance and workforce information may also be provided virtually. WIOA authorizes two types of service that are potentially available to job seekers:

1. Career Services – includes outreach, job search and placement assistance, provision of labor market information, comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans, counseling and career planning, and other services specified in Section 134(c)(2)(A).
2. Training Services – includes Occupational Skills Training, One-the-Job Training activities, Customized, Training, Individual Training Accounts, and other training services specified in Section 134(c)(3)(D).

Priority for both career and training services must be given recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the federal requirement.

The Alabama Workforce Development System will provide priority of services to veterans and eligible spouses, as specified in the Jobs for Veterans Act and its implementing regulations at 20CFR Part 101. When Veterans Priority is applied in conjunction with Priority of Services for WIOA Adult Program Participants, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skill deficient will receive first priority. The second priority would be recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient who are not veterans or eligible spouses. Local Workforce Development Boards are required to develop and include in their local plan, policies that implement Priority of Services for WIOA Adult Program Participants for the One Stop Center and service delivery plan for the local training providers. The State Program Integrity Section is tasked with monitoring the LWDAs to ensure that Priority of Services policies are established and approved by local boards, as well as sample testing participant files for adherence to stated policies. The State Program Integrity Section will monitor each local area on an annual basis and conduct extensive reviews of local area policies and conduct sample testing of participant files to ensure LWDAs adhere to their respective policies, as well operate within compliance of WIOA regulations for Priority of Service and regulations for Jobs for Veterans.

A description of how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient is provided in the Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive (GWID) PY 2016-01, located on the Department's website at Department of Commerce Made In Alabama website.
(<http://www.madeinalabama.com/divisions/workforce-development/governors-workforce-innovation-directive/>.)

5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs .

Local Workforce Development Areas must submit a plan modification request to transfer funds between adult and dislocated worker programs. Once funds are transferred from one funding stream to another, the program eligibility and activity requirement transfer to the new program. However, the funding allocation must be tracked separately in the financial system and reported as if it retained its original identity.

c. Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. Identify the state-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.*

*Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

Alabama's WIOA youth program activities are administered by the three (3) local workforce development areas / boards. Policy guidance (Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive PY2015-09) was issued on January 21, 2016 to the local workforce areas that delineated State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants (contracts) for WIOA youth workforce programs and activities. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) will follow the procurement procedures established within their area to ensure proper competition and transparency as required by WIOA Section 123(a). Each local area, is offered the opportunity providers of youth services that effectively address the needs of eligible youth.

The local areas / boards, per the policy Directive, are required to consider funding youth providers based on program cost data provided by potential providers and based on criteria that may include those youth providers and activities that:

- Develop relationships between youth and caring adults
- Involve family members
- Develop youth citizenship and leadership skills
- Provide appropriate services based on age and needs of each youth
- Demonstrate involvement of the business/employer community
- Demonstrate prior successes in providing employment and training services to youth, both basic skills and occupational skills

-Demonstrate the connection between work and learning

In addition, each Local Area/LWDB must use the following criteria in awarding contracts for youth services:

1. Ability to measure and attain youth-related core performance levels; participant and employer (customer) satisfaction levels (Note: the State calculates and tracks official standards and performance.)
2. Coordination with local secondary and post-secondary institutions;
3. Prior experience working with disadvantaged, special populations, and in operating education, training, and employment programs;
4. Leveraging funds with other funding sources;
5. Fiscal accountability; and
6. Program design that includes the following components:
 - a. An objective assessment for each participant;
 - b. Individual Service Strategies (ISS); and
 - c. Services that prepare youth for post-secondary education opportunities, link academic and occupational learning, prepare youth for employment, and provide connections to intermediary organizations linked to the job market and employers.

WIOA has established core performance indicators to ensure that Federal investments in employment and training programs are accountable to job seekers, employers, customers, and taxpayers. This is a renewed system, which will ensure access for all individuals, of every skill level, the opportunity to pursue the skills, training, and education they need to obtain employment that will lead to financial stability and economic security for themselves and their families. Employers will also have the assurance that trained and qualified workers will be available to fill their current and future openings. Specifically related to this Youth Policy are the Youth Measures and Descriptions.

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

The WIOA requirement that increases the minimum out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure rate to 75 percent signifies a much greater focus on both funds and resources on the OSY population. Early in Alabama's WIOA implementation process representatives from state level core and optional one-stop partner focused on reviewing requirements for aligning program services and activities. Guidance and recommendations will continue to be developed and should be completed and issued to Local Workforce Areas by the end of 2016.

The State Workforce Development Board supports cost-efficient, collaborative efforts that result in comprehensive and innovative services that lead youth to academic improvement, high school graduation or High School Equivalency attainment, employment, military services, advanced or apprenticeship training, paid and unpaid internships, and/or post-secondary education. Local programs must link academic and occupational learning and develop measures of successful outcomes. Effective programs require the involvement of local groups providing input on the proposed program design, and coordinating the delivery of the youth services with local employers, One-Stop Career Centers and other youth services already available in the community.

Local programs have the discretion to determine what specific program services will be provided to a youth participant, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. Critical to the success is integrating a youth development strategy that focuses on a young person's assets, provides a variety of interventions and supports allowing the youth to grow, learn and mature—successfully transitioning to careers and productive adulthood. Youth development activities include leadership development opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. It is expected that each youth will participate in more than one of the fourteen program elements required as part of any local youth program. The overall goal of the youth program is to help youth complete a high school diploma or equivalent and to prepare for a career pathway that will transition into skilled employment and/or postsecondary education.

In Alabama, the workforce system will expand education, training, and employment services to youth and adults with disabilities by using a career pathway framework to increase opportunities. Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the ACCS Adult Education program partners on serving individuals with disabilities that lack the basic academic skills and soft “essential” skills to be successful in postsecondary education and employment. The services include eligible services outlined under section 202 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II Adult Education and the support services that are offered by ADRS under section 414 (Vocational Rehabilitation Services) of WIOA.

Alabama will use multiple strategies to achieve improved outcomes for out of school youth as described in 129(2)(1)(B). These strategies will include all of the combined partners, especially Title II and Title IV being inclusive in their deliver models. The integrated Education and Training opportunities that will be offered through the Alabama Community College System adult education and technical education programs will emphasize braided funding and support services for continued success. All Out of School Youth will follow the eligibility and performance requirements as outlined in WIOA.

The State is implementing a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture demographic participant information for the four core programs and additional partners as requested. The system will align accountability measures and generate automatic referrals among the programs. The system is under development and will have a target date of 2017 for full implementation.

Currently each partner has their own accountability and performance systems for tracking client information and generating reports and referrals. Memorandums of Understanding are in place to allow for data matching of participants to collect the required common measure and partner specific information for accountability.

Using a no wrong door policy, all participants will develop an individualized plan which will entail an optimum blend of services and funding to achieve their objectives. The plan will guide a participant to a pathway built to meet his/her needs and integrate multiple programs and services in a seamless and effective manner.

This model is an integrated compilation of programs and services intended to develop basic academic, technical and employability skills; provide continuous education, training, and work supports that lead to high-demand jobs in targeted sector areas in the local region.

3. Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.*

*Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

The criteria to solicit competitive proposals (per WIOA Section 123(a)) for the operation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Public Law 113-128 youth purposes and activities, will ensure that Youth Programs are competitively procured and solicited for comprehensive year-round Youth Programs for out-of-school youth between the ages 16-24, and in-school youth between the ages of 14 and 21. Local Areas' youth program design must offer a unique opportunity to provide a creative and innovative mix of services designed to address the academic, vocational, and employment needs of at-risk youth.

Targeted activities include:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential; 2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component, academic and occupational education, which may include:

a. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

b. pre-apprenticeship programs;

c. internships and job shadowing; and

d. on-the-job training opportunities;

4. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA Section 123;

5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;

7. Supportive services;

8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training; 13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The State's Program Integrity Section (monitors) will provide technical assistance and monitor to ensure that local area policies and procedures meet the requirement delineated in WIOA Section 129(c)(2).

4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for **“requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).**

Alabama's state policy definition for someone who “requires additional assistance to complete and educational program or to secure and hold employment” is a low income individual who is (1) Indian, Alaska Native, or Hawaiian Native; (2) individuals who are English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; and (3) eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers.

5. Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and **Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If state law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school” indicate that is the case.**

Every child between the ages of 6 and 17 years is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term in every scholastic year except that, prior to attaining his or her 16th birthday every child attending a church school as defined in Section 16–28–1 is exempt from the requirements of this section, provided such child complies with enrollment and reporting procedure specified in Section 16–28–7. Admission to public school shall be on an individual basis on the application of the parents, legal custodian, or guardian of the child to the local board of education at the beginning of each school year, under such rules and regulations as the board may prescribe. The parent, legal custodian, or

guardian of a child who is 6 years of age, may opt out of enrolling their child in school at the age of 6 years by notifying the local school board of education, in writing that the child will not be enrolled in school until he or she is 7 years of age.

6. If not using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

N/A

d. Single-area State Requirements

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
3. The type and availability of WIOA Title I Youth Activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

This does not apply to Alabama. Alabama does not have a single-area.

e. Waiver Requests (optional)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;
2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

4. Describes **how the waiver will align with the Department's policy** priorities, such as:

- A. supporting employer engagement;
- B. connecting education and training strategies;
- C. supporting work-based learning;
- D. improving job and career results, and
- E. other guidance issued by the Department.

5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

6. Describes the process used to:

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the **State's WIOA Annual Report**

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

N/A

Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes

2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes

4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

1. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Alabama Wagner-Peyser employment services utilize professional development activities from several resources. Bedrock of the professional development is the Alabama State Personnel Department which offers courses such as interview and selection; performance appraisal; presentation skills; and dynamics of supervision to ensure selection of quality staff, properly motivated to perform with a high level of interpersonal skills. Each ASES staff member has this

training plan in his or her individual file. One-Stop Center weekly staff meetings of all partners are conducted to share information and train staff. Veteran's staff training provided periodically by NVTI is leveraged by Employment Service to include ES staff. Staff members are also afforded the opportunity to attend Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conferences twice a year to learn the latest in workforce development programs and skills training. Additionally, ADOL-ETA and Workforce Three-One training webinar offerings are transmitted to One-Stop staff for live participation or viewing of recorded programs later. Finally, implementation of the Kuder Professional Development Program is being evaluated to provide ES staff Career Advisor Training which teaches skills needed to deliver career exploration, career decision making, job seeking, and job placement services. This training meshes with the Alabama Department of Education that has implemented Kuder as their Career Planning System for all students.

2. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

Wagner-Peyser staff members are cross-trained on UI eligibility issues and are responsible for conducting the UI work test and, more recently, have been designated as responsible for the UI eligibility assessment portion of the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. Other core programs, including WIOA staff, are aware of UI eligibility issues through One-Stop staff meetings and a desk-aid developed by UI for One-Stop staff use in identifying potential eligibility issues. Wagner-Peyser management works closely with Unemployment Insurance management to provide continuous training to One-Stop staff on UI program changes that may affect eligibility.

B. Explain how the state will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

Information, both written and verbal, on filing a claim for unemployment compensation is available in the reception area in all one-stop centers where client service needs are assessed and identified. Telephone and internet computer access for filing claims are provided in One-Stop Center resource rooms. Individuals needing assistance in filing claims are provided staff-assistance by Wagner-Peyser resource room attendants.

C. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Wagner-Peyser staff reach out to UI claimants occurs early and often in their claim, either electronically, by phone, and/or by mail to apprise of one-stop center services and encourage visiting their nearest center for reemployment assistance. Claimants profiled and selected for RESEA are mandated to come to a center for mandatory reemployment services to include: (1) orientation to all services, including self-service; (2) provision of labor market and career information; and, (3) development of an Individual Reemployment Plan that includes work search activities such as

assessments, counseling, training, resume preparation, and job search. UI claimants not selected for RESEA receive many of the same reemployment services through the Wagner-Peyser grant and the state funded Claimant Assistance Program. Other unemployed individuals have available many of these same reemployment services as determined appropriate with their needs by interview and assessment with Wagner-Peyser staff.

D. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate, including the following:

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

UI claimants must register in Alabama Job Link (AJL), the state's automated labor exchange and log-in to the website weekly to search for a job, or visit a one-stop center for staff-assisted services as part of their job search requirement for receipt of benefits. UI claimant contacts are recorded in AJL and reported electronically to UI. Failure to comply with job search requirements may jeopardize benefits.

2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

Alabama State Employment Services (ASES) has an integrated workforce registration system that captures and shares common information from both UI and Alabama JobLink (AJL) in establishing a labor exchange registration for all UI claimants in AJL.

3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained in administration of the work test for UI claimants, including making eligibility assessments. As possible availability issues are detected during interviews with UI claimants, they are reported to UI staff for adjudication. Wagner-Peyser staff members also provide staff-assisted reemployment services to include job search and placement services.

4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained to recognize clients, including UI claimants, needing education and training services and/or resources in order to acquire skills leading to high demand, high wage career paths. They are also trained to provide referral and application assistance to reach this goal.

E. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or

Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include--

1. Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Assessment of Need

Alabama is not identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) state, or among states with the highest estimated MSFW activity, relative to the MSFW program.

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed the number of farms in Alabama decreased significantly (-11.3%) since 2007 to number 43,228 in 2012. While all size categories registered losses, the steepest declines were found among smaller farms (less than 180 acres) which shrank 13.7%. Farms with 180 acres or more declined 3.5% during this period. Farm acreage also decreased (-1.4%) during this period. Agricultural employers number an estimated 1,500 in the state. During PY 2014, an estimated 200 agricultural job orders for almost 1,600 agricultural job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link, the state's automated labor exchange. It is projected that PY 2015, job orders and job openings will remain unchanged or decline slightly from the preceding year.

The number of acres harvested for crops in Alabama, where historically MSFWs may be employed because of the crop's need for hand harvesting, hand planting or both, have also declined. These crops and acreage are: Sweet Potatoes - 2,700; Potatoes -1,100; Tomatoes - 1,300; Sweet Corn - 1,200; Vegetables - 19,000; Watermelons - 3,100; and Peaches - 3,500 (Tons). Overall, total acreage for these labor intensive vegetable crops has also decreased over the last few years as many growers have switched to crops such as peanuts and feed corn which are highly mechanized in their production, thus necessitating the need for fewer agricultural manual workers.

An attempt to review and analyze agricultural hired farm labor, to include the number of MSFW employed and possible labor shortages in these labor intensive crops, found only summary total agricultural labor numbers available in the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture. Detailed information was not found available by crop for labor. Lacking data on hired farm labor, estimates available through the Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System (LEARS) as determined in collaboration with WIA/MSFW grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and Alabama Job Link were used to estimate the number of MSFWs in Alabama at approximately 200.

The estimated number of MSFW in PY 2014 appears to be down from the previous year's estimates owing to fewer farms and the shift to more mechanized, less labor intensive crops. No significant change in MSFW is expected in the State in PY 2015. During PY 2014, it is estimated that sixty-three (63) MSFW registered for work in Alabama Job Link (AJL).

Assessment of MSFW numbers and needs, while difficult to ascertain, have been estimated from information and input from many sources such as WIA/MSFW 167 Grantee (Telamon Corp.),

Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and other knowledgeable sources.

As a non-significant MSFW state, ASES cooperates and works closely with Telamon, WIOA 167 Grantee, to outreach, identify, and serve the state's MSFWs. Through this agreement with Telamon, ASES is able to achieve many of the state's outreach goals and determine needs to include employment, training and housing.

In PY 2015, Telamon (WIOA 167 grantee), partnering with One-stop Career Centers and with co-location in two (2) centers (Mobile and Huntsville), will require registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIOA, Title I, Section 167 door into Alabama Job Link, the state's labor exchange system. The possibility of additional co-locations is also being explored. This collaboration is expected to increase the number of MSFW registered in AJL in PY 2015.

Assessment of Need (continued)

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

a. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic **area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State** (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

Assessment of Need

Alabama is not identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) state, or among states with the highest estimated MSFW activity, relative to the MSFW program.

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed the number of farms in Alabama decreased significantly (-11.3%) since 2007 to number 43,228 in 2012. While all size categories registered losses, the steepest declines were found among smaller farms (less than 180 acres) which shrank 13.7%. Farms with 180 acres or more declined 3.5% during this period. Farm acreage also decreased (-1.4%) during this period. Agricultural employers number an estimated 1,500 in the state. During PY 2014, an estimated 200 agricultural job orders for almost 1,600 agricultural job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link, the state's automated labor exchange. It

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Assessment of Need (continued)

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In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

b. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

Assessment of Need

Alabama is not identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) state, or among states with the highest estimated MSFW activity, relative to the MSFW program.

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed the number of farms in Alabama decreased significantly (-11.3%) since 2007 to number 43,228 in 2012. While all size categories registered losses, the steepest declines were found among smaller farms (less than 180 acres) which shrank 13.7%. Farms with 180 acres or more declined 3.5% during this period. Farm acreage also decreased (-1.4%) during this period. Agricultural employers number an estimated 1,500 in the state. During PY 2014, an estimated 200 agricultural job orders for almost 1,600 agricultural job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link, the state's automated labor exchange. It is projected that PY 2015, job orders and job openings will remain unchanged or decline slightly from the preceding year.

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In PY 2015, Telamon (WIOA 167 grantee), partnering with One-stop Career Centers and with co-location in two (2) centers (Mobile and Huntsville), will require registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIOA, Title I, Section 167 door into Alabama Job Link, the state's labor exchange system. The possibility of additional co-locations is also being explored. This collaboration is expected to increase the number of MSFW registered in AJL in PY 2015.

Assessment of Need (continued)

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

2. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

One-Stop Career Center outreach activities will assist in providing timely information to partner agencies and Workforce Development Boards about special employment, training, economic and educational needs of MSFW and their families. Outreach activity will interface with the WIA 167 grantee activities to assure all resources and assistance available to MSFW and their families is accessible. This coordination of service is assured and enhanced through the collaboration and, in some instances, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in One-Stop Career Centers.

A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Intensive efforts will be made to contact MSFW whose residence is in the local Career Center area served and those that migrate into the area that are not aware of the Center(s) or services available. In an effort to make sure that farmworkers are being informed of resource available to them, the state MSFW Monitor Advocate will continuously conduct outreach and reach out to all available resources related to MSFW program. Among these resources are the state's One-Stop Career Centers. The Monitor Advocate will visit and inform Center staff of the MSFW program and their responsibilities to outreach and provide services. Pre seasonal canvassing will be conducted by Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers contact individuals and groups to identify, offer and provide services to these individuals not reached by usual Career Center intake activities.

As part of the outreach, MSFW will be informed of their rights to full Career Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation, and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies to include WIOA for possible individualized and training services, will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFW informing them of their rights, including the complaint process, under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be provided to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Telamon, (WIOA 167 grantee) partnering with the Career Centers also performs outreach registering farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for additional American Job Center services through the Career Center system. Telamon is currently co-located in two (2) Centers (Mobile and Huntsville) with possibility of additional co-locations being explored. Through this partnership Career Centers and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to leverage resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. Career Center One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

B. Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

All core programs including UI will engage staff members in annual training designed to inform staff members of the needs, services, activities, and outreach efforts to assist MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need assistance. Training will be coordinated by Wagner-Peyser outreach staff and Telamon staff to ensure current information and resources are included in the staff trainings. One-Stop Career Centers maintain information, technological resources, and assistance contact information to provide technical assistance outreach workers. Designated staff members will attend state, regional and national conferences to stay abreast of current training, resources, and information needed to provide effective and efficient assistance fo MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need serivces. Intensive efforts will be made to contact all MSFW whose usual residence is

in the local Center area and those that migrate into the area that do not contact Career Centers for service. MSFW will be informed of their rights to full Career Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation, and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies to include WIOA for possible individualized and training services, will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFW informing them of their rights under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be given to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Bilingual regular and outreach staff, if possible, will be assigned to offices where substantial proportions of MSFW are primarily fluent and/or literate in Spanish, but not in English.

C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

All core programs including UI will engage staff members in annual training designed to inform staff members of the needs, services, activities, and outreach efforts to assist MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need assistance. Training will be coordinated by Wagner-Peyser outreach staff and Telamon staff to ensure current information and resources are included in the staff trainings.

D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Merit staff outreach workers are provided professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers. Bedrock of the professional development activities are courses taught by the Alabama State Personnel Department which include presentation skills, public speaking, and interviewing and selection.

Professional development programs are being evaluated to provide Career Center staff professional training and certification in the field of workforce development. This will include skills in career resources, career exploration, career planning, career development, interviewing, resumes, assessment, case management, job search, job development, job placement and employer outreach services. The training will complement Alabama Department of Education staff training which has implemented Kuder Career Advisor Training as their Career Planning System for all students. Selection of a Professional Development program is scheduled for January 2017, with implementation March 2017.

Outreach staff training also leverages one-stop partner Veterans Program - National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) training for LVER. This training closely tracks WIOA outreach training, and is conducted periodically at in-state venues as well as NVTI in Denver at the University of Colorado.

Staff members are also afforded the opportunity to attend Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conferences twice a year to learn the latest in workforce development programs and skills training. A workforce partner committee has been formed and is exploring development of an annual state-wide workforce development conference further economic and workforce development in Alabama.

Additionally, Workforce 3-One training webinar offerings, to include MSFW training, are transmitted to One-Stop staff for live participation or viewing of recorded programs later.

The State Monitor Advocate visits Career Centers on a regular schedule and conducts training for staff on the MSFW program.

E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

ASES Career Center staff members have a working partnership with Telamon Corporation, the 167 Grantee. Coordination of outreach efforts is assured through regular meetings and communication and is further enhanced through the co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers. A cooperative, coordinated effort is pursued to minimize duplication of services and maximize the number of MSFWs contacted. As MSFW are contacted, their needs are assessed and, those in need of Career Center services are referred and encouraged to visit for assistance. Services may include assessment, job referral, job placement, job development, counseling, training, support services, and information on unemployment insurance. Also, ASES, Telemon, and ALFA, have agreed to have quarterly meetings to discuss ways to effect overall improvement of the MSFW programs and services.

3. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;
- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Pre-seasonal canvassing is conducted by local Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers will conduct outreach activities to identify MSFW and services needed. Individuals and groups are contacted to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Telamon, partnering with the Career Centers, registers farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for and in need of additional services through referral to the Career Center system. Career Centers strive to ensure that MSFWs are afforded the same basic, individualized and training services available to all clients.

Agricultural employers continue to be reached by ASES as part of the Work Alabama program, focused on helping farmers find and hire temporary agricultural workers. Agricultural employers are encouraged to place job orders in Alabama Job Link. Career Center staff will assist in referring farm laborers.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Telamon, the 167 Grantee partnered with ASES, coordinates outreach efforts that will assure through regular meetings, communication with farmworkers and advocacy groups to include information on the complaint system. In addition, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers will ensure the successful distribution of information to MSFWs visiting Centers. Telamon, the 167 Grantee, assists migrants and seasonal farm workers in the State of Alabama. Its two primary objectives are: (1) to help farm workers seek alternatives to agricultural labor; and, (2) to improve the agricultural lifestyle of those who wish to remain in agriculture.

Agency staff and Telamon workers educate farmers regarding the posting of DOL migrant and seasonal farmworker posters and literature addressing farmworker rights, to include terms and conditions of employment, in visible high traffic areas such as check-in areas and break-rooms. Staff members also notify other State agencies that may serve Migrant Seasonal farmworkers of this information as well.

In a collaborative effort, ASES works with local partner agencies to ensure that farmworkers reached through outreach are informed and encouraged to visit their local Career Center where they can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Alabama Career Centers. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies, ASES, and Telamon partner with are local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and, health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is integrated into the Career Center System's operating system, Alabama Job Link (AJL). Agricultural job orders may be placed directly into the system by employers or placed into the system with assistance of Career Center staff. Brochures on "The Agricultural Recruitment System: An Agricultural Worker's Guide" and "The Employer Guide to participation in the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program" will be available and provided to agricultural employers. Brochures highlighting all of the services available to employers through Career Centers are provided to employers as part of the Career Center System marketing program.

State attention was focused on the agricultural sector in 2010-2011 with introduction of the Governor's "Work Alabama" initiative aimed at ensuring farmers have an adequate farm labor supply. This initiative required Career Center staff to identify, outreach and contact agricultural employers in the state to identify labor shortages and market Career Center services such as AJL, ARS and recruitment, and programs such as H2-A to ensure farmers an adequate agricultural labor supply. This relationship established between Career Centers and agricultural employers continues today and remains strong.

Additionally, the State Monitor Advocate will participate in meetings with farmworker organizations, county cooperatives, extension service, and others representing farmers to inform of and market Career Center System services, including ARS, H-2A programs to farmers.

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can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Career Center System. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies partner with local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care.

Pre-seasonal canvassing is conducted by local Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers will conduct outreach activities to identify MSFW and services needed. Individuals and groups are contacted to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Telamon partnering with Career Centers, register farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for and in need of additional services through referral to the Career Center system. Career Centers strive to ensure that MSFWs are afforded the same basic, individualized and training services available to all clients.

4. Other Requirements

(A) Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

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(B) Review and Public Comment.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

In developing the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) information and suggestions were solicited through survey of the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee (Telamon Corporation), and other appropriate groups, agencies, organizations to include: the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), and Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries. The State Monitor Advocate for MSFW was also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the AOP.

The items that follow are the suggestions received and the State response to the survey conducted:

Telamon - WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee

- • Comment: Telamon, partnering with the Career center system and co-located in some Job Centers, will register farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for additional American Job Center services through the Career Center system.
- • Response: Closer collaboration/coordination with partners serving MSFW should further outreach efforts allowing easier access to services, resulting in increased registrations, stimulation of dual enrollments with partners, and access to all services of the One Stop delivery system.
- Comment: Need to be provided with referrals from One-Stop partners of individuals entering the One-Stop system who are identified as primarily dependent on farm work for their livelihood.
- Response: Increased awareness of One-Stop partners of specialized services, including educational and job training programs for individuals with agricultural farm work experience, should increase referrals resulting in better service to farmworkers.

Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA)

- • Comment: Communication/Information on services available through Career Centers doesn't always reach farmers and farm workers.
- • Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies, organizations and in particular the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee should help ensure farmers and farm workers are aware of the services available to them through the Career Center system.
- Comment: Farmers don't always use the Career Center services available to them.
- • Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations to promote awareness of services available and staff assistance if needed should encourage farmers to use these services.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

- • Comment: The extensive network of job centers located throughout the state, the itinerant point centers located in key locations and the outreach activities planned provide appropriate levels of support for employment and training services to MSFWs and agricultural employers.
- • Response: None.

State Monitor Advocate

- • Comment: Better data on the number of farm workers in the state is needed.

- **Response:** Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be pursued to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the state.

The AOP was also posted on the ADECA-WDD website for public review and comment. Although solicited, no additional information or comments were received.

(C) Data Assessment.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Planned progress in agricultural outreach in PY 2014, did not achieve all of the progress sought. Agricultural job orders received and Agricultural job openings received remained largely unchanged from the previous two years at 240 job orders and 2,000 openings. Based upon historical trends, ASES does not expect these trends in the agricultural sector or the numbers of MSFW to change significantly in PY 2016. This reflects the continued decline in the number of farms and acres harvested in the state. The conversion to crops that are highly mechanized in their production also curbs the necessity for agricultural manual workers.

This trend is also reflected in the number of MSFW registering and seeking services through the Career center system. Those registered during the previous program year by quarter were: June 2014 - 98; December 2014 - 18; March 2015 - 35; June 2015 - 63; and September - 33. Of those served, indicators of compliance were met in referrals to employment, receipt of staff-assisted services, and Career Guidance while compliance was not met in referral to support service, job development contacts, and job placement.

Achievement of the state's goals was hampered by transition of the Monitor Advocate position following retirement of the incumbent and hiring of a new Monitor Advocate. This disruption in continuity of service delayed many of the plans for outreach. The new Monitor Advocate and Telemon (167 Grantee), along with Alabama Career Center management and staff, have resumed pursuit of increased the outreach efforts that are expected to net positive results. While too soon to tell if the increased efforts have made a significant improvement, with continued outreach and effort based on the current information, Alabama should see no less than an upward trend in outreach.

(D) Assessment of progress

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

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(E) State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate is a merit employee of the Alabama Department of Labor and was afforded the opportunity to review, comment, and approve the AOP.

F. Wagner-Peyser Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Workforce Division's Adult Education Office has aligned to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). The CCR standards reflect the necessary skills and abilities required for the rigor of postsecondary education, training, and employment. The CCR standards provide benchmarks aligned to the Common Core standards that create a framework that can be used to strengthen adult education instruction. Alabama Adult Education has officially adopted the College and Career Readiness standards that support the State standards used by the Alabama Department of Education. The Alabama State Board of Education, the governing board of the Department of Education, approved the adoption of the internationally benchmarked Common Core State Standards along with selected Alabama standards in November 2010. By combining both Common Core and Alabama's standards, our state has adopted a set of the most comprehensive standards in the nation, ensuring students are prepared for a successful future in the ever-expanding global environment. The adoption and alignment of the College and Career Readiness standards allow adult educators to target the specific skills that will ensure our adults are prepared to attain a high school equivalency, postsecondary education, training, and/or employment. Collaboration with K-12 and college partners will confirm consistent expectations for preparing students for entering postsecondary education without the need for developmental education. By July 1, 2016 Adult Education Title II contracted programs or any future selected programs are required to teach these standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students with the skills and abilities for postsecondary education, training, and the demands of the workforce. To facilitate the understanding and knowledge of CCR standards in the adult education classroom, professional development training will focus on how to use and implement the standards. Standards training will continue to be the foundation of targeted professional development. The courses will deliver the intensity and duration to lead to successful understanding and skills mastery.

The curriculum, instructional techniques, and support materials used in the instructional process must align to the standards for warranting quality and rigor. Instructors have been participating in professional development activities that support the use of the standards. For example, instructors have participated in standards training through various professional development activities such as: facilitated online standard courses through the National Center for Family Learning, self-paced online courses through the U.S. Department of Education supported Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), and local targeted professional development and specific sessions during the Summer Adult Education conference. Three groups of instructors, directors, and state staff members are also scheduled to attend the 2016 College and Career Readiness Implementation Institutes in Texas, Nashville, and Washington D.C. Additional training sessions are scheduled to continue the efforts in teacher preparation, and to share the acquired knowledge obtained from the standards professional development activities with the field.

State efforts will support all programs using a standards based approach to adult education, in which standards-based education is defined as the process for planning, delivering, monitoring and improving academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment. A standards based approach will help to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. This approach aims for a deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook-based or lesson-based instruction. Although standards define individual skills, standards-based education does not promote a skill-by-skill methodology. Multiple standards can and will be integrated in instructional activities to promote College and Career Readiness for preparing the skilled workforce of tomorrow.

Alabama Adult Education is partnering with the Southern Region Education Board (SREB) to provide additional CCR aligned resources for the field. Beginning July 1, 2016, Adult Education providers will be able to utilize SREB's college and career readiness contextualized curriculums in Reading /Language Arts and Mathematics. These SREB curriculums are also being piloted in the Secondary Schools of Alabama, and if adopted, will provide a unified approach for providing contextualized pathway instruction for the state. The contextualized curriculums of SREB readiness courses teach students to think critically through applying skills and problem-solving, while also using concepts that are tied to career sectors. Adults that have not completed the requirements of a high school diploma will be able to prepare for a high school equivalency in an academic contextualized instructional pathway; which also increases the skills necessary to attain employment, or participate in postsecondary education or training.

B. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The ACCS Adult Education Office is Alabama's eligible agency for adult education and is responsible for the administrative and programmatic oversight of the Title II AEFLA funds distributed to eligible, competitively selected providers. Under WIOA, ACCS Adult Education eligible providers' services may include all of the following:

- adult education and literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy;
- family literacy;
- English language acquisition;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation;

- integrated education and training.

ACCS Adult Education will focus on expanding low-skilled individuals' access to career pathways in high-demand occupations. With this focus, the integrated education and training (IET) activities and the contextualized curriculum and materials used for IET will be aligned to Alabama's College and Career Readiness standards for ELA/Literacy, science, and math. In addition, workforce preparation activities will align to OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework, and any occupational training components provided will be based on business and industry standards.

ACCS Adult Education will solicit requests for funding proposals from eligible providers as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law to serve the eligible adult education population who:

- have attained 16 years of age; AND
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and meet one of the following
- are basic skills deficient; OR
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or,
- are English Language Acquisition learners. The eligible entities selected will provide academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:
- read, write and speak the English language and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and,
- obtain sustainable employment.

Eligible entities may include the following organizations, provided they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

- 1) Local education agencies
- 2) Community-based or Faith-based organizations
- 3) Volunteer literacy organizations
- 4) Institution of Higher Education/Learning
- 5) Public or private nonprofit agencies
- 6) Libraries
- 7) Public housing authorities

8) Nonprofit institutions that are not described in (1) through (7) and have the ability to provide literacy services to adults

9) Consortiums of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8.

Ineligible applicants would be characterized as the following:

- Applicants that are not compliant with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or those applicants that discriminate on the basis of nationality, origin, race, gender, religion, or handicap;
- Applicants that lack evidence of the capability of stable fiscal control;
- Applicants that lack assurance that religious restrictions will not be violated;
- Applicants that lack qualified staff, facilities, and equipment.

In accordance with federal law, supplanting federal dollars for state and local dollars is prohibited.

ACCS Adult Education state office will distribute funds in accordance to the following process:

- 1) Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carryout section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carryout section 225;
- 2) Shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carryout state leadership activities under section 223; and
- 3) Shall not use more than 5 percent of the grant funds for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Funding will be allocated and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section. Funding will be awarded and distributed to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process. The criteria will include meeting the eligibility requirements, a proven record of demonstrated effectiveness, and a plan that will align with all of the requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The state review team will have representation from the local workforce investment boards and the core partners. This will aid in the selection of high quality providers that can be successful in meeting the goals and needs within the state, regional, and local area. Grants will be awarded on a multi-year three year basis contingent upon annual performance.

The ACCS, Adult Education office will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The grant competition will be publicized through a variety of print and electronic media throughout the state. Notification of the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) release will be published in the statewide newspapers and sent to the local media outlets. The information will also be posted on the ACCS website and other means of available communication such as social media.

Federal Definitions

In Alabama, adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

In Alabama, eligible individual means an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who— is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

In Alabama, literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

In Alabama, workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

In Alabama, family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality, to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

(A) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.

(B) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. (C) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children. (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. See Special Rule for Family Literacy.

Special Rule: The Alabama Community College System, Adult Education Office will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, Adult Education will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

In Alabama, Integrated Education and Training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

In Alabama, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language

acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

In Alabama, Workforce Preparation Activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

In Alabama, Integrated Education and Training models are a primary focus for adult education programs. They create opportunities for adults to gain academic and technical skills for employment in a contextualized way. Adult Education programs will contextualize basic academic instruction to support the achievement of a high school equivalency and the skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education & training. This approach will allow for an acceleration of knowledge and understanding. The integration of skills will ensure that our adult learners will be able to apply and use their knowledge to be successful in training and/or employment.

Request for Funding Proposal (RFP):

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Adult Education state office allocates adult education funds through a needs-based funding formula by county. The formula will take into consideration the population in need in each county based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5 year estimate. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment-related supports in the area. The formula will be designed to consider the levels of performance in the local programs as compared to established goals as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds.

The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following:

1. Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of adults with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, individuals' with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law).
2. Provide a description of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation).
3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs.
4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance. The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve: a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized

employment after program exit; b. Median earnings of program participants; c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting; d. Effective service provided to employers.

5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One–Stop Career Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for Career Center participants—with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One–Stop Career Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to participants.

6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met.

7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFP that are listed below.

Assessing the RFP:

The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At a minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following 13 considerations of section 231E:

- The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier;
- The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State–adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals;
- The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan;
- The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself;
- The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices;
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post–secondary education or entry into the workplace.

Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship;

- The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance;
- The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/business partners, and workforce boards;
- The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as child care, transportation, and mental health services;
- The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting.
- The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Special Rule:

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

Selected providers will deliver adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both workforce preparation activities and workforce training, for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All integrated education and training (IET), workforce preparation, adult education and literacy, and English Language Acquisition (ELA) activities must align contextualized curriculum and materials to Alabama's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). In addition, IET and workforce preparation activities must also align to OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework, and the occupational training component must be based on industry standards. Eligible providers are required to describe in their Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) how the selected contextualized instructional materials to be used meet these requirements.

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Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

C. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- a. Adult education and literacy activities;
- b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- c. Secondary school credit;
- d. Integrated education and training;
- e. Career pathways;
- f. Concurrent enrollment;
- g. Peer tutoring; and
- h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education office will provide corrections education services and services for other institutionalized population as described under section 225. AE will not use more than 20 percent of the overall 82.5% or greater that is described in section 231 to carry out the activities as described in section 225 for corrections education and other institutionalized populations. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with subpart C in Title II of WIOA.

A correctional institution includes any prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. A criminal offender is any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense.

The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—adult education and literacy activities; special education, as determined by the eligible agency; secondary school credit; integrated education and training; career pathways; concurrent enrollment; peer

tutoring; and transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible provider receiving funds under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five (5) years of participation in the program.

The correctional and institutionalized population will be afforded opportunities to develop their skills and abilities for successful re-entry into society after release. An emphasis on skills contextualization for pathway programs will ensure that inmates are prepared for employment opportunities. There are several innovative initiatives currently occurring in corrections education in Alabama. One initiative incorporates the use of tablet devices with pre-loaded educational resources that are used back in the inmate's dormitory. This allows for additional time on task that will lead to better knowledge and understanding of the material and the use of mobile devices. Another program that adult education plays an integral part is the Correctional Life-Tech program. The partnership is designed to reduce prison overcrowding and recidivism by preparing deserving parolees for job success and life success. Life skills, adult education and technical skills are integrated into an 18-week program to assist parolees in the transition from prison to society.

D. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

1. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Alabama Community College System Adult Education office will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi-year (three year) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with the requirements of Subpart C section 243 of WIOA. The purpose of this program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English Language Learners (ELL) in acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. English language learners who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries are eligible to access all services provided by section 243. These services shall include instruction in literacy and English acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Integration of workforce culture and skills training will enable learners to begin or continue careers in their chosen fields, including preparation for post-secondary education. A focused effort will be placed on providing English skills so that individuals with degree and credentials in their native countries will qualify for employment in the fields for which they have been trained. The desired outcome from the workforce training under this title will be unsubsidized employment in high demand sectors and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

All students in the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programs, as well as students from all other Title II funded programs, may be co-enrolled in other workforce development system programs and receive services concurrently from several partners.

Funding under this title will be awarded based upon the criteria for evaluation of programs applications contained in Section 231 (e) of WIOA.

An evidenced-based pathway approach will be the framework for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. Team planning and teaching will be critical in ensuring the contextualization of the skills to master the English language and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment. The in-demand occupations will be targeted in each regional and local area. Specifically, the provider will deliver contextualized English language acquisition instruction that includes general employability, workplace, and financial vocabulary as well as instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. The curriculum will include an overview of important dates/events in U.S. history and their significance to current events, as well as an overview of the U.S. government at the federal, state, and local levels.

2. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services and how the funds will be used for those services.

Alabama Community College System Adult Education office will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi-year (three year) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with the requirements of Subpart C section 243 of WIOA.

Each program that receives funding under this section shall be designed to— (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Alabama Adult Education state office will consider the ELL population in each service area. The eligible provider must demonstrate the need and services to be provided which aligns with the mission of the combined state plan and the requirements under WIOA. The funds will target those areas that have a large population of English language learners and provide the skills to improve one's abilities to read, write, speak the English language, and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Integrated English literacy and civics education is defined as educational services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. These type of services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and include workforce training.

An evidence-based approach using the framework of Integrated Career Pathways will be used for the non-skilled or skill deficient adults in our state who are non-native English language learners. Instructors from the ELL program and the technical education programs will be identified to provide an integrated instructional model to effectively and efficiently train the adult participants. The program will be a bridge that seamlessly prepares our ELL adults for employment opportunities like any other career pathway program in our state.

Eligible providers must demonstrate in their request the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training career pathway activities. These activities will be provided through collaboration with WIOA and other community partners. The following chart will be used as a guide for selecting pathway programs. This chart is currently being used for the Career and Technical Education Dual Enrollment program and is based on Labor Market Information (LMI) from the Alabama Department of Labor and aligns with the programs that are being offered through the Alabama Community College System. The programs are listed in priority.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Providers must prepare English Language Learners for unsubsidized employment in demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. The activities of the program must reflect the needs of the local, regional workforce area. Civics education is an integral part of the English language acquisition services for the ELL population. An emphasis is placed on contextualized instruction in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge they will need to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members. English literacy and civics education classes introduce students to civics-related content and provide them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in their daily lives while building their English language and literacy skills. The skills learned in these classes strengthen the ELL adult's ability to be an active participant and contributor to our communities and economies.

An increased emphasis on college and career readiness will be extended to the ELL and EL Civics programs. Integrated Education and Training (IET) pathway activities will include preparation of ESL/EL Civics for employment opportunities in the demand industries and with full coordination with the local workforce system. Providing targeted IET professional development to the ELL/EL Civics instructors will be crucial in preparing the English language acquisition population to be an active participant in the college and career readiness initiatives of the state.

E. State Leadership

1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

The Alabama Adult Education State office reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the required State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State. The following activities will be supported through State Leadership funds:

1) Support in alignment of adult education and literacy services with one-stop partners and the core programs. Local programs will align with local one stop partners to ensure that contextualized basic academic support is embedded in training designed to prepare the job seeker/student with the employability skills needed to be successful in achieving or sustaining gainful employment. There will be a seamless support of services between the partners. These funds will be used to cover the instructional costs for supporting these efforts.

2) Establishment and continued operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to the local activities required under Section 231 (b) including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, and dissemination of information about best practices and research-based models for improving teacher effectiveness and quality of instruction.

a. Professional development targeted to models of integrated education and training, career pathways, and bridge programs that can prepare students for success in postsecondary education, training activities, and sustainable employment.

b. Professional development on how to design instructional activities that incorporate support services that will increase student persistence.

c. Professional development for implementing team teaching and planning methods which includes exit points with industry recognized certificates and credentials along the way.

d. Professional development training is crucial to support the Reading Language Arts and Mathematics contextualized curriculum developed by Southern Region Education Board (SREB), which will be strongly recommended for integration into all adult education classroom instruction.

3) Technical assistance to the local programs for compliance under the WIOA Title II requirements and the other parts of the law that describe the common performance measures and roles of the partners as related to state and local areas.

a. Assistance in the use of technology in both administrative and instructional formats to increase effectiveness and efficiencies

b. Leadership training for program directors will be used to enhance their abilities as administrative and instructional leaders.

c. Assistance in using data to inform programmatic, instructional decision making. Leadership funds will allow for any upgrades that will be needed for reporting common measures and assessing the performance of the program. Training on the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) will be provided on an annual basis at the summer conference and as needed periodically throughout the year on rollouts.

4) The state will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits, and a program improvement process for low performing grantees.

Alabama Community College System, Adult Education will ensure that the requirements of section 223 are followed. Alabama Community College instructional staff and Adult Education have been working together with the fiscal agent providers of adult education and career centers to develop career pathway models. State level and local level staff have reviewed other states' models regarding the development of integrated education and training and career pathways at all

educational levels. Currently there are several adult education career pathway models underway in the state with close partnership with the community college and the local workforce investment board. In addition, multiple college providers are working internally with college faculty and adult education staff to create and establish pathway programs which provide multiple program options. Research, best practices, and strategies for creating and sustaining career pathway models are being disseminated through various professional development methods. Several Community College Presidents, in conjunction with local college and workforce investment board leadership, have been developing and refining their processes for implementation. The regional workforce councils are also very supportive of the career pathway programs, essential skills training, apprenticeships, and the contextualized academic instruction. Creatively incorporating all of the integrated education and training models, such as Alabama's Ready to Work program, will be central to successful transition to sustainable employment in the future. Adult Education is part of the Workforce Division of the Alabama Community College System and supports the Ready to Work program by integrating the basic academic and technology skills instruction to assist the participants to be successful in the training and attain a high school equivalency, if needed.

2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The Alabama Adult Education State office reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for any of the following permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways,). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State.

F. Assessing Quality

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

WIOA common measures along with other measures established by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Community, Technical and Adult Education will be used to assess the quality and performance of the providers. In addition to these measures, the programs will also be evaluated on state established goals for enrollment, overall academic level completions, attainment of high school equivalencies and National Career Readiness Certificates. Local eligible programs are responsible to meet all programmatic goals and outcomes that are set by the state. Performance outcomes for each provider will meet or exceed the levels of performance for the common measures set forth under WIOA and the measures established by the National Reporting System performance indicators for Title II Adult Education. The effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement toward meeting the measures will be continuously evaluated. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

(1) The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

(2) The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

(3) The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

(4) The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

(5) The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).

Performance Accountability In addition to the above outcome measures, the ACCS Adult Education state office has established goals for enrollment, academic performance, high school equivalency, and for the number of National Career Readiness Certificates earned. Each provider received their portion of the state goal based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) of the population 18 and over without a high school diploma. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of provider programs for quality of instruction and implementation of best practices and models for adult education is an ongoing process within the state.

The process is defined as follows:

Monitoring is the annual, systematic tracking of adult education program implementation. It consists of examining the progress made in the program against the agreed upon goals set forth in the application for funds. Monitoring also provides the opportunity to make constructive suggestions or recommendations.

It employs systematic collection of data and on-site observations by providing stakeholders the extent of progress and achievement of objectives, proper and lawful use of funds, and compliance with federal and state level policies and guidelines.

Desk-top Monitoring is continuous process that includes the analysis of data from the AAESAP management information system and reports, such as the mid and end-of-year reports from providers.

Desk-top monitoring informs management on how the provider is performing against the national and state expected measures. On-Site Monitoring includes review of Program Management; Recruitment, Orientation and Intake; Retention, Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction; Transition and Support Services; and Professional Development.

Program Performance shall be assessed using the ACCS adult education state approved monitoring instruments. On-site monitoring is an in-depth process that requires preparation in notification of the intent, dissemination of the monitoring tool, the actual intensive visit process, and the all-important findings, results, corrective action plan, and follow-up to ensure issues have been resolved. This allows the adult education state office to determine the provider's understanding and ability to meet the intent and purpose of the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the requirements of the National Reporting System for adult education (NRS). Monitoring reports shall address specific findings and observations. Programs shall be monitored based on a risk analysis that incorporates data and information from the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) management information system. Adult Education has reasonable processes reflective of reporting requirements. For example, staff will provide a copy of the documented monitoring report within a timeframe based on business days from the conclusion of the visit.

The provider will have a sufficient amount of time based on business days to respond with a written report reflective of the action required (i.e. corrective action plan or program improvement plan). Adult Education will determine the appropriate follow-up measures to ensure that the program has complied with the plan of action. Targeted Monitoring is performed to follow-up and verify the satisfactory completion of findings identified during the performance of on-site monitoring. ACCS adult education staff conducting the targeted monitoring visit shall notify the provider within an agreed upon reasonable time for the visit and notify the provider in writing if the result is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Findings are the discoveries that the program is out of compliance or has issues that will impact the ability to accomplish the intent and purpose of WIOA, this plan, or initiatives directed by the Chancellor. Findings require a response and a solution for ensuring that it does not occur again. The response is followed up on again to confirm that the solution has been implemented and is working.

Evaluation Adult Education will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities, including performance measures in Sec. 223. Program reviews and evaluations of state-administered adult education programs, services, and activities will be conducted based on data analysis, site visits, and evaluation instruments.

Activities such as professional development, instructional curriculum, and resources implemented into service delivery will be consistently monitored and evaluated through the year. Types of activities may include self-evaluation of program activities; report of progress in achieving state goals for adult education; effectiveness of teacher training; provider effectiveness; extent to which state adult education technology needs have been met; extent to which adult education for workers, the homeless, and other special populations have been met; and use of results to determine achievement of levels of national and state performance measures, and effectiveness of WIOA implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation Reviews Self-Evaluation can occur regularly through the use of self-assessment guides that are based on scientific, research-based models of adult education. The "Red Flag Chart" developed by McLendon and Associates is one of many tools that can be used for successful administrative and instructional practices. Also, the WIOA self-assessment tool developed by OCTAE and restructured by NAEPDC states for local programmatic use is a great resource for preparing for Comprehensive One Stop Career Center expectations and how to improve partnerships. Data reports from the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) are used by directors and their Program Improvement Team (PIT) crew to analyze and develop strategies for improving program performance. PIT crew is in reference to the 2014 three day professional development training conducted by NAEPDC staff for Alabama.

Mid-year Report gives the programs an opportunity to answer specific questions that are designed to create constructive self-assessment on where the program is and where it needs to be by the end of the year. Challenges and successes are reported. The current mid-year report was designed to enhance program providers' thinking about actions that would improve academic, career readiness, and essential skills services which would align with the intent of WIOA. Best practices are also shared in the mid-year report and are compiled and shared with all directors. Also, directors that have very creative and innovative best practices are scheduled to present at the next directors meeting and/or state conference. All mid-year reports are reviewed and receive a reply from adult education state staff. Year-end Report is the written report from the local provider addressing the success and challenges that were experienced during the year. It is reflective, yet it provides the context for designing services and instructional programming during continuation years. This report may also alert staff of risks that are apparent and would require a monitoring visit or follow-up. The reports are used to discuss the readiness of WIOA implementation with questions that require

programs to strategically assess employment and college and career readiness. The reports give insight into the challenges and barriers to success, which assists in designing professional development efforts.

Evaluations are used after any professional development training offered at a local, regional, or state level to determine if the professional development training objectives were met. The evaluations are used by instructors and state-level staff to assess the success and areas of improvement that will need to occur before any additional training. Surveys are used to gather feedback from the practitioners to guide professional development needs and other activities pertinent to continuous improvement of programs and practitioners. The annual training plan includes state priorities, input from surveys about training needs, and focus groups to advise on all instructional components such as reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers and paid personnel, and dissemination about models and promising practices. Survey results are reviewed with the focus groups to decide how the training would best be delivered, face-to-face or through online webinars. Best practices, innovative instructional methodologies, to communicate statewide key initiatives and policies, as well information regarding additional instructional resources and professional development opportunities are discussed via bi-weekly webinars.

Software and Curriculum Review is a committee composed of directors and instructors with the task of reviewing educational products that can be used to support the needs of adult learners and practitioners. Products are evaluated based on the opinions of the practitioners based on several criteria (including, but not limited to: cost, design, outcomes, user-friendly for student/staff, content, skill level, administrative functions, and time on task). Webinars are useful in providing pertinent information to the field in a consistent message. College and Career Readiness, Pathway Programs, Integrated Education and Training, the role of Adult Education at the Career Centers, as well as understanding how to implement the required components of WIOA are all continuous topics of discussion.

As discussed previously, the Adult Education office will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews, monitoring visits, performance reports, mid-year reports, and on-site program reviews. An important piece of the on-site review is teacher observation and evaluation. This is also part of the annual personnel review that is the responsibility of the program director. Teachers are reviewed by a comprehensive evaluation tool used by state staff and directors to capture and assess the observations made during the review. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other programmatic requirements, specific actions will be taken to improve the quality of the program. The state office uses the following process to improve the quality of adult education services.

1. **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** – A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with state and/or federal policies. The Adult Education state office will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and resolve the CAP.

2. **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** – A program improvement plan of action will be required for programs which are identified as low-performing when compared to the state performance on federal or state benchmarks. The plan will include specific action steps, such as student retention, post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training, and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance through an increase in the quality, rigor, and intensity of processes and direct services.

3. Program Self Review – A program self–assessment document is used to assist the programs in self–identifying programmatic and administrative compliance and the status of each area as related to adult education. The program can use the document as a guide to assess the strengths and opportunities for improving certain areas of need.

Adult Education state staff will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support to all programs. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at a program level.

Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in

connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization Alabama Community College System

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Mr. David Walters

Title of Authorized Representative: State Director of Adult Education

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports **that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;**

(a)(1) Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the DSU, and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to have a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) that meets on a quarterly basis. Council membership is representative of most areas of the state and includes a cross section of disabilities and minorities. Local vocational rehabilitation advisory councils, created by the SRC to obtain direct consumer input at the local level and to provide easier access, continue to meet across the state, and SRC members continue to report on information or advice from these councils at each quarterly SRC meeting. The councils also continue to serve as recruitment grounds for future SRC members due to member training provided during meetings. The SRC continues to advise the Designated State Unit (DSU) on a variety of issues. Specific activities and advice of the SRC include the following: Review and comment on the State Plan. As in prior years, an SRC subcommittee appointed by the SRC Chair reviewed the state plan and attachments, and the DSU asked for comments. No comments were obtained on the State Plan or attachments, nor were there any recommendations for changes or revisions. The SRC through a subcommittee agreed with the goals

and priorities in the State Plan. Review and comment on the Agency's CSPD. The SRC received information on the CSPD, and recommended no significant changes to the recruitment or retention plan. The SRC also reviewed information on current training programs for VRS staff and consumers and recommended no significant changes. Review and comment on the VR Employer services. The SRC continued to work with the Agency on issues affecting employer services and made the following recommendation: Recommendation: The Agency should upgrade the VR client applicant data in the applicant pool database. Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it. Review and comment on Impartial Hearing Officer List: The SRC continued to monitor the list for vacancies and recommend replacements where appropriate. No revisions to the list were recommended. Review and comment on VRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey: The SRC reviewed the Agency's consumer satisfaction survey and recommended the following: Recommendation: The Agency should use the survey and methodology proposed by Auburn University. Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it. SRC Training. Council members received training and/or informational materials on the following areas: a. STAR Reutilization Centers b. People First of Alabama c. VR Process and FLPA (Functional Limitation Priority Assessment Tool) d. Emerging Adults e. Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities

Revision of SRC bylaws. Although there were changes to the Rehabilitation Act through WIOA during FY 2015, the SRC did not amend its bylaws since the final regulations had not been released. After consideration of comments, the SRC agreed with the college tuition policy and supported its implementation. The SRC also agreed with changes to the Agency's self-employment policy. SRC Recommendation: VR should use dual enrollment (high school and college) for eligible VR clients. Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it. SRC recommendation: College preparation training programs should include training on independent living skills. Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it for those college-bound VR clients who need independent living skills training. SRC recommendation: The Agency should use a three-tier funding approach for self-employment VR cases. Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

2. the Designated State unit's **response to the Council's input and recommendations**; and

The DSU has accepted all of the SRC's recommendations as stated above.

3. the designated State unit's **explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations**.

The DSU has not rejected any of the SRC's recommendations.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

(b) This agency has requested a waiver of statewideness. The types of services to be provided by the program on a statewide basis are as follows:

- **JOINTLY FUNDED JOB COACHES:** The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services enters into third party cooperative agreements with twenty-seven (27) local education agencies. These agreements are written and carried out in compliance with 34 CFR 361.28. The agreements provide for jointly funded job coaches to provide pre-employment transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Services are individualized and are directly related to preparing students to enter and maintain integrated competitive employment in the community. Services provided by Job Coaches include: (1) assisting with development of school based learning, developing work based learning experiences (paid or unpaid) in the community; (2) assisting VR counselor with providing job readiness (resume writing, interview skills, completing applications, etc.); and, (3) developing competitive integrated employment sites. Once job placement is accomplished, on site job coaching is provided. Students served by this program include: (1) those with disabilities following the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway; (2) those with disabilities exiting with the Alabama High School Diploma, not enrolled in Career Technical Education; and, (3) those with disabilities following the Essential Life Skills Pathway for services not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. State Unit approval will be obtained before services are initiated. All services will be provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan. The agency has on record that no federal funds are used by the LEA to provide their share of the services. LEAs with which third-party third cooperative agreements for Job Coaches are being formulated are: Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Alabama School for the Blind- Talladega County; Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind Alabama School for the Deaf - Talladega County; Anniston City - Calhoun County; Baldwin County - Jefferson County; Bessemer City; Blount County; Clarke County; Escambia County; Etowah County; Eufaula City - Barbour County; Hale County; Haleyville City - Winston County; Homewood City - Jefferson County; Lauderdale County; Leeds City - Jefferson County; Limestone County; Marshall County; Monroe County; Pell City - St. Clair County; Piedmont City - Calhoun County; Pike County; St. Clair County; Shelby County; Sylacauga City - Talladega County; Talladega County; Tarrant City - Jefferson County.

- **PROJECT SEARCH:** Project SEARCH is a one-year internship program for students with disabilities in the last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government, or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three (3) internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, a special education teacher, and job coaches to create an employment goal, and to support the student during this important transition from school to work. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the employer, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the State Department of Education, the Development Disabilities Council, the Department of Mental Health, and the local school system. The program is currently available in the following counties: Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Shelby, Etowah, Marshall, Baldwin, and two (2) programs in Mobile. When participating in Project SEARCH, the student actually goes to the employment site each day as opposed to going to the school. The LEA provides a classroom teacher to provide employment instruction in the morning, and the students go to assigned work stations the remainder of the day. Work stations may include patient escort, food service, instrument sterilization, and other settings in the hospital. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADHS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

• **INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORTS (IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT):** IPS Supported Employment is an approach to support employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS is evidence-based SE that is based on the following principles: (1) zero exclusion, (2) competitive employment in the community, (3) mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, (4) benefits planning provided, (5) job search occurs rapidly, (6) employment specialists develop relationships with employers in their communities, (7) job supports are continuous, and, (8) consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among seven states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at two sites in the state. The grant is for five years, during which time our agency and partners will be working towards sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and at Alapointe in Mobile. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

No funds from these participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS.

2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated.

3. All State plan requirements will apply

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has cooperative agreements and working relationships with entities outside of the state Workforce Investment System. These agreements provide the agency with the opportunity to extend services to people with disabilities referred by other agencies, as well as the chance to utilize the services of other agencies for its consumers. (1) **Federal, State and Local Programs • Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB):** ADRS enjoys an excellent working relationship with AIDB. AIDB is charged with the responsibility of providing elementary and high school residential education for blind and deaf students in Alabama. Also, through its E. H. Gentry Technical Facility, it provides vocational assessment and training for adults with visual, hearing, and other disabilities. ADRS refers consumers to E. H. Gentry for vocational services. Also, the agency works very cooperatively with AIDB in providing appropriate services to students in the AIDB high schools for the blind and deaf. ADRS works collaboratively with the School for the Deaf and School for the Blind to provide deaf and blind students with summer employment

opportunities. ADRS also works actively with the Helen Keller School for Deaf and Blind that is also a part of the AIDB system. ADRS assists AIDB in transitioning these students into employment when they have completed school or, when appropriate, assists the students with further education. ADRS has a collaborative agreement with AIDB to jointly fund Rehabilitation Teachers who provide special teaching services to people with visual disabilities. Also, the agency jointly funds Interpreters, Randolph–Sheppard Specialists, and Orientation and Mobility Instructors. • **Department of Corrections:** ADRS is cooperating with the Alabama Department of Corrections. ADRS receives referrals on inmates who are in the prison system who will be transitioning back into their home areas through liaison counselors to the prisons. ADRS has established a system to handle these referrals and to provide services to eligible individuals when they return home. An ADRS staff specialist in the State Office is overseeing this initiative. • **Department of Risk Management:** ADRS works cooperatively with Alabama's Risk Management program. We receive referrals of individuals injured on the job to assist Risk Management in helping various state agencies retain individuals in employment who may have been injured. • **Governor's Office:** ADRS receives, on a regular basis, referrals from the Governor's office. The Governor's office contacts ADRS to make referrals of individuals who have contacted the Governor's office regarding various problems. These referrals are received by an Assistant Commissioner of ADRS, and forwarded to the appropriate local supervisor for follow-up and assessment. Understandably, many of these referrals are for services beyond the scope of ADRS; however, efforts are made to provide the Governor's staff with an appropriate service outlet to address the needs of the consumer. • **Bureau of Indian Affairs and State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission:** ADRS recognizes the need for services to Native Americans. The agency has liaison counselors assigned to various tribes throughout the state to receive referrals and to extend our services to Native Americans within Alabama. ADRS also coordinates services through the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission for Alabama's eight state recognized tribes and one state and Federally recognized tribe. ADRS provides services to American Indians with disabilities to the same extent as the agency provides such services to other significant segments of the population with disabilities residing in the state. • **Department of Youth Services (DYS):** Alabama has a Department of Youth Services. This Department is established to work with delinquent youth. It is hoped that the services of DYS will prevent delinquent youth from eventually advancing to the adult correctional system. ADRS has a specialist who is very actively involved with DYS. This individual receives referrals on a regular basis from DYS and forwards those referrals to the appropriate field staff.

Cooperative Agreements (continued)

• **Department of Mental Health (DMH):** The Agency maintains an ongoing relationship with DMH. ADRS serves numerous consumers with mental illness. ADRS works on cooperative initiatives to ensure services are provided to eligible consumers. ADRS maintains a relationship with the DMH Division of Substance Abuse and a network of residential aftercare service providers. ADRS is working extensively with the DMH to expand and improve the ADRS supported employment program. This includes efforts in the areas of Employment First, extended supports, and collaborating on grants. • **Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF):** ADRS continues its relationship with the Alabama Head Injury Foundation. This relationship is directed towards maintaining a service delivery system to address the needs of consumers affected by traumatic brain injury. • **Community Rehabilitation Programs:** ADRS continues an excellent working relationship with a wide network of community rehabilitation programs throughout the state. These CRPs are a critical link in our service delivery effort. • **Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA):** ADRS has an ongoing partnership with the ADECA. The agency has worked cooperatively to pursue grants to serve people with disabilities. • **The Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP):** ADAP is the Alabama arm of the Protection and Advocacy program for people with disabilities. ADAP makes referrals to Alabama's toll free number for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through ADRS which coordinates the service. • **Statewide Independent Living Centers:** ADRS is represented on the State Independent Living Council and works closely with Alabama's three

Independent Centers coordinate services and referrals. • **Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD):** GOOD serves as a clearinghouse for resources related to people with disabilities. ADRS maintains an ongoing relationship with the Governor's Office in order to provide resources as needed. • **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP):** ADRS partners with OFCCP to provide affirmative action training to employers on issues related to hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. ADRS hosted a major conference for employers in conjunction with OFCCP staff to provide information to employers on the 503 Federal Hiring mandates. • **Social Security Administration (SSA):** The Agency maintains an excellent working relationship with the SSA. The ADRS specialist, Donna Bowden, is very knowledgeable regarding Social Security issues and has given numerous presentations on the Ticket to Work, Work Incentives Improvement Act, not only to ADRS staff, but other agencies. • **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):** The partnership between EEOC and ADRS involves staff cross training on disability and employment law in addition to ADRS linkage to public and private sector businesses to assist with non-discriminatory practices in the employment, retention, training and promotion of individuals with disabilities. ADRS is a regular trainer for the EEOC technical assistance seminars for employers as well. • **Department of Labor – Veterans Employment Training Service (VETS):** ADRS collaborates at the state and local level with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff to assist wounded warriors in return to work or obtaining employment with Federal contractors and other businesses. This includes vets access to the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program. • **Alabama Industry Liaison Group (ALILG):** Represents Federal contractors' compliance issues to include those tied to disability (Section 503 of the Rehab Act). ADRS is the lead provider of information, training and resources related to outreach, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities to ALILG businesses and ALILG routinely trains ADRS business relations consultants and participates in local, regional and state conferences sponsored by ADRS. Cooperative Agreements (continued)

• **Alabama Business Leadership Employment (ABLE) Network:** The 501c3 conglomerate of Alabama businesses that advocate for the employment of individuals with disabilities, uses ADRS business relations program as their lead resource for disability-in-the-workplace issues while co-sponsoring numerous training events for employers. They also serve as an advisor to ADRS on disability issues and resources for employers. • **Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM):** Representatives from a variety of Federal agencies throughout Alabama that function under the OPM work directly with the ADRS business relations consultants to implement Federal hiring mandates, Schedule A recruitment, accommodations, and employee retention impacting workers with disabilities in the Federal sector. • **Department of Veterans Affairs: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)** program. ADRS collaborates with the VR&E program at the national and state level to serve and place into employment veterans completing the VR&E program, providing customized services through ADRS specialty counselors, rehabilitation technology specialists for accommodations, and for return to work assistance.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

(2) Assistive Technology Act – ADRS participates in providing assistance to people with disabilities living in the state who have technology related needs through the Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR) program. This is a statewide device reutilization and loan program which loans out needed equipment through a network of reutilization centers. ADRS also participates in the ABILITY loan program that is a loan guarantee program to assist people with disabilities in obtaining financing for assistive technology.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

Rural Development of the US Department of Agriculture: ADRS maintains a relationship with this office to receive referrals from rural areas that may need agency services.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

Non Educational Youth Services: ADRS has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Youth Services to provide a process for transitioning youth who may or may not be involved in an educational program into employment or training. ADRS also serves out of school youth through CRP's and Supported Employment projects and through collaboration with Workforce partners in the Career Centers where we house VR counselors who serve large numbers of out of school youth.

5. State use contracting programs.

ADRS currently has no cooperative agreements to participate in state use contracting programs.

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Plans, policies and procedures for coordination with Education officials: ADRS is committed to providing pre-employment transition services to assist students with disabilities in the high school setting in making a seamless transition to the world of work or vocational/post-secondary education. ADRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for the provision of transition services. This agreement serves to ensure that students with disabilities, who are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, are provided services without unnecessary delay, as well as, to increase the collaborative efforts of the ADRS and ALSDE regarding the coordination of services that will improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities. The agreement describes (1) the scope of services to be provided by the ALSDE and ADRS; (2) the financial responsibilities of each party; (3) the methods of consultation and technical services needed to formulate IPEs; (4) the role of each agency in transition planning; and, (5) methods and strategies for identification of students needing transition services. Transition planning, sharing of student information, and consultation activities are stated in the agreement.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS): New federal mandate requires ADRS, in collaboration with the local educational agencies, to use 15% of ADRS federal allotment in providing or arranging for the provision of pre-employment transition services (PETS) for all students with disabilities, ages 16–21, in need of such services who are eligible for or potentially eligible for services.

PETS required activities include: • Job exploration counseling. • Work – based learning experiences, which may include in–school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible. • Counseling and guidance on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education. • Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living. • Instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

In order to achieve the 15% federal mandate, ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs, and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs: • Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training) Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self–advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training. • Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program. • Jointly–Funded Job Coach – ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre–employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS and LEA pay half). The jointly funded job coaches provide pre–employment transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre–employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third–party cooperative agreements. At the state level, ADRS participates as an equal partner in the Alabama State Interagency Transition Team (SITT). SITT is a multidisciplinary group of 37 representatives from 22 state agencies (ADRS, ALSDE, Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education) and organizations providing services for students and young adults with disabilities. The purpose of this group is to develop a better understanding of each agency’s role and responsibilities in service delivery for Alabama’s students and young adults with disabilities, and to seek and implement new and better ways of providing secondary special education and transition services. At the local level, the ADRS has procedures in place to ensure the agency is actively involved in the transition of students with disabilities from school to work. The agency has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition counselor. The counselor visits the school on a regularly scheduled basis to meet with teachers and guidance counselors in order to provide vocational rehabilitation information and to receive referrals of students with disabilities in need of rehabilitation services. The VR counselor meets with the student and parents in order to explain rehabilitation services to enable a student’s informed choice regarding these services. School records and other information needed for eligibility determination is obtained. Once eligibility is determined efforts are made to begin determining rehabilitation needs and a vocational goal. As appropriate and as necessary, the transition counselor can provide the student with vocational evaluation while still in high school in order to assist a student in determining an appropriate and feasible vocational goal. Counselors make every effort to participate in IEP meetings. This provides the counselor the opportunity to have issues addressed in the IEP related to disability. The counselor also provides some level of expertise regarding accommodations the student may need related to disability. Per ADRS policy, when transition services are being provided to an individual (student) with a disability who is also eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is prepared in coordination with the appropriate LEA and includes a summary of the relevant elements of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for that individual. The ADRS

transition counselor will complete an IPE on each student determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services by the time the student leaves the school setting.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

ADRS provides consultation and technical assistance regarding VR, application process, eligibility requirements, vocational assessments, job placement services, local service providers, post-secondary education, and other topics deemed appropriate that will lead to a successful employment outcome. ADRS partners with ALSDE and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute to host an annual transition conference. This conference is attended by a variety of transition stakeholders including staff from LEAs, ALSDE, ADRS, Community Rehabilitation Programs and parents of students with disabilities. This conference provides an opportunity for counselors and transition staff to be updated on the latest successful trends and practices related to transition. Transition counselors also participate in transition work groups, teacher workshops and transition fairs hosted by the LEAs. These activities allow ADRS staff excellent interaction opportunities with education staff and teachers.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities. As stated earlier, ADRS has transition counselors designated to each LEA who work closely with the special education and career and technical education teachers in the development of the IEP for those students/consumers with whom the ADRS is involved and attend IEP Team meetings and/or provide input that will assist in making decisions about services that will be provided by the ADRS, such as assistive technology, career exploration or work experience opportunities. ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

ADRS recognizes the roles and responsibilities of each agency. Educational responsibilities rest with educational agencies that include the cost of accommodations for students with disabilities. Transition counselors are trained to be sure responsibilities of the education agency are not transferred to ADRS while the student is in school. The educational agency is responsible for ensuring students with disabilities are provided equal access to education. The school is responsible for providing school records to be used in determining eligibility and planning a rehabilitation program. ADRS utilizes school records and other available information in order to develop a rehabilitation program. These roles and responsibilities further defined in the formal interagency agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Outreach efforts continually occur between LEA staff and the designated VR counselor. These counselors (who most often have exclusive transition cases) work with teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, psychometrists and other education staff to identify students with disabilities who need transition services. Additional outreach will occur at IEP meetings, community based transition team meetings, teen transition clinic, job fairs, advocacy meetings, parent focus groups and other related events. These outreach efforts will inform school personnel, students, other state agency personnel, advocates, appropriate family members and other representative of the following:

- a. Description of the purpose of VR
- b. Information regarding eligibility requirements
- c. Information regarding application procedures and
- d. Scope of services that may be available to eligible individuals.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a viable working partnership with 25 Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) statewide. The CRPs play a vital role in assisting the department to meet its mission of providing quality employment outcomes for individuals with severe disabilities. Currently, the Accreditation Commission (CARF) accredits 22 of the CRPs in Alabama and three providers who are in a “provisional status” and have agreed to meet CARF standards in a twelve-month time frame. As the nature of services provided by CRPs continues to change, the options regarding standards and accreditation requirements will change. Within the CRP section area, one State Office Administrator supervises the general CRP programs, another State Office Administrator supervises the Supported Employment Providers (SEP) and both share an Administrative Assistant. All three employees report to the Assistant Commissioner of VR general field services. The CRP Administrator is responsible for initiating agreements with non-profits and for profits from which ADRS consumers receive services. CRP section staff review the qualifications of both nonprofits and for profits, meet to discuss fees and payment rates, and monitor service delivery through management/data reports and field visits. In 2005, the agency instituted a system to ensure that all community based service providers who desire to provide services meet CARF standards and maintain their accreditation. This requirement provides some assurance that CRP's address issues like ADA accessibility, accountability, safety, staff qualifications, accommodations, and affirmative action in hiring persons with disabilities and address any special communication needs of consumers. Currently, the CRP Administrator meets with CRP staff to discuss services and formulate an agreement that establishes agreed upon fees, referrals, and employment goals for each CRP. This information is shared with local counselors so that appropriate referrals and service authorizations can be made to the CRPs. The department has formally developed and implemented the “Stages to Employment Payment System” (STEPS), which is a four-step outcome based payment schedule that is efficient, requires minimal paperwork, and focuses on the individual needs of the consumer served. To date this effort has met with positive feedback and all CRPs are utilizing this service/payment system. The department continues to work

cooperatively with CRPs statewide to improve services at the local level. There is a continuous need for services. The development and establishment of new programs will change with the assessment of consumer needs. Based on an assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services currently provided by CRPs statewide, a number of trends appear to be taking place:

- Increased emphasis on serving individuals that are considered underserved, individuals with the most significant disabilities, and individuals residing in rural areas of the state.
- Increased emphasis on consumer choice.
- Increased emphasis on serving ADRS consumers in their home communities.
- Increased emphasis on integrated employment.
- Increased incentives based on performance.
- Increased emphasis on community based services.
- CRPs are becoming more diversified regarding services provided and funding streams. More options regarding accreditation requirements as providers and the nature of service provision changes.
- Increase of supported employment long term supports.

The department's commissioner, the assistant commissioners for general field services, and blind/deaf services, and the CRP specialists meet regularly with all community rehabilitation program directors. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual concern, improve communication, and focus on the continuous improvement of the partnership. Supported employment is available in Alabama to individuals who require intensive and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. Supported employment services are available through some 38 community based providers in the state. These services are currently provided in all regions of the state through cooperative agreements with community-based organizations and agencies. The availability of job coach services is provided in most of the state's network of 25 community rehabilitation programs. Additionally, specialized center based services for blind and deaf consumers are being expanded and developed in local communities throughout the state.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to stay abreast of national issues regarding community rehabilitation facilities through its attendance and participation in conferences of state and national significance including Alabama Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (AARF), Alabama Association of People Supporting Employment First (AL-APSE), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). Collaborative efforts between ADRS Computer Services and the CRP section have recently developed computer generated reports that assist the CRP section in tracking targeted CRP goals and outcomes such as numbers of individuals successfully employed, cost per successful closure, and average wage.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Supported Employment (SE) is available in Alabama for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services, and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. These services are provided in all regions of the state by 38 approved community-based organizations. Supported Employment services are available to individuals regardless of their disability. Currently, the primary disabilities served include persons with significant intellectual disabilities, severe mental illness, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, visual and hearing impairments, severe orthopedic impairments, traumatic brain injury, and other severe disabilities. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services currently utilizes a Milestones service and payment process. Milestones, a service and outcome based payment system, has significantly improved the quality of supported employment throughout the state, while proving to be more cost effective for the Agency. Providers of supported employment are paid for successful outcomes achieved by individuals participating in supported employment. The Milestones program segments the rehabilitation process into four distinct areas: (1) Determination of Needs and the Discovery Process, (2) Hire, (3) Job Retention/Coaching and (4) Closure. Extended supports including natural supports are available at the job site, and are provided for the duration of the employment. Providers of long term supports are required to document twice monthly contact with each consumer successfully working in the community, and to maintain this documentation in case files for the duration of that consumer's job. This information is reported monthly to the ADRS Supported Employment Coordinator for tracking purposes. To ensure the highest quality of services, training is provided throughout the year to address issues related to supported employment, including the provision of extended services. This training is available to all SE providers as well as other agencies that may collaborate to provide supports to an individual working in the community. These agencies include the Alabama Department of Mental Health, The Alabama Department of Education, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This training is currently being offered twice a year in a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. APSE (Association for People Supporting Employment First) is sponsoring, and our state Chapter of APSE are also participating in CESP National Certification (National Certification for Employment Support Professionals). Project SEARCH, a statewide initiative to improve transition services for students with most significant disabilities began in Alabama in FY 2012 with two pilot sites. Alabama now has 10 Project SEARCH sites and we will continue to work to expand this transition program in our state. All sites have a state team member assigned to them to help with implementation and fidelity. Trainings take place throughout the year and the teacher and job coach both attend national SEARCH training as well. Cooperative Agreements between the Local School Systems (LEA's) Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation Program and the local employer supporting the program are in place for all 10 sites. In FY 2014, ADRS in a collaborative effort with and ADM, piloted Project GATE. Project GATE (Gaining Access to Employment) moved consumers with most significant disabilities from sheltered work to training in industry. ADRS and ADMH are currently hosting 5 GATE Projects. This program was recently recognized by the ICI: Promising Business Relations, Developments in Integrated Employment for innovation in employment. "This innovative and collaborative training program blends funding from both key agencies. It provides opportunities for higher wages, more innovative and opportunities to provide customization. Job coaches are on site and training the interns". Participants are either offered employment at the host site or in the community upon completion of training." Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community

Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post–Secondary Education continue to work towards Employment First legislation. Additionally, the lead agencies (ADMH and ADRS) have been very active in regional trainings to assist providers, families, and advocates to better understanding Employment First and to address fears and concerns from these groups. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is also participating with the Alabama Department of Mental Health in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Additional training, to the Employment First Team, is being provided via Vision Quest (through ODEP). Partners on the Employment First Team are working as a local unit and in concert with other states to better understand how to successfully infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid Waiver and State Plan Options. An Employment First interagency agreement is in draft form at this time. Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment is an evidence based approach to supported employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS is an evidence based practice to SE that is based on zero exclusion, competitive employment in the community, mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, benefits planning is included, job search occurs rapidly, employment specialist develop relationships with employers in their communities, job supports are continuous, and consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among 7 states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at 2 sites in the state. The grant is for 5 years during which time we will be looking at sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and Alapointe in Mobile County (urban site). This grant includes Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Auburn University, the Alabama Department of Veteran's Affairs and Dartmouth University. In a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with AL–APSE/ the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education training and educational activities continue to be offered twice a year to improve the consistency of service delivery by job coaches and supported employment providers. This training is coordinated by ADRS and the ADMH and offered by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. SE job coaches, School job coaches, Job developers and coaches from private and nonprofit, as well as other state agencies are welcome to attend. Project SEARCH teachers and job coaches attend this 3 day interactive training as well. Project SEARCH sends their teachers and job coaches to this training as well. ADRS will partner with ADMH, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs–Workforce Development, Alabama Department of labor, Community College System, Job Corps, Department of Veterans Affairs, the AL Department of Veterans Affairs, Reintegration Apprenticeship, the WIA Indians and Native American programs to implement the DEI grant. This grant provides funding to increase the number of youths with disabilities ages 19–24 served through American Job Centers and improve their employment and training outcomes while increasing the Job Centers capacity to serve people with disabilities. The goal of the grant is to increase access to existing employment, training and educational opportunities available through the states workforce partners, which will promote a culture of employment as a priority for persons with disabilities.

g. Coordination with Employers

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and

Vocational Rehabilitation Services In addition, the new indicators in WIOA, specifically Indicator 6, will measure Effectiveness in Serving Employers. In the world of disability, that effectiveness almost always goes beyond the employment of individuals with disabilities. This document provides a summary for inclusion in the VR state plan to address the above since the new legislation asks that we describe how VR, as the designated State unit, will work with employers to accomplish the above. ADRS has committed to a “dual customer” approach in working with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for the consumers we serve. While doing so, ADRS also focuses on developing effective working relationships with business to address their disability related issues in the workplace from outreach and recruitment, to accommodations, to education, to resources linkages and more via the development and delivery of appropriate products and services to meet those needs as specified in the WIOA proposed regulations and beyond. Specific list of services to business, along with their explanations, is available on the ADRS website business page: ADRS Services to Businesses . To accomplish the above, ADRS has a business relations unit, “READI-Net” (Resources for Employment And Disability Information Network), staffed by specially trained Business Relations Consultants (BRCs, in a classification separate from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, who are charged with establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with business in order to generate employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities or to assist business with retention of workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability. BRCs also develop and deliver the other disability-related services needed by business and are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of those services while simultaneously assisting a wide variety of consumers (youth and adults) with all levels of job readiness preparation through group or one-on-one sessions, job development, job search, job retention and follow-up. In addition, ADRS works with a network of community-based organizations on customized placement services for consumers, also necessitating coordination with employers. These partnerships include special assistance to students and youth with disabilities, Transition services, and supported employment assistance. This coordination with business also involves internal ADRS staff specializing in job readiness and placement services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing and may include Deaf Support Specialists or other contract employment specialists focusing on visually impaired. Engagement with businesses through the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program also necessitate collaboration with business and includes ADRS vocational rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation technology specialists To foster collaboration among these resources, thus avoiding duplication of effort with employers while maximizing assistance to consumers, ADRS has developed local collaboration teams facilitated by BRCs to include any and all local entities that assist VR consumers with job readiness, placement and retention and who reach out to employers on behalf of those consumers. These groups meet either monthly or quarterly and can include: ADRS staff, community rehabilitation programs, supported employment projects, jointly funded job coaches with the school systems, disabled veterans organizations, workforce partners, staffing companies and more. To enhance coordination with employers, the ADRS READI-Net program and BRCs also engage with entities that represent business and disability-related issues: Staffing companies, Society of Human Resource Management, Chambers of Commerce, Alabama Industry Liaison Group, EEOC, OFCCP, and other partners that represent the needs of employers. BRCs work through those entities to deliver needed disability-related services to the business. Operating under an “employer account system” to ensure accurate record keeping of services provided to employers and to organize outreach to employers, ADRS has an employer data base, “Mr. ED”, that maintains permanent records on every business contacted by BRCs or with whom BRCs have a working relationship as an “account”. These records reflect the following: • Company name and detailed demographics on contact info, staffing patterns, benefits, referral processes, type company (e.g. Federal contractor, Federal agency, private sector, etc) and more; • Specific services provided to the company by ADRS; • Employment and retention outcomes with the company; • Archived records that can be re-activated to reflect the history of the partnership A number of customized services to business, on behalf of ADRS consumers, to enhance hiring opportunities by the business include a variety of the following initiatives which require coordination with the business and delivery by ADRS staff or

partners: • Pre-hire work experiences • Mentoring or internships • Summer work experience • On-the-Job training support (fiscal and programmatic) after hire • Targeted Job Tax Credits •

Accommodations at the job site such as: o Job coaching o Delivery and set up of accommodation resources o Additional follow up services to ensure success • RAVE services to assist existing employees with disabilities Determination of whether or not ADRS has effectively served employers (Indicator 6) is driven by specific input from long term ADRS business customers who serve as advisors to ADRS through: • VR State Rehabilitation Council – Business Relations Committee • ABLE Network – Alabama Business Leadership Employment Network, the state chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network That input reflects the following elements in determination of whether or not ADRS effectively served the employer: 1. Chart of Core Functions (attached) with specific reference to the WIOA proposed regulations and approved by the SRC and ABLE Network. These functions reflect an overview of how VR will function in its partnerships with employers. 2. Agreement with the Business Services listed in the WIOA proposed regulations 3. Expansion of the Business Services listed in WIOA proposed regulations 4. Methods to determine the effectiveness of services to business

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

ADRS will coordinate with employers to provide pre-employment transition services for students and youth with disabilities through the development of internship sites, job shadowing opportunities and trial work experiences.

h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

The State of Alabama Independent Living Service, a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, provides comprehensive services for individuals needing independent living and competitive integrated employment. Services are provided through specialized counselors who manage services for both vocational rehabilitation and the Medicaid waiver. Additionally, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama's Medicaid Agency are all principle players in Employment First in Alabama. These agencies meet monthly to promote and expand collaboration and collaborative efforts for individuals with disabilities seeking competitive integrated employment, including those with more significant disabilities especially. Additionally, ADRS and ADMH conducted statewide trainings on Employment First, and together ensure that those who are funded through the home and community based waivers are participating in the Employment First initiatives and trainings. ADRS has also been working with providers, funded by the home and community based waivers, to become vendors of supported employment funded by ADRS to move individuals into community based employment through an outcome based payment process.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

Alabama Department of Mental Health is responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities, and ADRS works collaboratively in our state to increase competitive integrated employment, particularly for individuals with more significant disabilities. Initiatives such as Project SEACH, that currently serves over 100 individuals with significant disabilities at ten different locations throughout the state, the GATE project which is a collaborative effort to move individuals served through the waivers in day programs into community based, integrated employment opportunities through development of training sites embedded in employment opportunities in the communities, and conjoint trainings for job coaches working through both entities, community based rehabilitation partners, school personnel, jointly funded school personnel and other community providers.

3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

IPS SE is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to serve individual with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse in SE. We currently have one IPS program in West Alabama in a rural setting and another in South Alabama in an urban setting. We are working on sustainability.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. This system is based on finding candidates who possess prescribed levels of specific education and experience for available positions/job classifications. After employment, a second phase of this comprehensive system of personnel development is initiated. This includes an initial orientation to the department, its goals, and mission. A regular system of personnel appraisal and staff development is tailored to suit the needs of each staff member.

(1)(A) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

ADRS maintains a comprehensive system of data on personnel needs. This is maintained within the agency's human resource division. This data system allows for the input of personal information about each staff member and includes all possible training opportunities for staff to attend. It can also record historical information about each training, maintain participant lists, and track continuing education credit hours as needed.

(i) As reported in the latest RSA-2 information (December 2014), the total number of consumers served by the staff in 2015 was 30,248. The majority (83%) of individuals served were coded in case files as having significant disabilities or higher.

2014 RSA-2 Personnel Reporting Categories, Number Employed

Administrative Staff, 71

Counselor Staff, 188

Staff Supporting Counselor Activities, 163

Other Staff, 2

Total, 424

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Those classified as "counselor staff," can be somewhat deceiving because it takes into account specialty staff (rehabilitation teachers and orientation and mobility specialists) that may not be considered actual vocational rehabilitation counselors. This number is currently closer to 158 rehabilitation counselors who provide services through our field offices and One-Stop Career Center sites. It also includes three "hybrid" counselors who work under the State of Alabama Independent Living Program (SAIL). These counselors serve consumers who dually qualify for independent living services and vocational rehabilitation services. Each of these counselors currently averages a caseload of approximately 148 consumers. New vocational rehabilitation counselor positions (FTEs) are not being requested in next year's budget because all of the current vacancies cannot be filled due to the mandated statewide hiring freeze and budgetary constraints. Last year the agency was granted a blanket approval to fill positions beyond the hiring cap for direct service and direct service support staff that are federally funded.

A database is used to track the educational backgrounds and experience of the active counselors and field supervisors within the department for the express purpose of encouraging and enabling all staff to reach the state's highest definition of 'qualified rehabilitation professionals.' This database supports already existing systems and contains information gathered from educational transcripts required upon application to this job classification.

The agency also employs orientation and mobility instructors, interpreters, rehabilitation teachers and rehabilitation employment specialists. A qualification for orientation mobility instructor is an ACVREP or NOMC certification. Interpreters must be licensed by the Alabama Licensure Board for Interpreters and Transliterators. A rehabilitation teacher must have at least a Bachelor's degree and one year experience; however, most of the rehabilitation teachers have Master's degrees. The business relations consultants may come from a business background or a vocational rehabilitation service background with appropriate degrees.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Fifty-nine (59) “counselor staff,” fifteen (15) supervisors from the “administrative staff” and five (5) specialists from the “staff supporting counselor activities” will be eligible to retire within the next five years based on their age or years of service. These numbers represent actual positions currently filled and do not include those budgeted positions presently not filled. There are many unfilled positions due to the hiring freeze. In addition, field supervisors and rehabilitation specialist positions are included in this number (79) because counselors are often promoted into these supervisory roles, leaving counselor vacancies. Therefore, we can project the need for approximately seventy-nine (79) counselors over the next five years to remain staffed at the current budgeted level.

It is difficult to project the number of ‘Staff Supporting Counselor Activities’ and ‘Other’ staff. However, of the remaining “administrative staff” (less the supervisors) and the support staff (less the specialists) and the “other” the estimate would be eighty-five (85) eligible to retire over the next five years. This is based on the fact that 42% of the current overall agency staff will be eligible to retire within the next five years, based on age or years of service.

The department’s Leadership Training Institute (LTI) has 105 graduates still working for the department, fourteen (14) of them graduated last year. This training works to prepare existing staff to assume leadership roles. These graduates actively compete for leadership roles when vacancies occur. Another method of preparing LTI graduates for leadership roles is involving them in departmental task forces and special assignments. It gives current leadership the chance to see how well LTI graduates perform and the strengths they possess.

Currently, all rehabilitation counselors hired to work with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services must possess master’s degrees from an accredited university in specific fields of study and become “eligible to sit” for the CRC exam.

There are currently four (4) counselors who do not meet the state CSPD requirement. One (1) has enrolled to complete her coursework in the spring. The three (3) remaining have been offered opportunities to further their education either by distance education or on campus, thus enabling them to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness and provide for succession planning.

	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Rehabilitation Caseload Counselor	155	7	50
2	Rehabilitation Field Supervisors	20	0	3
3	Rehabilitation Specialists	16	1	3
4	Orientation & Mobility Specialists	5	0	0
5	Interpreters	12	1	2
6	Rehabilitation Audiologists	4	0	0
7	Rehabilitation Teachers	20	1	2
8	Rehabilitation Technology Specialists	6	0	1

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

Institution, Number of Students Enrolled, Graduates form Previous Year

Alabama A&M University, 55, 12

Alabama State University, 21, 9

Auburn University, 17, 9

Troy University, 17, 25

University of Alabama, 43, 7

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

Institution, Students Enrolled, Graduates from the previous year

1. Alabama A&M University, 55, 12
2. Alabama State University, 21, 9
3. Auburn University, 17, 9
4. Troy University, 17, 25
5. University of Alabama, 43, 7

The above institutions provide excellent candidates for available counseling positions. This translates into increased candidates for the department to recruit into employment. All graduates obtain the necessary credentials to apply for and/or test for certification and licensure. Many, but not all, sit for the CRC exam or seek the LPC credential.

The state personnel department's qualifications for rehabilitation counselor currently require specific master's degrees; therefore, ADRS will not be presented with candidates without appropriate degrees. In addition, ADRS and state personnel have worked to strengthen the application process by setting a time limit to be "eligible to sit" for the CRCC (the end of their probationary period, which is up to one year).

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of these institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

Institution, Students Enrolled, Graduates from the previous year

1. Alabama A&M University, 55, 12
2. Alabama State University, 21, 9
3. Auburn University, 17, 9
4. Troy University, 17, 25
5. University of Alabama, 43, 7

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2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

ADRS works diligently to implement strategies necessary to address personnel issues. Since 2002, the department has a dedicated staff specialist devoted to the issues of recruitment and retention. This individual works with the executive leadership team and task forces to create and implement a recruitment and retention plan that is updated annually to address the projected personnel needs of the department. However, ultimately the State Department of Personnel is the entity that provides and oversees hiring practices, salary schedules, and staff vacancies among other personnel issues. Within the strategic planning and implementation process, the following issues are addressed:

1. Maintain a strong relationship with key personnel at the State Department of Personnel and universities offering educational opportunities for potential ADRS employees. Unpaid internships will continue to be offered as a recruiting tool for students in the field of rehabilitation. Paid internships will be re-instated once the hiring freeze is lifted. The professional trainee job class will be used to attract individuals to pursue professions in rehabilitation requiring experience such as rehabilitation teacher and rehabilitation employment specialist. This will allow dedicated individuals to train while

gaining the experience needed to be eligible for hire. A hiring procedure known as 'disability preference' continues to enable ADRS to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities. Other avenues to recruit individuals with disabilities are made possible through specialty areas such as rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility. Also educating consumers with the potential to pursue rehabilitation professions is a recruitment tool as well as supporting entry level staff to pursue professional positions through a process of "grow your own."

2. Continuation of promotions of deserving rehabilitation counselors to the senior rehabilitation counselor level. Promotions are based on exemplary performance of job duties and the ability to take on additional duties within the unit. This provides incentive for younger counselors to remain with the department and helps address the issue of supervisory succession planning. The counselors who are promoted and retained are then in line to fill supervisory vacancies, with proper training.

3. Regularly scheduled exhibits at various professional, educational and disability organization meetings to share employment opportunities with potential candidates. Exhibits are used for recruiting students into the field of rehabilitation and for recruiting professionals into positions within the department. Several ADRS administrators have served on advisory boards for rehabilitation counseling programs and are also asked to sit on interviewing panels for RSA scholarship recipients.

4. Maintain an active role on the advisory committees of Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University. Both universities are known as historically black colleges/universities and provide an opportunity to recruit students from more diverse backgrounds to positions within the department. Seasoned and retired staff are encouraged to work as adjunct professors within the graduate rehabilitation counseling programs which affords a practical application of information to the students.

5. Develop more marketing tools, created through annual meetings with educators, to increase interest in the field of rehabilitation from high school students and encourage undergraduate students to pursue Master's level work in one of the rehabilitation programs. Departmental transition counselors are used to recruit high school students across the state. There has also been increased participation in high school career events to educate students of the many professions within the department.

The ADRS public website includes an expanded career opportunities section that can be accessed by college career services, advocacy groups, and students. This section provides information on career opportunities and employee benefits available within the department.

The development of an orientation program for new employees, which includes a disability etiquette section, serves as a recruitment and retention tool. It provides information for all new employee to effectively interact with individuals who have disabilities as well as knowledge regarding legal obligations and work procedures.

3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services adopted a standard which states rehabilitation counselors would be “eligible to sit” for the CRC exam in 2009. This standard is easily obtainable by a majority of new staff, because they are graduating from rehabilitation specific programs. Almost all other staff hold related degrees, which fortunately contain coursework in the theories and techniques of counseling, a critical component in an individual’s ability to be “eligible to sit” under current CRCC reviewing practices. Transcripts are required as part of the state personnel application process allowing coursework to be reviewed by the hiring supervisor and the human resource division of the department. However, one of the greatest obstacles in using the “eligibility to sit for the CRC” standard are the changes that CRCC periodically makes to this criteria as it relates to Category D and R. CRCC implemented a change to the categories in July 2014. This in effect knocked 16 agency staff out of “eligibility” status. In order to prevent this from happening in the future, the agency is considering certifying all current counselors and supervisors that meet CSPD for the agency based on the current educational standards for CRC eligibility and not requiring them to meet any new standard that should be implemented. Individuals hired after any new CRCC regulations are enacted will be required to meet the new standard as being “eligible to sit” for the exam. Ninety (90) possess a master’s degree and CRC certification (47%) Additionally, 97 possess a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling (CORE program) or required coursework and experience and are eligible to sit for the CRC exam (99%) There are currently four (4) counselors who do not meet the state CSPD requirement. One (1) will complete her coursework in the spring. The three (3) remaining have been offered opportunities to further their education either by distance education or on campus, thus enabling them to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness and provide for succession planning. These employees who either possess a master’s degree in a non-related field, or possess a related degree but without the necessary coursework or supervised experience have been presented with opportunities to acquire a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling through RSA long term training grant programs or obtain the necessary coursework through the RSA in-service training grant. All have been made aware of the requirement to meet the state standard. Those who chose to remain or were hired by the department beyond the required timeframe have had their signature authority removed for determinations of eligibility and rehabilitation plans. These rehabilitation counselors’ specific duties must be reviewed, approved, and signed by a senior counselor or supervisor meeting the CSPD standard. Current and closed consumer files are reviewed by the department’s Quality Assurance section to assure compliance with this policy until the staff meets the CSPD requirement. ADRS and state personnel adopted new minimum qualifications in 2012 to strengthen the application process. By requiring that qualified candidates must be eligible to sit for the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) by the end of their probationary period (up to one year) ADRS now has the ability to terminate employees who do not complete the necessary requirements. This change has helped to align the state personnel qualifications more closely with the CSPD standard. However, there appears to be an effect on the number of qualified applicants in areas of the state where there is not a rehabilitation counseling program. This has recently prompted a discussion among agency leadership to review and possibly make changes to the CSPD standard and/or the personnel qualifications in the future. The listed salary range of our beginning rehabilitation counselor positions is \$33,902.40– \$51,376.80. The senior rehabilitation counselor pay range is \$37,389.60–\$56,685.60. Each pay range consists of eighteen steps. Newly hired counselors can start at step three of the eighteen-step range, or \$35,589.60, in order to help in recruiting efforts.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that

the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

These requirements (described above) help ensure that personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The department has an extensive in-service training program. The department maintains a departmental training team that meets to identify, plan, and coordinate training. A department wide training plan, reviewed by this team on an on-going basis, targets core subjects as well as new topics related to particular job classifications or specialty areas.

(A) These topics may include, but are not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, case management, Social Security work incentives, employment development, WIA, medical aspects of disability, disability etiquette, assistive technology, assessment, job placement, and multicultural issues. Two assistive technology expos/symposiums are held annually to assist in carrying out section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials is accessed as well as RSA webinars to disseminate knowledge to staff from research and other sources.

The department utilizes MAESTRO learning management software to track training records for each staff member. This software allows for input from both field and state office staff. MAESTRO will track an individual's training record, training dates, and future training needs. AT&T Connect webinar system and in-house video-on-demand capabilities have broadened the counselors' ability to participate in training programs, webinars, and receive valuable time-sensitive information without spending time away from their office and consumers while significantly reducing travel/training costs.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Webinar technology, video on demand capabilities, and internal intranet site all allow the department to disseminate information from the federal level to the local level at speeds often much faster than standard personnel meetings and supervisory instruction. Training and program evaluation staff are utilizing the SharePoint platform as a training tool. The goal is to continue to expand its use for business intelligence, staff collaboration, team and project collaboration as well as to develop SharePoint forms and workflow applications. Although instructor led training continues to serve an

important role and appropriate staff are encouraged to attend training conferences to meet specific needs, these technologies have definite benefits when timing is critical.

The department's Leadership Training Institute (LTI) has been continuously changed and updated since 1994 to include new approaches and concepts of leadership. This training, offered nine times since its inception has proven to sufficiently meet the changing needs of the department by preparing staff to fill vacant leadership positions statewide. The most recent LTI class (2015) included 14 VR field staff.

The State Department of Personnel offers supervisory training in the areas of performance appraisal, progressive discipline, FMLA, sexual harassment, employment law, interview and selection, and the dynamics of supervision. A portion of these trainings are required for all new supervisors.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

ADRS maintains regular communication with programs providing specialized training in the areas of deafness and blindness. Communication is maintained with Western Oregon University to train staff in the area of deafness. Staff members serving the deaf and hard of hearing populations attend an annual training conference to address issues relative to deaf services and to meet with students at the Alabama School for the Deaf. The department also remains actively involved with Mississippi State University's blind program. Mississippi State also assists the blind programs with consumer satisfaction surveys. Staff members serving the blind and low vision populations attend training programs annually to address issues relative to blind services. The department possesses Braille and large print producing capabilities in local offices to address the needs of Braille and large print users. UbiDuos and video phones are available in the reception areas, resource rooms and counselor offices to assist staff and consumers with communication and hearing difficulties.

ADRS continues to work with Alabama A&M University to target and recruit candidates for the rehabilitation counseling program in either the blindness or deafness tract. This two year Master's program includes the second year in Mississippi (MSU Vision Specialist) or Tennessee (UT's Orientation to Deafness) for the specialized training. Priority to receive the RSA long term training scholarship will be given to students interested in pursuing sensory specialties. Also, ADRS rehabilitation counselors with general caseloads, but with an interest in working with consumers with sensory impairments, qualified for specialty training through the RSA in-service training grant.

ADRS applicants and eligible individuals who speak limited English can be provided interpreters or are able to access vendors for remote interpreter services. The ADRS consumer guide has been translated into Spanish. Spanish instruction is encouraged by using technology and individual instruction either online or in person for staff.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Approximately half of ADRS cases served and the closures obtained, involve transition students. This year, 16,240 transition students received services and 2,238 were successfully employed. The department continues to strengthen the jointly funded job coach program with twenty-seven (27) local school systems across the state and two (2) with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB). This program is designed to place students with disabilities who are in their final year of school into competitive jobs in their local communities before they leave school. The program is cooperatively managed by local VR service staff and school system staff and employs full-time and part-time job coaches. Students, parents, rehabilitation counselors, local school special and regular education staff, and the job coaches, work together to plan for students' successful and smooth transitions to adult life and work.

ADRS continues efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models to meet the needs of students with more-significant disabilities and overcome barriers to employment and community living. College Prep Program services were offered at six sites around the state, with more than 200 students participating. Collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections continues as ADRS implements the Prison Transition Initiative for youth with disabilities incarcerated in adult prisons.

ADRS established a statewide Transition Workgroup to develop a strategic plan for strengthening and improving transition services. A Best Practices Guide for Transition Services for staff was developed as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities in schools and that also serves as a tool to help transition counselors develop ideas and services/programs in their local areas. ADRS also supports many local transition events such as career fairs, transition expos, mentoring days, and summer employment readiness program.

ADRS is represented on the State Interagency Transition Team (SITT). This is an interagency work group designed to identify existing interagency barriers to effective transition services and develop appropriate remedies. This group consists of representatives from ADRS, Division of Special Education, Auburn University, University of Alabama, Department of Mental Health, Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Association of Higher Education and Disability, and the Young Adults in Transition (YAIT) group. This group encouraged local areas to establish Community Transition Teams to address transition issues for youth with disabilities.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is annually provided an opportunity to give input about the department's CSPD initiatives. Current and future personnel issues are presented by field services program directors. Detailed information is presented through discussions, handouts and questions and answers. Comments and suggestions are requested at any time throughout the year.

j. Statewide Assessment

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the State Rehabilitation Council jointly conducted the triennial Statewide Needs Assessment during FY 2014. A variety of sources were utilized in order to obtain information needed for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of Individuals with disabilities residing in the state, particularly their vocational rehabilitation needs. ADRS utilizes a variety of sources in order to accomplish the needs assessment. ADRS is engaged in multiple stakeholder groups, including service providers from other Alabama agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. Data was collected from these organizations that were incorporated into our Needs Assessment Analysis. Agencies included the State Rehabilitation Council, The Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Community Rehabilitation Programs, Centers for Independent Living, Governor's Office on Disability, and the agency's own Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, Supported Employment Providers, Vocational Rehabilitation Field Staff and Workforce Development. The agency also utilized information with its ongoing relationships with various consumer groups including the Alabama Association for the Deaf, the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, the Alabama Head Injury Foundation, the Alabama Deaf-Blind Coalition, and the Alabama Workforce Board. The agency also utilized input from the agency's Blind Advisory group, Deaf Advisory group, which provided valuable information about rehabilitation needs. The above listed agencies provide the agency with a rich source of information as to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State of Alabama. It was not surprising that the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, minorities and underserved participants, and individuals with disabilities served by components of Workforce Investment System were very similar. Underserved Individuals with Disabilities: Autism continues to be an emerging underserved disability. Data indicate that 1 in 68 children born fall on Autism spectrum disorder scale. Job placement is need of this group. It is especially important due to the difficulty people with autism have on the job due autistic behaviors. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control in FY 2015 indicate that 31.5% of Alabama's population have some type of disability. Services to those of Hispanic decent: The agency's data for the years FY 11 through FY 14, indicate a need for additional outreach to the Hispanic community. According to United States census of 2010, the Hispanic community in Alabama has grown by 144% since the census of 2000. This indicates a need for outreach to this underserved population The deaf-blind population is one at which the agency is directing a concentration of services. A significant number of this population resides in Talladega, Alabama due to the presence of the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. (A)Rehabilitation needs indicated for individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD): Information from this group indicates a need for expansion of Supported Employment services in the state. While we have expanded the number of supported employment providers in recent years, the agency's method for determining which consumers are MSD is resulting in more consumers eligible for and requesting supported employment. It is in the rural areas where additional service providers are needed.

B. who are minorities;

Services to individuals with disabilities who are minorities paint an interesting picture in Alabama. While African Americans comprise 26% of the total population of Alabama, African Americans made up 44% of those participating in VR services over the last three years. Additionally, in FY 2012, African Americans comprised 41% of the successfully closed rehabilitation cases. Nevertheless, increased number of job placements for individuals with the most significant disabilities and minority groups is noted as a need.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Common needs among the various underserved populations included the need for additional job placement and an increase in wages. Although not specifically identified as an unmet need the

agency will continue its efforts to expand the availability of on-the-job training opportunities for consumers to assist with placement needs and access to higher wage employment. We will also continue efforts to expand college preparation training in order to improve access to college training programs, improve the success rate for college students and increase access to higher wage employment. Also, as is the growing trend across the United States, more employers are offering part-time employment. Our placement efforts will be directed toward locating full-time employment for consumers.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

Alabama is a predominantly rural state. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to improve services to rural areas. While the agency has staff assigned to serve every county, the challenge can be to locate service providers in the local areas. This is particularly applicable to those needing supported employment, thus the agency's ongoing expansion of supported employment providers.

Service needs were identified as included additional placement services, higher wages, and more services to veterans.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

Youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including their need for pre-employment transition services generally receive services through Alabama's public school, community colleges, and other educational institutions and organizations that serve youth and students with disabilities. ADRS maintains strong collaborative relationships with the AL State Department of Education and the Alabama Community College System. In some cases, transition programs for youth are housed on the campuses of State Universities. ADRS collaborates when requested with any community agency serving youth (i.e. Easter Seals, local park and rec authorities, Arts for Autism, Goodwill, and private groups that serve youth with disabilities like Eagles Wings or ARC of Tuscaloosa)

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

Alabama has a long and lasting partnership with "Brick and Mortar" rehabilitation facilities such as Easter Seals and Goodwill and other independent organizations and agencies. This relationship has been in existence for over 50 years and has worked well to cover the needs of agency consumers in many geographic areas of the state. However, ADRS does not foresee growth in developing new large Community Rehabilitation Programs. This is due to the trend in the last five years of establishing small independent businesses and agencies providing more community-based services. ADRS will expect to maintain the same standards as has been held for previous organizations serving its consumers.

Additionally, the future of vocational rehabilitation is to provide community based experiences as opposed to those in the confines of a CRP facility. With the passage of WIOA, we can expect more vocational assessments, work adjustment experiences, and paid work experiences to occur in the community, for both transition and non-transition consumers.

Further, as ADRS moves towards serving consumers with more significant disabilities, we can anticipate the need for specialized and well trained staff in the various community service programs to provide services to these consumers. The role of the traditional rehabilitation facility professionals are now more involved within the community, becoming familiar with employment trends, and skills needed to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

As the agency continues on the path of serving those with more significant disabilities, there may be the need to enhance the assessment and evaluation capability of CRPs. Three potential areas of Community Rehabilitation Program improvement were noted: increased availability of comprehensive learning disability evaluations, services to individuals with autism, and increased emphasis on social skills training.

One strategy to expand learning disability evaluations will be to attempt to utilize existing learning disability projects to train other Community Rehabilitation Program staff. The sharing of knowledge and practices will assist the agency in expanding this service.

The agency will invite CRP staff to specific trainings in order to improve and elevate skills of CRP employees in areas such as autism and social skills training.

The Assistant Commissioner of the CRP Section recently retired and was not replaced. The CRP and Supported Employment Specialist of the CRP section were placed directly under the Assistant Commissioner for VR General Services. This created a closer alignment between these two sections and should enhance services.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

An assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services provided under this part are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Pre-Employment Transition Services: New federal mandate requires ADRS, in collaboration with the local educational agencies, to use 15% of ADRS federal allotment in providing or arranging for the provision of pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible for or potentially eligible for services. A student with a disability is defined as an individual who is ages 16–21, is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or is an individual with a disability for the purposes of 504. ADRS and the Local Educational Agencies (LEA) will be collaborating to meet the following needs of students with disabilities: (1) Increased job exploration opportunities (2) Increased work based learning experiences, such as volunteer work, work experience including trial work, job shadowing, internships, (3) Increased opportunities for students with disabilities to explore postsecondary educational programs such as visits to vocational, junior and four year universities, increased opportunities for participation in college prep programs. (4) Increased opportunities for workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living. (5) Increased instruction/activities regarding self-advocacy and peer mentoring. **Funding:** Funding estimates are difficult to determine to serve the above populations, but the agency is always seeking additional state funding to match available federal dollars.

k. Annual Estimates

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

It is estimated 25,000 will be eligible for services under the VR program.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

It is estimated 25,000 will be eligible for services under the VR program.

It is estimated 28,950 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 1,350 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. The DSU is not in an order of selection.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

It is estimated 1,189 individuals with disabilities will participate in the Supported Employment Program.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

ADRS is not in an order of selection.

3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

ADRS is not in an order of selection.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

It is estimated 25,000 will be eligible for services under the Plan. It is estimated 28,950 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 1,350 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. It is estimated \$79,076,821 will be expended under Title I and \$372,696 under Title VI.

l. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The goals below were jointly developed and agreed to by the agency and the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC and the agency jointly reviewed the goals and jointly agreed to any revisions. These goals were developed after analysis of available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program including reports and recommendations from the SRC and the statewide needs assessment.

State Plan Goals FY 2016

1. Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches \$10.60.
2. Expend 15% of the State's Federal allotment for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).
3. Meet a minimum of 4 times per year with workforce development partners in order to increase interagency coordination and collaboration, improve services for all consumers, and increase outreach efforts to underserved populations.
4. Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.
5. Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of Assistive Technology in order to better meet the individual needs of consumers
6. Increase case service dollars expended for Supported Employment by 5%.

These goals and priorities are based on:

- A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
- B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA,
- C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

The goals below were jointly developed and agreed to by the agency and the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC and the agency jointly reviewed the goals and jointly agreed to any revisions. These goals were developed after analysis of available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program including reports and recommendations from the SRC and the statewide needs assessment.

State Plan Goals FY 2016

1. Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches \$10.60.
2. Expend 15% of the State's Federal allotment for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).

3. Meet a minimum of 4 times per year with workforce development partners in order to increase interagency coordination and collaboration, improve services for all consumers, and increase outreach efforts to underserved populations.

4. Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment. 5. Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of

Assistive Technology in order to better meet the individual needs of consumers

6. Increase case service dollars expended for Supported Employment by 5%.

These goals and priorities are based on:

A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,

B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA,

C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

These goals and priorities are based on:

A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,

B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and

C) other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

These goals and priorities are based on:

A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,

B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and

C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

These goals and priorities are based on:

- A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
 - B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and
 - C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.
- C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

These goals and priorities are based on:

- A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
- B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and
- C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

B. The justification for the order.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

C. The service and outcome goals.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds .

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services .

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) has an extensive history and commitment to providing supported employment within the state. Currently, ADRS matches Supported Employment State Grant funds at over 8 times that amount. Our state currently receives just under 400,000 dollars for provision of supported employment. We currently spend over 3 million dollars in supported employment outcome based services and another million in contract services with our collaborative partners. The priority of the department is to improve services to Alabamians with the most significant disabilities. The Department anticipates continuing to increase funding for FY 2016. ADRS distributes supported employment funds to its rehabilitation counselors who in turn purchase needed supported employment services through a network of approved vendors utilizing a Milestones outcome based payment system. This process provides payments to authorized supported employment providers for assisting individuals to reach Milestones toward successful employment. Supported Employment providers are reimbursed for the following Milestones:

1: Determination of Needs (20% of total) (Discovery Profile can be substituted making it approx. 26%)

2. Job Development and Hire (20 % of total)

3. Job Coaching and Retention (25 % of total)

4. Successful Closure (Employment Stability for 90 days) (35% of total) ***80% of funding occurs on and after the person is employed (74% with Discovery)

Each provider receives funding based on the milestone achieved for each person served. Provider goals are based upon past performance, input from the ADRS liaison counselor, and the estimated need for supported employment services in each service area of the state. The Department's goal for FY 2015 is for 250 consumers to obtain competitive, integrated employment in their community.

Supported employment services are provided utilizing an individualized, customer driven approach, encompassing each person's individual support needs to ensure an appropriate and successful job match. Additionally, The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has committed to increasing successful supported employment outcomes through collaboration and coordination with other agencies and organizations including sharing or braiding funding. ADRS is currently participating in the following collaborative efforts to help achieve supported employment priorities:

We have 10 Project SEARCH sites in Alabama serving over 100 students. This collaboration involves Alabama Department of Mental Health-that provides extended services for students and youth, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities that provides funding for training and technical assistance, the local school systems that funds a teacher and some programs also fund a teachers aid, local Community Rehabilitation Partners that train and supervise the job coaches on site, and our department that funds two job coaches at each site. Our state is unique in that our Project SEARCH sites are led by a state team which supplies oversight to the programs and the steering committees. This state team consists of members of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment- This program serves individuals in supported employment who have serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse. This is a collaboration between the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, Auburn University, and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Long term support is provided by the therapeutic team or case management at the local mental health centers.

Connections is a program that serves students and youth on the Autism Spectrum and provides support services for parents. This highly successful transition program is expanding in our state from its initial program in Birmingham, to a second site Montgomery last year. We are adding two additional programs this year and 2 the following year. Additionally, to address the increasing number of students and youth on the Autism spectrum we are introducing a pilot program, Transition to Success, in the tri-county area. This program will improve present and future employment and quality of life outcomes for students with autism. Transition to Success is a collaboration between the State Department of Education, the local school systems, a nationally recognized Community Rehabilitation Partner and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

GATE- Gaining Access to Employment-This program recognized by the Institute for Community Inclusion for its creative sequencing of funding is a collaboration between the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Community Rehabilitation Programs and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation. This program is designed to move individuals with most significant disabilities away from traditional day habilitation and into competitive, integrated employment. Extended support services are provided under the waiver for individuals participating in GATE.

Additionally we are continuing to collaborate with all our state entities to improve services for students and youth with most significant disabilities. We are working with the State Department of Education on improving Assistive Technology access in order to improve the transition from school to work, and entry to Post Secondary settings. We are working with Career and Technical Education to increase participation for students with more significant disabilities.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

Project SEARCH, an innovative transition program for students, was piloted in two areas of Alabama beginning in 2012. We currently have 10 Project SEARCH sites. These programs are collaborations between our department, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, local school systems, and local supported employment programs. The State Team is working to expand this program and hopes to have additional sites in FY 2015. This includes the potential development of Project SEARCH for students who are deaf, blind, and individuals who are both deaf and blind within the next 2 years. This year long internship offers unique highly skilled training opportunities leading to competitive employment opportunities for students with the most significant disabilities. • Collaborative efforts continue as we work with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers that will be referred for community based integrated employment, and be able to utilize the waiver for long term support. To date, this collaboration has resulted in the addition of 5 Mental Health providers contracting with ADRS to become Supported Employment providers. • Certificate Based Job Coach Training is collaboration between our agency, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First). This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We offer this training twice a year to SE Job Coaches, School Job Coaches, Job Coaches employed by the Department of Mental Health and other community job developers and job coaches. This year, job coaches specializing in sensory impairments also participated in this training as we work to collaborate more closely with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) and their AIDB regional center staff located throughout the state. • Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education have been working to secure Employment First legislation and continue to participate in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to support the concept of Employment First. Additionally, several partners are participating in the Vision Quest training, offered through ODEP, to assist Alabama with options to infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid waiver, State Plan Options and increased collaboration to better serve consumers as they move towards integrated, community based employment options. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to improve transition services; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to community based Supported Employment providers while still in high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community based assessments or begin the Discovery Profile before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services. 2. •The GATE program (Gaining Access to Employment) is a training program that takes consumers from sheltered work or day habilitation and fully immerses them in industry training. This collaboration between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Alabama Department of Mental Health began in North Alabama and now has 5 sites. The GATE program braids funding utilizing from both ADRS and ADMH (Medicaid waiver). Adults, who are long term consumers of day programs are trained in competitive integrated employment settings using job coaches for support during their internships. Consumers are paid wages while they intern, primarily in manufacturing settings.

Extended service provision is provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in a variety of ways. This includes the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support youth in Project SEARCH, contract service provision to SE vendors, grant dollars for IPS and DEI, fund raising, and private pay. Extended services not to exceed four years.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities .

Alabama is exploring the use of the Medicaid Rehab Option and targeted case management for IPS to support extended services to youth in that program. We are also partnering with Alabama Department of Mental Health to explore various opportunities to use the waiver to support extended services for individuals seeking community based integrated employment. We are currently partnering with DMH, and will continue to do so, to support youth in Project SEARCH requiring extended services. Fund raising and private funding is also being utilized to support extended services to youth.

o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities .

The agency employs a number of strategies to expand and continuously improve services. The sections below will describe some of the specific methods and strategies to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities in Alabama.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis .

The agency has multiple strategies to provide access to technology services and devices on a statewide basis during all phases of the rehabilitation process. To start the agency has a statewide network of degreed and qualified rehabilitation technology specialists. The team members are located strategically throughout the state so all staff have access to their expertise. This team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss among themselves, and with partner agency, staff various advances and new products in rehabilitation technology. These meetings provide vendors the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative pieces of technology to demonstrate to the team. This team will act as a training agent for other agency rehabilitation staff throughout the state. Team members will attend unit meetings throughout the state to discuss and demonstrate technology to frontline counseling staff. The team members will also continue to attend national conferences, such as the Assistive Technology Industries Association (ATIA) conference, where they will be exposed to innovative technology. The rehabilitation technology team will continue to present at various conferences throughout the year. Conferences they will attend and present at include the Alabama Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference, the Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference, the Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision

technology), and other conferences as appropriate. As part of this statewide team of rehabilitation technology specialists, the agency also employs an assistive technology specialist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing assistive technology and an assistive technology specialist specializing in blind and low vision technology. Having this team of rehabilitation technology specialists provides a resource for counselors to purchase and utilize technology for consumers throughout the rehabilitation process, including evaluation, IPE development and implementation, training, and employment.

The agency also has a state of the art Adaptive Driving Program. The agency has ten (10) vehicles equipped with comprehensive adaptive driving equipment. These vehicles are used by two (2) Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists and five (5) Certified Driving Instructors who provide adaptive drivers training to people disabilities statewide. The program is unique in that through a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, one of the agency's adaptive driving staff has been certified to give the driver's license road test to our consumers and confer upon them a driver's license. In partnership with the UAB Center for Low Vision the agency's Adaptive Driving Program is now providing comprehensive training in bioptic driving. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that utilizes both the individual's general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the individual's far vision. This has been a very successful partnership and an avenue of independence for many individuals served by the agency. A number of agency staff attended the annual Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference at Auburn University as well as the annual Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology) at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind.

3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

OUTREACH PROCEDURES The agency has made significant efforts over the past four years to identify and work with the most significantly disabled. The agency developed an instrument to determine who are the most significantly disabled of applicants for services. This is known as the Functional Limitation Priority Assessment tool (FLPA). During the eligibility determination process VR Counselors answer specific questions about various limitations that consumer has and then a score is derived which will indicate if a consumer is most significantly disabled, significantly disabled, or disabled.

The agency has developed and continues to improve a system of business intelligence dashboards that provide a graphic view of caseload data for the VR Counselors and Field Supervisors. The VR Counselors and VR Field Supervisors can review this data to determine the number of most significantly disabled individuals being served and successfully rehabilitated. These dashboards are also use to monitor demographic information and this information can in turn be used to address unserved and underserved populations to include minorities and people with the most significant disabilities.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve the emerging Hispanic population in Alabama. Census data shows the Hispanic population in Alabama has grown by 144% since the 2000 Census. The agency has established an account with language Line Solutions to provide interpreting on a real time basis so staff can converse with non-English speaking consumers and minimize any language barriers. The agency will contact various agencies serving Hispanics throughout the state,

explain agency services, provide referral materials, and contact information. We will also maintain data on the number of Hispanics served to monitor progress on this issue.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve American Indians residing in the state through partnerships with other service provider, the State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission, and tribal governments.

The agency will provide a wide range of services to the deaf population. First, the agency will continue its practice of serving consumers who are deaf through specialized rehabilitation counselors who have sign language skills. These counselors are familiar with the needs of the deaf and are involved in the deaf community that allow them to relate very well to our deaf population. The agency will continue its use of a network of staff interpreters throughout the state. These interpreters will assist deaf consumers in obtaining various types of services, particularly services from employers. The interpreters are able to establish a link between the employers and consumers who are deaf that are recently hired. We will continue to work with a network of deaf support specialists. These specialists assist deaf consumers in various aspects of the rehabilitation process and in getting acclimated to a new employment situation.

The agency will continue to conduct its annual training conference for counselors serving the deaf. A unique aspect of this conference is that students from the Alabama School for the Deaf come to the conference to spend time with the rehabilitation counselors. This interaction is very effective in forging a working alliance between the counselor and consumers who are at the Alabama School for the Deaf.

OUTREACH PROCEDURES (continued)

The agency will continue its active involvement in the One–Stop Career Center system involving deaf consumers. The agency has established a Video Interpreting Network so that when a consumer who is deaf comes through the career center an interpreter will be available.

Troy University, in Troy, Alabama in partnership with ADRS, the Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, has established an interpreter for the deaf training program. The agency is establishing internships for these students within the agency. This will increase the supply of interpreters and eventually mean more support for deaf consumers. In conjunction with this, the agency is attempting to establish a "professional trainee" position. These students would occupy these positions for one year, then transition into employment with the agency.

The agency will continue its activities through the interagency agreement that has been established with higher education institutions throughout the state. This agreement delineates the specific responsibilities of the agency and that of each institution of higher education for individuals who are deaf.

The agency will utilize the Deaf Advisory Committee to help shape ADRS policy in terms of service provision to the deaf community. The Committee also serves as an advocate to legislators and other state officials and is a subcommittee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

College prep for the deaf will be conducted at four campuses: Troy University, Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, and the University of Alabama.

The agency maintains an excellent service delivery system to consumers who are blind or visually impaired. A network of rehabilitation counselors for the blind, technology specialists, vision

rehabilitation assistants, rehabilitation teachers, and orientation and mobility specialists provide these services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Additionally, there is a state office specialist who assists with the coordination of blind services. The agency provides a wide range of services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

In partnership with the agency and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf & Blind an annual Technology symposium is conducted in the state on an annual basis that provides staff serving the blind and visually impaired consumers the opportunity to learn about a wide range of technology related to improving access for individuals who are blind or low vision.

Our consumers who are in high school and college successfully will participate in the 2015 Summer Work Experience. This program continues to offer young adults who are blind, or have low vision, the opportunity to work for six weeks, 40 hours a week, earning minimum wage. The participant's salaries are paid out of the VR Counselors case service budgets. The Summer Work Experience program provides an opportunity for a real work experience. ADRS has partnered with Central Alabama Community College and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind to offer a comprehensive approach in providing a support system to students that have a visual or hearing loss that are interested in attending college. This Dual Enrollment Program involves the campuses of the Alabama School for the Deaf, the Alabama School for the Blind and the EH Gentry Rehabilitation Facility for individuals that are blind and deaf as well as the various campuses under the community college program. Central Alabama Community

OUTREACH PROCEDURES (continued)

College offers dual enrollment to visually impaired and hearing-impaired high school students and graduates needing assistance to be successful in college.

The agency will increase its services to disabled veterans as an underserved disability group. The agency is participating on a Governor's task force, the Alabama Veterans Network (AlaVetNet), to improve services to disabled veterans. The task force has brought together a wide variety of agencies that have services to offer veterans, including those with disabilities. The agency will continue to foster our relationships with the rehabilitation counselors employed by the Veterans Administration in an effort to make contact with disabled veterans. The agency counselors will receive referrals on veterans and initiate the vocational rehabilitation process to assist them with entering into employment. The agency will maintain a state office position related to serving veterans, some of the duties of which will include the oversight of veteran referrals and the monitoring of their progress through the VR process. The agency receives referrals from an organization in Huntsville, Alabama known as Still Serving Veterans. This organization assists veterans in returning to civilian life. The agency has completed an interagency agreement and will work cooperatively in processing referrals to assist veterans who may need employment services. The agency completed an interagency agreement with the Veterans Administration in Montgomery, Alabama to formalize the referral process referenced above. That agreement is still in effect.

The agency has an active program in serving individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a staff person who oversees various grants related to traumatic brain injury. The agency has a task force related to brain injury. It includes members of various social service organizations who may have contact with individuals who have traumatic brain injury. This organization meets on a quarterly basis for the exchange of information which will benefit services to individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a network of TBI care coordinators located strategically throughout the state. The role of the care coordinator is to receive the initial referral of someone with a brain injury, then assist the individual and family in accessing the state's network of services for persons with TBI. This includes services of the agency and services of other agencies. Alabama has two specialty

caseloads in Mobile and Birmingham dedicated to serving individuals with TBI. These two counselors also serve as a resource to other counselors in the state who may receive a TBI referral.

Over the past three years 44.6% of the consumers served and 42% of the consumers closed rehabilitated in the agency were minorities. The population of the state is approximately 30% minority (26% African American & 4% other). Consequently, minority numbers are well represented in the agency's service delivery system. Nevertheless, outreach efforts will continue at the local level to be sure that minorities are aware of agency services and programs. In addition, the agency employs a diversity & recruitment coordinator to ensure that we have a diverse staff to meet the varied needs of the consumers served by the agency. This individual has completed a diversity plan that has been approved by the administration of the agency. This plan indicates the strategies to hire minority staff to work within the agency. The agency conducted diversity training for all agency staff. This training addressed the needs of diverse consumers the agency serves. Another effort of outreach to minorities is continuation of a grant that the agency has from the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). DHR requested agency assistance in providing placement services for hard to place individuals. The grant was given to the agency and individuals were hired utilizing those grant service funds to specifically work with this population. The agency is receiving referrals on many of these individuals who have a significant impediment to employment and may be in need of vocational rehabilitation services. Services to Individuals in Supported Employment Programs: The agency recognizes a critical factor in a successful supported employment is long-term supports. The agency will continue its dialogue with state and private entities that can be involved in the provision of extended services for supported employment consumers. OUTREACH PROCEDURES (Continued)

The following are efforts the agency is making to overcome barriers and provide equitable access to and participation in supported employment services: 1. The agency has a state specialist overseeing the expansion and effectiveness of the agency's supported employment efforts. Two additional specialists have been hired to assist with the growth and expansion of supported employment in Alabama in the last 2 years. This growth includes ten (10) project SEARCH sites, the expansion of the GATE Project, IPS SE for individuals with serious mental illness, and an additional Connections program for individuals with Autism. We are currently collaborating with the State Department of Education and training rehabilitation transition counselors on provision of services to students at an earlier age while in the secondary setting. This should increase participation of students with more significant disabilities and provide those services earlier. We currently have contracts with secondary education for students with most significant disabilities. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition. 2. Training on Certificate Based Job Coach Training in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, and the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First), The Network on Employment continues. This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports.

3. The agency began four years ago with two Project SEARCH sites. We currently have ten (10) sites, and we expect this program to continue to grow. These sites provide real life internships embedded in businesses that lead to competitive integrated employment. We currently have over 100 participants in Project SEARCH.

4. ADRS continues to work cooperatively with Department of Mental Health to move consumers towards community-based employment from sheltered workshops. We continue to work collaboratively on Employment First endeavors. Many of the providers for ADMH that have traditionally supported day programs are either vendors with ADRS for SE or exploring becoming a vendor to move individuals to community based integrated employment. Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education have submitted a bill to the legislature in the Employment First collaborative initiative. The partners are also participating in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to work together to support the concept of employment first. Additionally they are working to identify barriers relating to provision of services to those who require additional supports and to expand capacity within providers.

5. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for supported employment services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. Supported employment providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students, and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit school in order to facilitate a seamless transition from school to employment.

6. Services to Individuals with Autism: Autism is an emerging disability with increasing numbers requesting services from the public rehabilitation program. This holds true for Alabama. Staff has participated in several training programs during the current fiscal year related to autism. It is expected this will continue in FY 2016. Also, a staff member has been in the state office has job duties to develop and enhance the agency's autism program. The agency will to provide consultation to supported employment projects and CRPs who need technical assistance and support in serving this expanding population. This effort is intended to build capacity within our existing provider network. We have identified Triumph, Inc., a successful supported employment provider for individuals with autism, to serve as the consulting organization. Triumph continues as a vendor to provide supported employment services. Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility hosts a Connections programs for students, youths, and young adults with Autism. Last year we expanded this program to the Montgomery area. They receive support from LCARA an advocacy group in the Lee County area. We also assisted Auburn University in a grant application to try and get research to make Connections an evidence-based program. We are currently working to expand this program to several additional areas of the state in the next year. This year-long social skills training takes place in the classroom, but then is applied in real world settings in the community where classroom skills taught are then utilized. Nearing completion of the program the participants are referred to community-based rehabilitation programs for employment.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

ADRS continues to collaborate and coordinate transition services with the LEAs. A Menu of Services was developed to assist the LEA and Transition Counselor when discussing VR services that are available to students with disabilities. ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition

partnerships, programs and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs:

- (1) Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training) – Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.
- (2) Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.
- (3) Jointly-Funded Job Coach – ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements.
- (4) Vocational Assessments – ADRS transition counselors will expand the delivery of vocational assessments to students with disabilities earlier in the transition planning process to assist with identify the student's interests, abilities, aptitude, and values.
- (5) Best Practices – ADRS Transition Counselors developed a guide for best practice as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age in the secondary education setting who are eligible for, or potentially eligible for, VR services.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

As the agency continues on the path of serving the more significantly disabled, there may be the need to enhance the assessment and evaluation capability of CRPs. Three potential areas of Community Rehabilitation Program improvement were noted: (1) increased availability of comprehensive learning disability evaluations, (2) services to individuals with autism, and (3) increased emphasis on social skills training. One strategy to expand learning disability evaluations will be to attempt to utilize existing learning disability projects to train other Community Rehabilitation Program staff. The sharing of knowledge and practices will assist the agency in expanding this service. The agency will invite CRP staff to specific trainings in order to improve and elevate skills of CRP employees in areas such as autism and social skills training. The Assistant Commissioner, Facilities Section, that previously led the four-person agency CRC section retired and was not replaced. The CRP and Supported Employment Specialist of the CRP section were placed directly under the Assistant Commissioner for VR General Services. This creates a closer alignment between these two sections and should enhance services.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

All performance indicators were met in FY 2015 with the exception of 1.5, the average hourly wage. Improvement strategies for performance indicator 1.5 are described below:

1. The agency has revamped and updated the Retaining A Valued Employee (RAVE) program. RAVE is a service to employers to assist them in procuring rehabilitation services needed to retain an employee who is having difficulties on the job due to disability. It results in referrals of long standing employees needing rehabilitation services who are receiving higher wages due to time on the job. Successful rehabilitation of these referrals results in a higher average wage for the agency and benefits the consumer and employer.
2. The agency has and will continue to establish relationships with federal contractors that hopefully will result in hiring of our consumers. This relationship combined with the President establishing \$10.10 as minimum wage for those employed by federal contractors sets the stage for wage increases and moving the agency closer to achieving Indicator 1.5. The agency's coordinator of employer development will provide VR Field Supervisors and VR Counselors monthly information on federal employment opportunities paying higher wages. Also, Business Relations Consultants will be asked to carefully search for higher paying jobs as they contact employers. We will train VR Counselors on means of obtaining useful labor market information. The agency will consult with neighboring states attaining this indicator to investigate what strategies they are employing. There will be a continuous effort to get counselors to discuss training with consumers, since training can lead to higher paying jobs.
3. The agency will continue participation in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Employment Team (NET), and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). The agency employment development coordinator is very active nationally and regionally in this initiative.
4. The agency continues to assist consumers with gaining the skills necessary to compete for in-demand jobs through collaboration with technical schools, universities, and partnerships with agencies such as AIDT. AIDT, an independent agency under the supervision and oversight of the Secretary of Commerce, encourages economic development through job-specific training. Training services are offered in many areas, at no cost, to new and expanding businesses throughout the State. ADRS along with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind started a partnership with AIDT in FY 2015 to expand training and in-demand employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

The agency maintains a very productive relationship with the Workforce Development System of Alabama. First, the Commissioner of the agency sits on the Statewide Workforce Development Board. Consequently, the agency has a voice at the table to advocate for the needs and issues of individuals with disabilities. The agency has counselors stationed on a permanent basis in One-Stop Career Centers in several of the larger cities in the state. These staff members receive referrals and also provide advice and information to other staff in the One-Stop Career Centers on how to serve individuals with disabilities. The agency will have numerous staff participate in the state Workforce Conference, when conducted, involving all partners and other service providers related to the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The agency sits on the planning council of this conference so that various breakout sessions related to the needs of individuals with disabilities are included on the agenda. The agency is currently working in collaboration with the Career Centers and Workforce Development Partners on assessing all of the Career Centers in the state for accessibility. Recommendations will be made by the agency and the Workforce Development Core Partners will

work together to ensure that the Career Centers continue to be accessible for all individuals with disabilities. Also, as mentioned previously, the agency has established a Video Interpreting Network. Should a deaf individual come into the local One–Stop Career Center, a video interpreting situation can be set up for that individual to be served.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

Achieving Goals and Priorities

Goal 1. Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches \$10.60. The agency's coordinator of employer development will provide VR Field Supervisors and VR Counselors monthly information on federal employment opportunities paying higher wages. Also, Business Relations Consultants will be asked to carefully search for higher paying jobs as they contact employers. We will train VR Counselors on means of obtaining useful labor market information. The agency will consult with neighboring states attaining this indicator to investigate what strategies they are employing. There will be a continuous effort to get counselors to discuss training with consumers, since training can lead to higher paying jobs.

The agency will continue participation in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Employment Team (NET), and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). The agency employment development coordinator is very active nationally and regionally in this initiative.

Self–Employment Training for VR Staff: Self–employment is a viable employment option for some VR consumers. The agency conducted self–employment training for selected VR staff in 2006. There have been significant staff changes since that time. It is appropriate now to train new staff on possibilities presented by self–employment. A new state office specialist was hired in the summer of 2011. A significant portion of that person's duties will be related to self–employment. Outreach efforts will be made to locate and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Labor market information will be gathered and shared with counseling staff about projections for future career opportunities within the state. This will assist the counselors in directing consumers towards training that will lead towards prompt employment.

The agency will utilize its corps group of Business Relations Consultants to assist in identifying businesses that will provide internship (training) opportunities for consumers. Internships and on–the–job training opportunities are excellent methods to assist consumers in getting needed training, immediate employment, and also an increase in the average starting wage of the consumers of the agency.

Achieving Goals and Priorities (continued)

Goal 2. Increase case service dollars expended for Supported Employment by 5%. Efforts will be made to increase the number of Project SEARCH sites. We currently have ten (10) Project SEARCH sites and are working to increase these programs—including a Project SEARCH to serve students with sensory impairments. We hope to have that site developed over the next two (2) years.

We are looking at expansion in service provision to those with Autism Spectrum Disorders by expanding our connections program to individuals in secondary school to increase the employment rate, the retention rate, and the likelihood that these individuals will have successful postsecondary outcomes.

We anticipate serving more individuals typically served in day habilitation and sheltered workshop settings as we work with the Employment First team to move individuals from these settings to community-based integrated employment.

ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement transition initiatives; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers earlier in the secondary settings. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit schools, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services. We will also be working to increase access to summer work experiences that include paid work in their communities.

Collaborative efforts will continue with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is to create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers that will be referred for community based integrated employment, and be able to utilize the waiver for long-term support.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Auburn University Center for Disability Research and Service were awarded a grant from Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for implementation of Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support model for Supported Employment. The Department of Veterans Affairs in Alabama is also included in the grant. This evidence-based program provides individualized placement and support for adults with serious mental illnesses as an essential and vital part of their recovery. IPS is currently underway in Alabama and will increase service provision to this underserved population.

Efforts will be made to increase the number of Project SEARCH sites.

We anticipate adding additional Supported Employment vendors next year as we try and expand services to those clients previously served in sheltered workshops who will be moving to community-based employment.

ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative, ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments before they exit schools, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services.

Collaborative efforts will continue with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The goal is to create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers who will be referred for community-based integrated employment, and who will be able to utilize the waiver for long-term support.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Auburn University Center for Disability Research and Service recently submitted a grant proposal to Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for implementation of the Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support model for Supported Employment in Alabama. Partners in the grant include Dartmouth University and the Department of Veterans Affairs in Alabama. This evidence-based program provides individualized placement and support for adults with serious mental illnesses as an essential and vital part of their recovery.

Achieving Goals and Priorities (continued)

Goal 3. Expend 15% of the State's Federal allotment for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS).

- **Project SEARCH:** Is a one-year transition program for students with disabilities in their final year of school. The program takes place in a business – typically a hospital – where there is total immersion in the workplace. Project SEARCH facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three internships to explore a variety of career paths. Competitive employment is the goal of Project SEARCH. There are currently 10 sites in Alabama and we will continue to work to add more sites to this program.
- **Vocational evaluations:** These evaluations help students identify their interests, abilities, aptitude, and values. Students begin to explore identified areas in terms of the anticipated growth of the targeted occupation; wages; employment opportunities; labor market in their areas; educational requirements; and knowledge, skills, and training required. The physical demands of the jobs selected are also identified. Vocational evaluations are purchased through Community Rehabilitation programs. ADRS plans to see an increase in the number of vocational evaluations administered to students with disabilities as all transition counselors have been encouraged to provide this service earlier in the transition process to assist students in setting transition/employment goals.
- **Smart Work Ethics (SWE):** – SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.
- **Summer work program – JET (Job Exploration Training):** Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.
- **Jointly-Funded Job Coach:** – ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS and LEA pay half). The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements. ADRS is currently collaborating with the Alabama State Department of Education (Special Education and Career and Technical Education) to expand these contracts.

- **Connections: Connect the World Around Us:** Connections focuses on teaching social skills within the classroom and real-world situations for students transitioning out of high school. This program is offered in the evening during the school year to high schools students and young adults who intend to pursue employment. ADRS is currently offering this program in two sites but is working to expand this program to locations across our state.
- **Supported Employment:** Supported Employment is a customer-driven approach that assesses individuals with the most-significant disabilities and assists eligible individuals in obtaining appropriate employment. Supported employment (SE) is offered by Vocational Rehabilitation Service in collaboration with several community rehabilitation partners throughout the state. SE uses Milestones to Employment (MTE) in connecting employers with valuable employees who care about their job.
- **Youth Leadership Forum YLD):** YLF provides students with disabilities the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and to gain knowledge and information regarding self-esteem, self-advocacy, career choice, independent living, and assistive technology.
- **Counselor Salary and Benefits:** ADRS will expend the majority of the required 15% federal allotment through services provided for students with disabilities. However, a portion of the transition counselor's salary/benefits will be used based on the percentage of time he/she spent providing pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. This time is captured by using the State of Alabama eStart program.

Achieving Goals and Priorities (continued)

Goal 4. Meet a minimum of four times per year with workforce development partners in order to increase interagency coordination and collaboration, improve services for all consumers, and increase outreach efforts to underserved populations.

ADRS has state office staff who attend regular meetings with other workforce development agencies in order to collaborate regarding services and ensure people with disabilities have representation in the state's workforce development planning.

Goal 5. Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as underserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment.

The assessment of underserved populations carried out in the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment revealed that ADRS was adequately meeting its responsibilities in serving traditionally underserved persons of various types of disabilities and the most significantly disabled. However, ADRS continues to strive to improve service delivery to persons with the most significant disabilities, as well as youth, and persons with physical, cognitive, mental, and sensory disabilities. The only major area that specifically needs to be addressed beyond these ongoing efforts is that of minority population. In Alabama the traditional minority of Black or African American person is being served at a much higher percentage than the percentage in the general population. Other than White and Black or African American, there are very small populations of other racial minorities. However, the ethnic group of Hispanic has grown significantly and continues to grow, not only in Alabama, but nationally. The number and percentage of persons of Hispanic descent who are served by ADRS is extremely low. The percentage of persons served in FY15 identified as Hispanic was less than 1% of the total served, whereas the state Hispanic population is over 4%. Therefore, the agency recognizes the need to identify and serve people of Hispanic descent. The agency has established an account with Language Line Solutions to provide interpreting on a real time basis so staff can converse with non-English speaking consumers and minimize any language barriers. ADRS has a

relationship with a company that provides translation services for the production of brochures and forms. The agency will contact various agencies serving Hispanics throughout the state, explain agency services, provide referral materials, and contact information. We will also maintain data on the number of Hispanics served to monitor progress on this issue.

Achieving Goals and Priorities(continued)

Goal 6. Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of Assistive Technology in order to better meet the individual needs of consumers. The agency has multiple strategies to provide access to technology services and devices on a statewide Basis during all phases of the rehabilitation process. To start the agency has a statewide network of degreed and qualified rehabilitation technology specialists. The team members are located strategically throughout the state so all staff have access to their expertise. This team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss among themselves, and with partner agency, staff various advances and new products in rehabilitation technology. These meetings provide vendors the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative pieces of technology to demonstrate to the team. This team will act as a training agent for other agency rehabilitation staff throughout the state. Team members will attend unit meetings throughout the state to discuss and demonstrate technology to frontline counseling staff. The team members will also continue to attend national conferences, such as the Assistive Technology Industries Association (ATIA) conference, where they will be exposed to innovative technology. The rehabilitation technology team will continue to present at various conferences throughout the year. Conferences they will attend and present at include the Alabama Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference, the Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference, the Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology), and other conferences as appropriate. As part of this statewide team of rehabilitation technology specialists, the agency also employs an assistive technology specialist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing assistive technology and an assistive technology specialist specializing in blind and low vision technology. Having this team of rehabilitation technology specialists provides a resource for counselors to purchase and utilize technology for consumers throughout the rehabilitation process, including evaluation, IPE development and implementation, training, and employment.

The agency also has a state of the art Adaptive Driving Program. The agency has ten (10) vehicles equipped with comprehensive adaptive driving equipment. These vehicles are used by two Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists and five Certified Driving Instructors who provide adaptive drivers training to people disabilities statewide. The program is unique in that through a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, one of the agency's adaptive driving staff has been certified to give the driver's license road test to our consumers and confer upon them a driver's license. In partnership with the UAB Center for Low Vision the agency's Adaptive Driving Program is now providing comprehensive training in bioptic driving. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that utilizes both the individual's general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the individual's far vision. This has been a very successful partnership and an avenue of independence for many individuals served by the agency. A number of agency staff attended the annual Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference at Auburn University as well as the annual Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology) at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

ADRS will utilize consumer feedback to identify areas of needed improvement that will be used to support innovative change and expansion.

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

ADRS has committed additional staff to address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities in order to improve access to services. Additional staff members have been added to expand and improve supported employment services for this population.

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Goal 1 – The agency will increase by 20% the placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities. ADRS closed 517 consumers with the most significant disabilities as rehabilitated in FY 2014. In FY 2015 the agency closed as rehabilitated 687 MSD consumers. This is an increase of 32%. Therefore, the agency significantly exceeded the goal of 20%. The strategy to accomplish this goal was a deliberate and methodical expansion of the service delivery system geared specifically at those persons with the most significant disabilities. ADRS expanded the number of supported employment providers and Project Search programs to meet the needs of this targeted population of consumers. Although not in an order of selection, ADRS management has made a commitment to utilizing our resources of staff, case service dollars and community partners to enable this population of consumers to enter and maintain competitive employment. Goal 2– The agency will increase wages of consumers successfully rehabilitated to a level that will comply with RSA Indicator 1.5. The average wages calculated for Indicator 1.5 in FY 2014 was \$10.08 per hour. The wages calculated for FY 2015 average was \$10.37. This constitutes a 3% increase in wages. However, the goal for FY 2015 was \$10.54. ADRS outcomes were less than 2% short of the goal. This goal was not reached but progress was made in a positive direction. However, the Blind/Deaf section of the ADRS Combined Agency exceeded the standard of \$10.54 by reaching an average wage of \$13.87.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Several factors impeded achievement of this goal. Due to the high unemployment rate and slow economy experienced over the past seven years, Alabama has lagged behind other states in available employment and wage growth. Entry-level wages for new workers have not grown while the average wages for those experienced workers in the work force have made minor gains. Therefore, many ADRS consumers who are entering the workforce for the first time are subject to these lower wages, which affects performance on Indicator 1.5.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Goal Three: The agency will increase by 10% case service funds spent on consumers receiving supported employment services and increase by 10% the number of consumers participating in supported employment. This goal was accomplished. The increase in those consumers receiving an assessment or service with supported employment was over 15% from 2014 to 2015. There was over a 19% increase in successful closures of consumers in supported employment. In terms of expenditures we also met our goal by increasing expenditures by over 10% for individuals receiving supported employment and by adding an additional 3 contracts for additional Project SEARCH sites. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals— The goal was to expand supported employment program including long term supports. Many strategies were used to accomplish this above goals including: (1) concerted efforts by counselors who work with consumers with more significant disabilities, (2) an increased participation in projects like SEARCH and GATE, IPS Supported Employment, and, (3) working with students with more significant disabilities earlier in secondary education. .

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Although we accomplished our goals we still have the challenge in our state of individuals on the waiting list for waiver services that will require these services to be successful in employment. We have made strides, but it is still a challenge. Provider transformation is still a challenge for the Employment First effort. Difficulties exist in finding the resources to transform existing Medicaid funded day habilitation programs. We are receiving technical assistance to move forward with this effort.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

he agency achieved all indicators with the exception of Indicator 1.5, Average wage. Factors that negatively impacted the achievement of Indicator 1.5 include the following:

1.) ADRS serves a large number of transition cases that typically go to work at entry level wages. The data support this conclusion as 53.7% of all active cases were between ages 14–24 at application and 48.6% of all FY 15 successful closures fall in this age group at application. As with the general population of persons without disabilities, this age group typically goes to work at entry level wages and must obtain work experience or increased education or credentials in order to demand higher wages. The Blind/Deaf section easily exceeded the Indicator 1.5 wage threshold due to the fact that this population often enters into and completes higher education or vocational training in order to overcome their barriers to employment. The success rate with this population is evidence that vocational and or occupational training does result in improved wage outcomes. 2.) The economy of Alabama has been severely limited by the national economic crisis over the past seven years. Although 2015 showed some relief in the unemployment rate, wages in Alabama and nationally have remained stagnant. Therefore, increases in wages to meet the state's wage standard have not risen, especially for the entry level worker as described above.

3.) Alabama has in the past two decades invested heavily in attracting automotive manufacturing companies. In fact, Alabama is home to three manufacturing plants and their suppliers. This bumps up the state's average wage, which is a factor in calculating this indicator. Also, in Alabama the largest single employer is the University of Alabama in Birmingham medical center and its associated hospitals, clinics, and school. These highly paid professions serve to increase the average wage which is not readily available to person without the credentials to obtain the types of jobs offered in this work setting.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds were used to support activities of the State Rehabilitation Council. This included support for a portion of the SRC Director's salary and benefits, as well as operational expenses including travel and office expenses in order to assist in carrying out the functions of the SRC including providing input regarding the VR program. The I&E expenditures totaled \$95,013.00.

q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) remains committed to the provision of quality services to individuals with the most significant disabilities through the provision of supported employment services. ADRS provides supported employment services through a collaborative/partnership effort with 38 service providers statewide in FY 2015. These providers cover all counties in the state. These providers offer services to individuals with a variety of significant disabilities without restrictions regarding disability type. The SE providers are distributed throughout the state in order to ensure maximum availability to those in need of supported employment to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment or advancement in employment. Service providers receive funds for the provision of supported employment through an outcome based payment system. Providers must submit evidence that each milestone has been achieved. Some milestones include consumer and employer satisfaction surveys. Consumer satisfaction is designed to reflect satisfaction with the job or identify any consumer concerns or issues. The employer satisfaction survey is designed to reflect the consumer's job performance, stability and training needs. Supported employment funds are distributed to each provider agency based on the milestone achieved by each individual served. Job skills training is provided to individuals on site at the work setting. Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible and is based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. In FY 2014 the SE program:

- 1,023 consumers were served in Supported Employment across the state.

- In FY 2014, 367 consumers were closed successfully employed. These individuals averaged just over 22 hours per week and earned an average of \$7.82 per hour. When the consumers are stable in their employment and fully acclimated to their jobs extended services are provided. ADRS continues to seek methods to increase participation of individuals with all types of disabilities in

supported employment programs. Initiatives for improving transition services for students with more significant disabilities are being implemented. This includes serving students earlier in their secondary education, procuring additional job coaches to support competitive integrated employment for students with more significant needs, and expansion of Project SEARCH across the state. We will continue to work with career and technical education to develop innovative programs that address internship and apprentice opportunities as well as certifications in employment areas, especially in high demand areas for our state. We will continue to work with Workforce development to identify and provide services to youth in the area, especially underserved youth and those with more significant disabilities. All these identified entities are a part of our Employment First efforts in Alabama.

- Efforts continued to collaborate closely with Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First)—The Network on Employment, Alabama Department of Mental Health, and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), to provide training to staff, transition job coaches, and Milestone's employees. ADRS continues to expand services within the state to increase opportunities for individuals to access to supported employment services. All counties in Alabama all have trained supported employment providers to serve consumers in their area. Many of our community rehabilitation programs provided paid summer work experiences with employers in their local areas. Two additional staff members have been hired as Rehabilitation Specialists for Supported Employment to assist the counselors and providers with quality supported employment and to provide training as needed to both groups. The addition of this additional staff will assure that we are providing quality services to students, youths, and adults requiring supported employment. Regional refresher training on Discovery was recently completed. This will be utilized in the secondary school setting to assure better job matches, and more opportunities for internships and training to consumers requiring SE. The following initiatives have been implemented:

- Participated in the Boot Camp for new counselors that included information on Supported Employment, Milestones, Discovery and Project SEARCH for transition students.

- In collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, completed trainings with local mental health service providers and ADRS staff on moving consumers from facility based services to community based, competitive employment. This training helped participants gain a better understanding of application and eligibility process, services each agency offers, Medicaid waivers, SS implications, and work incentives. Since this training was first initiated, we have contracted with four mental health providers offering SE services. We continue to work closely with ADMH on Employment First. We are currently working on contracting with them for additional benefits planners to help support individuals who are seeking competitive, integrated employment.

- Collaborated with Alabama Association of Persons Supporting Employment First (AL-APSE) and Alabama Department of Mental Health to offer job coach training to new job coaches, job developers, school job coaches, mental health job coaches and case managers. This training is conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University and offered twice a year. For the last two years Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind sent local and regional staff personnel who serve those with sensory impairments.

- Expanded the GATE Project. GATE was designed to assist consumers in sheltered work or day habilitation who wish to do so move into real jobs in industry in the community. It is a partnership with our agency, the Department of Mental Health and local employers. This program is embedded in the workplace and gives the opportunity for those who will require extra time and coaching to learn a job. This program began with one provider and one employer in Northwest Alabama and we currently have 5 GATE Projects at this time. This unique program braids funds from the two agencies to secure the supports and training needed.

- Alabama currently has 10 Project SEARCH sites. This model, founded by Cincinnati's Children Hospital is an innovative, transition/work model for students with most significant disabilities. Two employment sites, utilizing two school systems, were piloted in August 2012, and the program has grown to 10 sites since that time. This collaborative effort involves the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health, and the State Department of Education, the Developmental Disabilities Counsel, ten local school systems and ten employers. Other school systems have expressed an interest in having this program and we expect to continue our expansion. We have a meeting with representatives for the Alabama Institute for the deaf and blind to discuss the possibility of a Project SEARCH in their area.

- Alabama was one of seven states awarded a SAMHSA grant to provide evidence-based IPS Supported Employment at Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model. This evidence-based practice will be implemented at Chilton Shelby Mental Health (a very rural area) and at Altapointe Mental Health in Mobile (an urban area). We are currently working on a plan for sustainability and expansion.

- Connections is designed for students and youth who have social skills deficits, especially those with Autism. The program runs the entire school year and not only teaches social skills in the classroom, it moves those skills into real world settings in the community to practice them. This year long social skills acquisition program is then followed by supported employment services. This program, offered by Lakeshore in Birmingham, has been very successful, and was replicated last year in central Alabama. ADRS, Lakeshore, and Auburn University submitted a grant earlier this year to research both programs. We are also currently working on expanding this program to several different areas throughout the state.

- The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provides a Supported Employment Administrator and two Supported Employment Specialists to monitor supported employment services and provide training and technical assistance. Each supported employment provider operates under a milestone/outcome-based program to ensure quality outcomes and appropriate employment options based on individual choice. Consumers are offered the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments to facilitate an informed decision regarding their employment goal. Job development is provided on an individual basis to locate employment based on the consumer's interests, skills, limitations and community living needs. Job coaching is also provided at the work site to ensure that the individual has the necessary training, skills and supports to work. Once the consumer is stable in the workplace, extended services are planned and implemented to protect the long-term success of the job. Consumer and employer satisfaction regarding the services provided are measured at the time of employment and again before case closure. Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These extended supports are provided at the completion of stabilization, during the successful rehabilitation Milestone and beyond ADRS case closure.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

The plan for Supported Employment specifies the services under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Extended services may include natural supports. If it is not possible to identify the source of extended support when the individual's plan for employment is developed, the counselor must describe the basis for the conclusion that there is a reasonable expectation that sources for extended support services will become available. Extended support services in Alabama, come from a variety of sources. These sources include the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support Project Search, grant funding, private funding, fund raisers and are included in contractual agreements with community rehabilitation providers who have supported employment programs. The plan specifies the services

under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Services for SE often include service provision by other state or federal services. Services provided under an individualized plan are coordinated with other services provided under other individualized plans established for the individual. Vocational Rehabilitation presents at transition training on coordinating to match IEP's with IPE's. Coordinating with ADMH to assure that long term support efforts covered under the Medicaid waiver is part of the consumers IPE.

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Service

Name of designated State agency Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Cary F. Boswell

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the designated State agency listed above agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Service

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Cary F. Boswell

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

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Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Cary F. Boswell

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR

services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds Yes

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: Yes

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. Yes

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities .

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services :

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an **individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan** any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above Yes

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

- i. has developed and will implement,
 - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
 - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
- ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:

a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 **percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program**; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that:

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act

- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State

VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(a) Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program,

specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).

The State will conduct programs designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) to provide assistance and/or services to needy families with children under the administration and supervision of the Alabama Department of Human Resources through County Departments of Human Resources located in the 67 counties in Alabama. Activities of these offices for programs 1 – 3 below include: accepting and processing applications for assistance; and as appropriate conducting reviews and redeterminations of eligibility, providing child support enforcement services, information and referral services, providing family intervention and preservation services and managing a program of work activities and requirements known as the JOBS Program. Special Projects may not necessarily be available on a statewide basis.

Programs: 1. Basic Assistance to Needy Families – Temporary Cash Assistance (limited to 5 years) – Work Program (includes services to current and former recipients of cash assistance) 2. TANF Emergency Assistance 3. TANF (Direct) Child Welfare 4. Special Projects

Financial thresholds are provided for each in Attachment E in section k. Program component general descriptions are as follows:

Program descriptions for the components of the Family Assistance Program are as follows:

Basic Assistance to Needy Families: 1. Cash Assistance: Financial assistance to meet basic needs is available to a family with a dependent child under age 18 or under age 19 if s/he is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training and whose income does not exceed established agency standards and who are otherwise eligible. Non parent adult caretaker relatives may not be included in the Family Assistance unit.

Funding Source: Federal Funds.

2. Work Program: (See Section b.) Non– assistance expenditures for current and former recipients of cash assistance as well as certain needy applicants of cash assistance so as to maintain children in their own homes and end the dependency of needy parents by promoting work. Services include information and referral, case management short-term non-recurrent benefits as discussed in 45CFR 260.31, day care, transportation and other work and training services.

Funding Source: Commingled State and Federal Funds.

TANF Emergency Assistance (Formerly AFDC–EA with provision date of August 21, 1996): Assistance with paying for shelter or other emergency living expenses during a investigation of abuse and (non–assistance) services which include information and referral, case planning and case management, counseling and other support activities to normalize family functioning to or on behalf of a needy child 1) who is under the age of 21 and to any other member of the household in which he is living provided that such child is (or, within 6 months prior to the month in which such assistance is requested, has been) living with any of the relatives specified in section 406(a) (1) of the Act and further clarified in 45 CFR 233.90(c)(1)(v) in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home; 2) who has been removed from his/her home or is at risk of such removal and 3) whose emergency did not arise from his refusal or refusal of such relative with whom he lives without good cause to accept employment or training for employment.

Funding Source: Commingled State and Federal Funds.

TANF Direct Child Welfare: Non–assistance expenditures for payment of specific services for department child welfare cases such as counseling, case management, peer support, childcare, information and referral, transitional services and non–recurrent, short–term benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31. An individual is certified if that individual meets either of the following: 1) a child resides in his/her own home; 2) a child is in out–of–home placement and has a permanency goal to remain at home, return home, or live permanently with relatives.

Funding Source: Federal and State funds.

Special Projects: 1. Eligible Families: Non–assistance expenditures for services including information and referral to needy parents/families such as short–term non–recurrent benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31, day care, subsidized employment, transportation and work and training services, statewide food distribution network activities and pro–family activities expected to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock births as well as encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy two parent families including after school activities for teens, fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives, mentoring and literacy programs and domestic violence/drug abuse/prevention/education programs. Additional non–financial criteria, if any, are dependent on the project plan.

Funding Source (s): Commingled State and Federal funds; Federal funds dependent on the project; State MOE.

After–School Care Program – Through a collaboration with the Alabama Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, project based learning activities are provided for the purpose of preventing out of wedlock teen pregnancy. Projects include: Character, Health and Life Skills; Education and Career Development; and Health and Physical Education Programming.

Funding Source: Federal Funds

2. Pro–Family Activities for Other Than Eligible Families: Non–assistance in the form of non–federal cash and in kind qualified expenditures by third parties for individuals and families pursuant to 45 CFR 263.2(a) (4) (ii). Program specifics including non–financial eligibility criteria, if any, are contained in written agreements/contracts between the Department of Human Resources and the third party and in project plans as applicable.

These benefits and services are provided without regard to financial need or family composition.

Funding Source: State MOE.

Projects provided may not be available on a statewide basis but will be provided as determined appropriate by the state.

Provision of assistance and/or services to eligible, needy families is contingent on the availability of program funding.

Program operating guidelines which include all policies, procedures, etc., for the determination of initial and continuing eligibility for each program will be issued to the County Departments of Human Resources from the State Department of Human Resources as needed. Such operating guidelines contained in department program manuals or other correspondence is binding on the County Departments of Human Resources.

(b) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act)

1. Requirements and Activities

The State will operate a welfare work program in compliance with Section 407 of Title IV–A of the Social Security Act and consistent with Alabama’s approved Work Verification Plan. The program is known as the JOBS Program. All parents/stepparents, including teen parents, who are receiving assistance, are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. The assessment process includes screening for disability and language assistance needs. An Individual JOBS Participation (IJP) and Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) will be developed for these individuals. Individuals determined to be ready to engage in work will be immediately placed in work or work–related activities for up to 40 hours per week. After receipt of assistance for 24 months, all individuals not already participating in such activities will be required to engage in work activities, as defined in state policy.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Work Program—The parent(s) and/or stepparent(s) of a dependent child(ren) receiving assistance are required to participate in work activities designed to result in gainful employment unless the parent(s)/stepparent(s) is deferred or has good cause for not participating as specified in department program manuals. See Attachments B and C below. The penalties for failure to comply are as follows:

Applicants:

Upon overt refusal of the grantee relative or other member(s) of the assistance unit required to participate in JOBS activities, the application will be denied and entitlement to benefits for the month of application through the month of application disposition is lost even if reapplication is made in the month of the original application disposition.

Recipients who have received for less than 24 months:

For the first three months of non–compliance (consecutive or not), the grant amount is reduced by 50% of the payment standard for the assistance unit size. For a month of non–compliance in excess of three months, the assistance unit is disqualified for a one–month period for the first disqualification. For a month of non–compliance following the first disqualification, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a six–month period. For a month of non–compliance following the second and subsequent disqualifications, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a twelve–month period.

Recipients who have received for 24 months or more:

The assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a one-month period for the first instance of non-compliance; a six-month period for the second instance of non-compliance and a twelve-month period for the third and subsequent instances.

Recipients who voluntarily terminate employment or refuse employment without good cause (regardless of the number of months of receipt):

The assistance unit is immediately permanently disqualified.

Attachment B

WORK PARTICIPATION DEFERRAL CRITERIA and

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DELAY CRITERIA

A. Deferral Criteria

Individuals may be temporarily deferred from the participation requirements of the JOBS Program if the individual:

1. Is a person in the home whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis

due to the illness or incapacity, determined on the basis of medical evidence, of a related individual and no other appropriate individual is available to provide the needed care.

2. Has an illness or injury which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment or

training with the goal of employment. This includes pregnancy when it is determined

by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to

the woman or the unborn child.

3. Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by the Department

of Rehabilitative Services which prevents the individual from engaging

in employment or other work activity.

4. Has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as defined in department program

manuals to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded.

5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling to the extent participation

in program work requirements is precluded.

6. Is a single custodial parent caring for a child under the age of six (6) and appropriate

childcare is not available or is inaccessible to the client.

7. Is a single custodial parent (age 18 or older) of a child age 12 months or younger.
8. Is age 60 or older.
9. Has no regular transportation of any kind available.
10. Has a personal barrier of such significance to preclude participation in a work activity or employment and is participating in other JOBS activities to overcome the barrier.
11. Is a parent in a two-parent family who has to provide childcare for a child while the other parent works or participates in a JOBS activity because appropriate childcare is not otherwise available, accessible and/or affordable.

Attachment B cont'd.

B. Special Circumstances Delay Criteria

Participation for clients who are required to participate and do not meet deferral criteria may be delayed if no appropriate component/employment is available.

Attachment C

GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH JOBS ACTIVITIES

Good cause for failure or refusal to participate in JOBS activities or to accept employment includes the following:

1. Illness of individual or illness of a household member or family member which requires the presence of the individual.
2. Childcare problems
3. Transportation problems
4. Personal or family crisis
5. Domestic Violence issues
6. Rare/Unusual Circumstances
7. Non-receipt of correspondence
8. Administrative error
2. Displacement Provisions

Pursuant to 45 CFR 261.70, no adult in a work activity as described in 45 CFR 261.30 will be employed or assigned to an employment when any other individual is on layoff from the same or an equivalent job in the company, or if the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction of the workforce in order to fill the vacancy

so created with a recipient of Family Assistance. Aggrieved individuals may file a written complaint with the Family Assistance Division, State Department of Human Resources. All complaints are investigated. Complainants are advised of findings in writing. Corrective action is taken by the Department as appropriate.

(c) Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act)

The FRP is developed jointly by the FA grantee relative and the JOBS case manager. It outlines the responsibilities of the FA grantee in regards to the participation of all required family members and includes a copy of the IJP for each required family member. The IJP outlining work activities, supportive services and other family needs is developed jointly by the recipient and the JOBS case manager. Support services such as childcare, transportation, and work/participation expenses will be made available as needed to enable recipients to participate in work or work-related activities. Other services include information and referrals for domestic violence and substance abuse issues. The individual will receive reimbursement or payment of agreed upon expenses directly related to participation in such activities. Each recipient will be informed of the work requirements, what constitutes noncompliance, and the sanctions for non-compliance. If a recipient refuses or fails to cooperate with work requirements as set forth in his/her IJP, the family's benefits will be reduced or terminated as set forth in state policy unless good cause for the non-compliance, as defined in state policy, is established. No sanction for failure to work or participate in work-related activities will be imposed on any single custodial parent caring for a child under age 6 if the individual proves that s/he has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

Each non-deferred recipient will be placed in a work-related activity consistent with his/her IJP. Work activities may include: Subsidized/Unsubsidized employment

On the job training

Job Search

Job Readiness Activities

Community Employment Placement (work experience)

Community Service Employment

Vocational education activities

Job skills training

Satisfactory attendance in high school or a course of study leading to a GED

Education directly related to employment

For the duration of the recipient's involvement in work activities, the JOBS case manager will monitor component participation and provide assistance to participants with any problems or barriers.

Individuals who agree to treatment programs for drug, alcohol, or mental health reasons may be temporarily deferred from a work activity when the person is making a serious attempt to recover. Domestic violence victims will be deferred from a work activity when they are at risk of endangerment.

Definitions

a. Unsubsidized Employment: This is paid employment for either wages or salary where no part of the pay is subsidized by TANF or any other public programs.

b. Work Experience: In Alabama this activity is called Community Employment or CEMP. CEMP is a work activity, performed in return for welfare that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment. Placements are designed to help prepare the client to obtain unsubsidized employment by allowing him/her to develop a current work history and establish references for future employment seeking efforts as well as develop and improve marketable skills. Placements will be in both non-profit and for-profit businesses. Placement in for-profit businesses will have shorter time frames (maximum of three months) than placements in non-profit businesses (maximum of six months).

c. On-the-Job-Training: In this component a public or private employer hires the TANF client full-time where part of the wages are subsidized, usually by a governmental entity such as Department of Labor. While employed in the OJT position, the client engages in productive work while receiving training in knowledge and skills essential for adequate job performance. The client is compensated at a rate comparable to that of other employees performing the same or similar jobs, but at no less than minimum wage.

d. Job Search and Job Readiness:

1. Job Search is assigned in increments lasting no more than two weeks. The client is expected to complete a number of serious contacts with potential employers and must also register with the Employment Service. The daily number of required contacts is determined by the case manager based on the client's specific circumstances and the geographic area. The case manager will randomly contact employers turned in as job contacts to verify that an application was submitted and/or an interview was conducted.

2. Job Readiness is an intensive, short-term component, consisting of formal classroom training designed to prepare the client for successfully seeking and maintaining employment. Activities focus on pre-employment preparation and are aimed at helping the client overcome barriers that might preclude employment. Typical activities include application completion, interview skills, ways to locate job openings, general workplace expectations, and the behaviors and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. This activity also includes substance abuse, mental health and rehabilitation counseling for clients who are otherwise employable.

e. Vocational Educational Training: This is organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training including a baccalaureate or advanced degree. These courses should provide individuals with technical skills and academic knowledge needed for success in current or emerging employment sectors. It also includes any formal instruction in a skill or trade traditionally referred to as job skills training, determined by the JOBS staff to be other than purely academic in nature, that prepares the client for a vocation. For example, technical programs designed to prepare a client for a specific occupation, including nursing, plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics, welding and barbering. The training is limited to education that leads to useful employment in a state recognized occupation.

Training is available to clients through WIA, vocational/technical schools and some colleges and universities. Training includes courses for any state licenses, certificates, and/or degrees.

f. **Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment:** This is training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. It includes training or education required as a prerequisite for employment or to advance or adapt to changing demands of current employment. Such training and education will be provided through educational and training organizations. This activity also includes all activities described above as vocational education and any four-year bachelor's or advanced degree programs at any State certified college or university.

g. **Education Directly Related to Employment for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency:** This is education related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer. It includes basic education and ESL, and where required as a prerequisite for employment, education leading to a GED or high school equivalency diploma in any educational program approved by the Alabama Department of Education.

h. **Satisfactory School Attendance for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency:** Individuals in this activity must be attending an educational facility with the goal of achieving a high school diploma or certificate of high school equivalency. In addition, the student must be considered a "student in good standing". The student must have regular attendance and the activity must be considered feasible for the student.

i. **Subsidized Public or Private Sector Employment:** This is paid employment funded with TANF or other public dollars in the public or private sector. In all cases, the employer is reimbursed by DHR or other public programs for the gross wages paid by the employer to the employee. In addition, subsidized public and private sector employment in Alabama may be provided through college work study programs that meet the guidelines.

j. **Community Service Employment:** This is publicly and/or state funded, wage-paying jobs designed to provide employment for individuals and to address unmet community needs. See i. above.

(d) Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act)

Pursuant to Code of Alabama Title 38, Section 38-2-6 information/case records of program participants is considered confidential and shall not be subject to public use or inspection. The release and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance through the Family Assistance Program is limited in scope by the purpose/program for which it is released/disclosed. Such release/disclosure is only permissible as follows:

– in connection with programs operated under Title I – Aid to the Aged; Title IV-A – Aid to

Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Title IV-A – Block grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Title IV-B – Child Welfare Services; Title IV-D – Child Support and Establishment of Paternity; – Title IV-E – Foster Care (FCMP) and Adoption Assistance; Title X – Aid to the Blind; Title XIV – Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled; Title XVI – Aid to the Aged,

Blind and Disabled; Title XVI – Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Title XIX – Medicaid; or Title XX – Block Grants.

- in connection with services provided by other entities integral to and consistent with the administration of public assistance pursuant to state laws under written agreements with the Department of Human Resources.

- in connection with the administration of other federal or federally assisted programs providing assistance in cash, in-kind, or services, directly to individuals on the basis of need.

- at the request of state, local or federal law enforcement authorities searching for fugitive felons or individuals violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law (current address only).

- in connection with a public audit.

- in connection with the investigation of problems related to misuse of funds issued by the Department of Human Resources.

- at the request of the client under certain limited conditions as specified in department program manuals.

- in connection with the investigation of program fraud under certain conditions as specified in department program manuals. – at the request of grand juries.

(e) Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act)

The Department of Human Resources partners with the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama to competitively award grants to community and faith-based organizations for fatherhood programs across the state. These programs offer a myriad of services to all non-custodial parents, including parenting classes, with the overarching goal to strengthen families, to enhance child support collection and to address the multi-faceted needs of children growing up without the involvement of one or both parents in their lives.

The Department of Human Resources partners with the Alabama Department of Public Health which serves all women of child bearing age and the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (ACPTP) for pregnancy prevention efforts. The mission of the ACPTP is "Leading Alabama in adolescent reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention with an emphasis on positive youth development." To further the mission, the ACPTP has adopted priorities as well as vision and value statements. The mission, vision and value statements as well as priorities and other information about the Campaign can be found on the ACPTP website at www.acptp.org.

Our goal specifically targeting teen pregnancy is to maintain out of wedlock teen births to at least 5% below the national average as published by the National Center for Health Statistics. In regard to the overall issue of out of wedlock pregnancy prevention, as part of the JOBS Program client assessment the case manager provides discussion and information about the impact of additional children as it pertains to the goals of personal responsibility, parenting and family support. Through these discussions it is our goal to provide individuals with sufficient information and assistance to

move families from welfare to work without additional pregnancies during receipt of assistance and until such time as the family is stable. These activities in conjunction with our fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives provide the foundation for success in this area.

(f) Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act)

The Department of Human Resources has developed and issued pamphlets containing information regarding the legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape to be distributed by Alabama Fatherhood Programs administered by the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama as part of the educational activities of these programs which are specifically targeted at non-custodial males. TANF funded Fatherhood programs number 21 throughout the state. Additionally, these materials are used in the educational activities of the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Further, these pamphlets are generally available in Alabama Departments of Public Health statewide. Staff of the Department of Human Resources distributes the pamphlets as appropriate to individuals applying for or receiving Family Assistance and in other program areas as deemed necessary.

TANF workers are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate service staff. This activity specifically includes the circumstances of girls under the age of 16 having sex with males who are at least 16 years old and at least two years older than the female.

The Department of Human Resources participated on the Council on Violence Against Women in the development of the Alabama State Plan, Responding to Domestic and Sexual Violence, to assist in promoting systemic change and improving responses to victims and perpetrators of such violence. This council membership included judicial, law enforcement, prosecution, health care, education, social services and mental health representatives. The 2010 State Plan can be viewed at www.acadv.org.

(g) Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act)

Statement of Policy: Use of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for merchandise or a service from an automated teller machine (ATM) or point of sale (POS) device physically located in liquor, wine or beer stores, casinos or other gambling establishments, strip clubs, tattoo or body piercing facilities or facilities providing psychic services is prohibited. Such use constitutes an unauthorized EBT transaction. Use of any portion of the FA

benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction to purchase alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets is also prohibited. Purchase of any of these items is referred to as unauthorized FA expenditures.

Definitions:

Unauthorized EBT Transaction: Use of an EBT card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for the purchase of merchandise/goods or services from an ATM or POS device physically located in a liquor, wine or beer store, gambling establishment, strip club, tattoo or body piercing facility or a facility providing psychic services.

Liquor, wine or beer store: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily alcoholic beverages.

Gambling establishment: A retail establishment offering casino, gambling or gaming activities as the primary purpose of the establishment.

Strip Club: Any retail establishment providing adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

Tattoo or body piercing facility: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily tattoo or body piercing services.

Psychic services facility: Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily psychic services.

Unauthorized FA expenditures: Use of any portion of the benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets.

Alcoholic beverages: Any alcoholic, spirituous, vinous, fermented, or other alcoholic beverage or combination of liquors and mixed liquor, a part of which is spirituous, vinous, fermented, or otherwise alcoholic, and all drinkable liquids, preparations or mixtures intended for beverage purposes, which contain one-half of one percent or more alcohol by volume, and shall include liquor, wine and beer.

Tobacco products: Any product that contains tobacco such as cigars, cigarettes, pipe and chewing tobacco and associated paraphernalia.

Lottery ticket: Any ticket purchased for a game of chance operated by a state government such as instant lotteries, general lotteries and lotto.

Practices: Educate clients; investigate reported violations; and impose penalties on FA recipients.

Client Education Clients are educated about the spending restrictions as follows: mandatory discussion of the prohibition by the eligibility worker with all new applicants; public information materials which state the prohibition to include program summarized eligibility rules, client EBT brochures (under revision), automated client notices of case action, the program applicant/recipient affirmation and agreement statement which requires client certification of understanding and agreement to adhere to the prohibition in writing. The prohibition language is posted on the Department website and is being added to the EBT client portal in the future. Further recipient grantee relatives must acknowledge in writing understanding of the rule as part of the Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) under the JOBS Program as discussed in section (c) above.

Financial Penalties (1) For the first instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a one-month period. (2) For the second instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a three-month period. (3) For the third instance of non-compliance, the assistance unit may continue to receive benefits if otherwise eligible, but the grantee relative is permanently disqualified from receiving benefits as a grantee relative, and, if included in the assistance unit is permanently disqualified to be a member of the assistance unit. Payment to the assistance unit will be made to another relative living in the home or other protective payee pursuant to Department operating guidelines. The disqualified grantee relative may continue to receive benefits for other eligible assistance unit members for a temporary period while appointment of another grantee relative is being processed. (4) In addition to penalties in (1) – (3) above, the recipient must reimburse the Department as follows: For unauthorized EBT transactions, the amount withdrawn and/or used; for unauthorized FA expenditures, the amount of the purchase. Reimbursement in the full amount must be made before the assistance unit can again receive benefits following a period of disqualification as described in (1) and (2) above or before another relative living in the home or a protective payee can be approved to receive as described in (3) above.

(h) Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act)

Benefit Access and Fee Information Benefit Access—Recipients can access FA benefits at any ATM or POS device at any location with such a device other than the prohibited locations. EBT cards are not accepted in state owned liquor stores known as Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) stores. To ameliorate an identified situation of unauthorized EBT transactions, the client will be referred to the Client Help Desk provided by our Contractor who is required to provide Customer Service, toll free via a 1-800 number for benefit access information as well as other account information. As part of the delivery of Customer Service, our Contractor is required to provide information 24/7 about POS/ATM site locations where benefits can be accessed. The Contractor must provide general information to clients regarding stores and ATMs. In order to do this the Contractor maintains a database and tracks retailers providing cash back and ATMs that accept the Alabama EBT cards. The Contractor must ensure that no cash client travel any further than 15 miles to any cash access location (either retailer or ATM). Further, if the Contractor is informed of the fact that there is no location within 15 miles or less to provide cash services they will make an effort with assistance from the Department to look into the businesses that are in the area and see if a location is willing to provide the service. If there are no businesses that can or will do so, then the Contractor would inform the Department of why and provide the closest business that will. According to information from the Department EBT Office, to date there has not been an instance where the “15 miles or less” rule could not be met.

Information about benefit access, lost and stolen cards, customer service, pin numbers, etc. is explained to clients during the application interview and is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website. Other Department materials contain customer service contact information.

Fee Information—The first two cash ATM withdrawals in a month are free. Any subsequent ATM withdrawals in the same month incur a fifty cents (\$.50) fee. Recipients can receive cash back when using their EBT cards for purchases and incur no transaction fee. Information regarding fees is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website.

(i) Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act)

Families moving into the State from another State will be treated the same as other families under the program. Therefore, the policies and procedures of the Family Assistance Program applicable in a county will be applied uniformly to all residents of the State (County) whether current or new.

(j) Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act)

Citizens and qualified non-citizens are eligible to the extent permitted under federal law, Title IV of Public Law 104–193, as amended. Recipients must be citizens, qualified aliens who entered the United States before August 22, 1996, qualified aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 who are excepted from the 5-year bar or aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 and have been in “qualified alien” status for at least 5 years. Victims of severe forms of trafficking are eligible for federally-funded TANF benefits to the same extent as refugees. Aliens who (or whose child or parent) have been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S. are eligible under certain circumstances consistent with Federal law as specified in program operating manuals.

(k) Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act)

Delivery of benefits is dependent on the component program of the FA Program and includes delivery by Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), by vendor payment, cash payments or provision of services.

Eligibility rules of the Department of Human Resources will be uniformly applied in all cases in a county. The determination of need and amount of assistance for all applicants and recipients will be made on an objective and equitable basis and all types of income and potential income will be taken into consideration in the same way except where otherwise specifically authorized by State or Federal law or the Administrative Code of the Department of Human Resources or as stated in program operating guidelines issued by the State Department of Human Resources, Family Assistance Division. The State will adhere to prohibitions and requirements of Section 408 of Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Pursuant to subparagraph (B) of Section 408(a)(10) Good cause exceptions to subparagraph (A) of Section 408(a)(10) include absence due to medical

reasons, school attendance, visits, conducting business, participating in Job Corps or vocational training.

1. Financial Responsibility for Program Benefits

For assistance subject to time limits, financial responsibility for needy children includes parents and stepparents in the home and alleged fathers living in the home with their child and the child's mother. Income of all members of the assistance unit will be considered in determining eligibility of the assistance unit for benefits and amount of payment.

Income of parents and stepparents ineligible due to alien status, disqualification for fraud or spending restrictions violations, exclusion as a parole violator, or for a conviction of a felony or for fraudulently misrepresenting residence will also be used to determine eligibility if appropriate and applicable according to department operating manuals or other instructions. Earned income from new employment may be disregarded for the first twelve months wages are received if timely and accurately reported and the individual is otherwise eligible for the disregard pursuant to Family Assistance Program guidelines.

2. Summarized Eligibility Rules

In order to be eligible families must:

- meet component specific conditions including the following if applicable
- be U.S. citizens (or meet alienage requirements in Title IV of P.L. 104–193 and/or be a legal immigrant residing in the U.S. prior to August 22, 1996).
- be residents of Alabama.
- be in need by agency financial standards. See Attachment E.
- cooperate in self-sufficiency requirements including work and child support enforcement activities unless deferred from work requirements or unless good cause exists not to cooperate with child support if applicable.
- provide or apply for a SSN for each member of the assistance unit
- not be on strike (applicable to cash component only)
- complete applicant job search
- cooperate with drug screening activities

3. Medical Services

Federal law prohibits the use of federal funds to provide medical services and states that the term “medical services” does not include pre-pregnancy family planning services.

In addition to pre-pregnancy family planning services for purposes of federal expenditures, the following activities/services that are consistent with a TANF purpose and related to employment and/or work participation activities for cash assistance recipients or required as a condition of eligibility for cash assistance are not considered medical services:

- pre-employment physical examination by a health professional that does not include treatment.
- payment to a health professional for completion of Department forms. (Used for eligibility determinations related to time limits which constitutes an administrative cost and for work activities).
- payment to a health professional or entity for administration of a pre-employment drug test or TB test or for administration of a drug test as a condition of eligibility for cash assistance.
- assessment, testing or other determinations of modification by a health professional needed for reasonable accommodation related to a participant's incapacity/disability. Excludes treatment.
- dental services (cosmetic, extractions, fillings, etc.) needed to eliminate a barrier to participation or employment. The service may not be of a surgical or other medical nature.

The Family Assistance Program will provide cash assistance pursuant to 45 CFR 260.31 on a time limited basis (time limit is 5 years) consistent with provisions in section 408, Part A, Title IV of the Social Security Act (and supportive services to enable families to become self-sufficient) to eligible families. In order to receive past 60 months the grantee or spouse of the grantee must have a circumstance/situation which creates a barrier to self sufficiency known as a hardship and s/he must be cooperating with child support and complying with JOBS as appropriate. See Attachment F below.

Attachment F

CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTION TO TIME LIMITS

In order to receive past 60 months the grantee or spouse of the grantee must have a circumstance/situation which creates a barrier to self sufficiency known as a hardship and s/he must be cooperating with Child Support and complying with JOBS as appropriate. To be eligible both criteria in A & B must be met and continue to be met in each month after 60.

A. Hardships

The grantee or spouse of the grantee must meet one of the following circumstances and must not be employed. If a hardship is established but the individual becomes employed or employable (as determined by the JOBS worker) eligibility is lost.

A hardship may exist when the grantee or spouse of the grantee:

1. Is a person whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis due to the illness or incapacity of the spouse, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law or of an individual to whom the relationship of the caregiver is within certain degrees of relationship and no other person is available to provide the needed care.
2. Has an illness or injury which has lasted or is expected to last at least 30 days and which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment (or training with the hope of employment) when

determined on the basis of medical evidence from the attending physician/clinic. This includes pregnancy when it has been determined by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to the woman or the unborn child.

3. Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by a physician or a licensed or certified psychologist which prevents or substantially reduces the individual's ability to work.
4. Is fleeing current domestic violence or abuse because s/he recently has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as verified by certain documentary evidence specified in program manuals.
5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling as verified through the sources of the counseling to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded.
6. Is age 60 or older.
7. Has a personal barrier of such significance as to preclude training and/or employment and is engaged in an activity to overcome the barrier.
8. Lives in a Food Assistance ABAWD waiver county and has not been disqualified due to noncompliance with JOBS since December, 1996.

B. Program Compliance Criteria

The grantee and/or the spouse of the grantee must cooperate with Child Support and comply with JOBS in each month past 60. Failure to meet this criteria results in (1) permanent loss of program eligibility for the grantee and spouse of the grantee regardless of family circumstances and (2) recovery of all benefits received past month 60.

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Individuals receiving assistance are required to cooperate in child support enforcement activities unless good cause as defined in department program manuals exists not to do so. See Attachment D below. The penalties for failure to cooperate are as follows:

Applicants:

Upon overt refusal of the grantee relative or other member(s) of the assistance unit required to cooperate with child support enforcement, the application will be denied and entitlement to benefits for the month of application through the month of application disposition is lost even if reapplication is made in the month of the original application disposition.

Recipients:

For the first three months of non-cooperation (consecutive or not) the grant amount is reduced by 50% of the payment standard for the assistance unit size. For months of non-cooperation in excess of three months, the assistance unit is disqualified for a one-month period for the first disqualification. For a month of non-cooperation following the first disqualification, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a six-month period. For a month of non-cooperation following the second and subsequent disqualifications, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a twelve-month period. Attachment D

GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOOPERATION IN CHILD SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

An applicant/recipient for assistance under the Family Assistance Program must cooperate with the agency in child support enforcement activities unless it is determined that cooperation in such activities is not in the child's best interest. Circumstances under which cooperation may not be in the child's best interest include:

1. Physical or emotional harm of a serious nature is reasonably expected to occur to the child or to the parent or relative with whom the child is living.
2. The child was conceived as a result of incest or forcible rape.
3. Legal proceedings for adoption of the child are pending before a court of competent jurisdiction.
4. The applicant/recipient is currently being assisted by a public or licensed private social agency to resolve the issue of whether to keep the child or relinquish for adoption and the discussions have not gone on for more than three months.

DRUG SCREENING

Certain individuals applying for and/or receiving assistance must cooperate in activities needed to determine if reasonable suspicion exists that the individual uses or is under the influence of a drug and by taking a drug screening if reasonable suspicions exists. This provision is applicable to individuals applying for cash assistance on or after October 1, 2015 and to individuals awarded as a result of such application. The penalties for failure/refusal to cooperate are as follows:

Applicants:

Failure/refusal of an applicant to cooperate results in denial of the application for the assistance unit and loss of benefits for that application period, i.e., month of application through the month of disposition of the application. Failure/refusal of an applicant being added back to an open case results in denial of the application for the individual for that application period and case closure.

Recipients:

Failure/refusal of a recipient to cooperate results in case closure.

The penalties for a positive screening result without a valid prescription for the identified drug are as follows:

- For the first positive drug screening, a warning shall be issued that subsequent positive tests will result in loss of benefits and that other random drug screenings will be required.
- For the second positive drug screening, the adult will be ineligible for benefits for one year.
- For the third positive drug screening, the adult will be permanently ineligible to receive assistance and payment to the otherwise eligible assistance unit will be made to another relative living in the home or other protective payee pursuant to Department operating guidelines. The ineligible grantee relative may continue to receive benefits for other eligible assistance unit members for a temporary period while appointment of another grantee relative/protective payee is being processed.

Client Opportunity for Review of Action Taken Procedures for client review of case action taken provide for three options for review (1) a conference with the County Department of Human Resources, (2) a State Department of Human Resources case record review and (3) a fair hearing conducted by the State Department of Human Resources. A request for options 2 and 3 must be in writing and submitted to either the County or State Department. Information about these opportunities as well as instructions regarding how to request and where to send the request is provided to clients as general information on all automated system notices generated and mailed to clients at award, termination or change in circumstances. If a system notice is not sufficient to explain case action a manually prepared case action form is completed and mailed which also contains the general information in regard to a review of case action described above. The summarized eligibility requirements pamphlet for the Family Assistance Program contains similar language and is required to be given and explained to all applicants and as needed to recipients during the interview process. Rules of review for special projects may vary dependent on the project and would be included in informational materials as appropriate.

Applications will be acted on in a timely manner. Department rules provide that not more than 30 days shall elapse between the date of application and the date the first benefits are made available or the notice of denial is mailed. The number of applications that exceed such standard is kept to a minimum. The standard of promptness is monitored and reported to

County Directors of Human Resources monthly.

Applicants and recipients are notified in writing of actions taken in their case.

PAYMENT ACCURACY AND PROGRAM INTEGRITY

The program is supported by an automated system known as the Family Assistance Certification, Employment and Training System (FACETS) operational in all counties of the State. An Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) as required by Section 1137 of the Social Security Act for persons receiving assistance is operational in all counties of the State.

Methods are in place to ensure payment accuracy to eligible families which includes mandatory case record reviews by county office supervisory staff with a re-review of a sample of those records by state office field supervisors. Identified deficiencies require corrective action. State statistics about payment accuracy are published to the Directors, County Departments of Human Resources monthly. Payment accuracy is a component of County Director evaluations. The state is subject to Federal and State Audits.

Program operating guidelines contain provisions to strengthen and maintain program integrity from fraud prevention actions to recovery of erroneously paid benefits. Benefit recovery activities are supported through the Comprehensive Claims System (CCS) which interfaces with the program certification system, FACETS. Individuals found guilty of committing an intentional program violation by a court of competent jurisdiction in Alabama will be disqualified from participation in the cash assistance component of the Family Assistance Program as follows: for a period of 6 months upon the first occasion of any such offense; or a period of 12 months upon the second occasion of any such offense and permanently upon the third or subsequent occasion of such offense.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

The Family Assistance Program, like all programs and services of the Department of Human Resources, is administered in full compliance with Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964,

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and all other Federal and State civil rights laws.

Language assistance so as to ensure meaningful access to all Department programs, services and benefits is provided to individuals needing such services consistent with the Department's Language Assistance Plan first issued on August 24, 2005 and revised January 2012.

Reasonable accommodations are provided to enable full use of existing programs and services to those individuals who tell us (or for whom we determine) they have a physical, mental or learning disability that limits a major life activity. Client case action notices provide information about the availability of reasonable accommodations. Departmental program operating manuals for the TANF Program contain guidelines for county staff in this regard as well as information about language assistance.

SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Procedures are in place through the statewide Special Assessment, Intervention and Liaison Project (SAIL) for eligibility workers to routinely screen and identify domestic violence for individuals applying for or receiving cash assistance. JOBS case managers include questions on domestic violence as part of the JOBS assessment as well. For those identified as victims of domestic violence, referrals are made to the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence for a variety of services including development of a safety plan, information and referral, supportive services, counseling and case management, etc. Certain program rules are waived for those individuals identified as in imminent danger and include child support enforcement activities, time limits and work participation requirements (although the client may volunteer to participate).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to Title IV-A, Section 402, Alabama's TANF State Plan is published and maintained on the Department of Human Resources website. Written comments on this plan were solicited and a period of 45 days was provided for such comments. Further Alabama law at Section 41, Chapter 22 Administrative Procedure, provides for the promulgation of program rules on requirements to receive assistance. Two of the stated purposes of that Act are to increase public access to governmental information as well as to increase public participation in the formulation of administrative rules. The law requires publication of the referenced program rules for public comment in the Alabama Administrative Monthly for a period of 35 to 90 days. This rule affords all interested parties reasonable opportunity to submit data, or arguments, orally or in writing. The publication of the plan on the website and the proposed program rules process provide for input from other state agencies, public and private organizations, the general public and other pertinent entities during development and implementation.

CERTIFICATION

The State will operate a program to provide temporary assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. In administering and operating a program which provides temporary assistance to needy families with minor children under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the State will:

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program under part A in all political subdivisions of the State: Alabama Department of Human Resources is the agency responsible for administering the programs.

Attachment E

1. Cash Assistance

A. Monthly Maximum Payment Standards

STANDARDS FOR FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Assistance Unit Size Payment Standard

1 \$165

2 \$190

3 \$215

4 \$245

5 \$275

6 \$305

7 \$335

8 \$365

9 \$395

10 \$425

11 \$455

12 \$485

13 \$515

14 \$545

15 \$575

16 \$605

B. Resource Standards

Not applicable effective October 1, 2009.

C. Work Program Supportive Services (Former Recipients and Needy Applicants)

Family's gross income is less than 200% of the HHS federal poverty guidelines by family size.

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Attachment E cont'd.

2. TANF Emergency Assistance (Formerly EA)

Annual family income is lower than two times the state's estimated median income level (as published by HHS) for a family of three.

3. TANF Direct Child Welfare Assistance

Child's or family's gross income is equal to or less than 200% of the HHS poverty guidelines by family size.

4. Special Projects

Eligible Families: Child's, individual's (including pregnant women), or family's gross income can be up to 300% of the HHS poverty guidelines by family size. Additionally, the family's receipt of other means tested benefits/services is sufficient to convey categorical financial eligibility as well as receipt of benefits/services from an entity (organization, state agency, etc.) or program whose client population is largely low income.

A. Hardships

The grantee or spouse of the grantee must meet one of the following circumstances and must not be employed. If a hardship is established but the individual becomes employed or employable (as determined by the JOBS worker) eligibility is lost.

A hardship may exist when the grantee or spouse of the grantee:

1. Is a person whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis due to the illness or incapacity of the spouse, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law or of an individual to whom the relationship of the caregiver is within certain degrees of relationship and no other person is available to provide the needed care.
2. Has an illness or injury which has lasted or is expected to last at least 30 days and which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment (or training with the hope of employment) when determined on the basis of medical evidence from the attending physician/clinic. This includes pregnancy when it has been determined by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to the woman or the unborn child.
3. Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by a physician or a licensed or certified psychologist which prevents or substantially reduces the individual's ability to work.
4. Is fleeing current domestic violence or abuse because s/he recently has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as verified by certain documentary evidence specified in program manuals.

5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling as verified through the sources of the counseling to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded.

6. Is age 60 or older.

7. Has a personal barrier of such significance as to preclude training and/or employment and is engaged in an activity to overcome the barrier.

8. Lives in a Food Assistance ABAWD waiver county and has not been disqualified due to noncompliance with JOBS since December, 1996.

B. Program Compliance Criteria

The grantee and/or the spouse of the grantee must cooperate with Child Support and comply with JOBS in each month past 60. Failure to meet this criteria results in (1) permanent loss of program eligibility for the grantee and spouse of the grantee regardless of family circumstances and (2) recovery of all benefits received past month 60.

(l) Indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(a)(1)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act)—

1. providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or

2. in other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.

The State does not intend to fund a special initiative for training/employment of individuals providing direct care in a long-term facility or in other occupations providing eldercare. However, on a case-by-case basis FA cash assistance recipients can receive assistance/services while pursuing training/employment to provide such eldercare as part of their IJP and FRP as discussed in section (c) above. Assistance/services in this regard include payment for short term training to obtain classification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), supplies, uniforms, equipment, etc. Further, the Department has partnered with a centrally located technical school and Baptist Health to provide support for a grant to fund such training. If awarded, referrals from our JOBS client pool can be accepted from 24 surrounding counties.

(m) Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program

benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7)

Special Projects: 1. Eligible Families: Non-assistance expenditures for services including information and referral to needy parents/families such as short-term non-recurrent benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31, day care, subsidized employment, transportation and work and training services, statewide food distribution network activities and pro-family activities expected to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock births as well as encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy two parent families including after school activities for teens, fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives, mentoring and literacy programs and domestic violence/drug abuse/prevention/education programs. Additional non-financial criteria, if any, are dependent on the project plan. Funding Source (s): Commingled State and Federal funds; Federal funds dependent on the project; State MOE.

2. Pro-Family Activities for Other Than Eligible Families: Non-assistance in the form of non-federal cash and in kind qualified expenditures by third parties for individuals and families pursuant to 45 CFR 263.2(a) (4) (ii). Program specifics including non-financial eligibility criteria, if any, are contained in written agreements/contracts between the Department of Human Resources and the third party and in project plans as applicable. These benefits and services are provided without regard to financial need or family composition. Funding Source: State MOE.

TANF Certifications

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under The Unified or Combined State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services Yes

Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access

to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act) Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence Yes

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

a. General Requirements

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

1. The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;

Name of Component: Job Search Description of Component: Job Search is composed of several services offered through the Career Centers and is available to all ABAWDs who volunteer to participate in the offered component. All ABAWDs will not need all of the available services but will be assessed for determination of the services to most benefit the ABAWD in the job search process.

Some of the services are provided in a group setting, while some are provided in individual interviews with One-Stop Career Center staff.

The services offered under Job Search, and a description of each is as follows: a. Career Center Orientation: Interview or meeting to orient client to Career Center services and provide information about the availability of, access to, and participation in services. May include tour of Resource Room, demonstration of Alabama Job Link (AJL), demonstration of self-assessment software and availability of Labor Market Information. Labor market information is important to recipients in the Job Search process, as it provides information about occupational demand, high wage—high demand jobs, education/skills required, wage data, etc. for the state and by geographic region. b. Job Search: Interview to develop a plan for the client's job search. Includes assessment of client's work history, education, interests, supportive service needs, barriers to employment, and eligibility for services. Plan includes steps to achieve employment objective. Information on available jobs can be found on the ADoL Job Link system accessible in the Career Centers. c. Resume Preparation: Client is provided instruction on the content and format of resumes and cover letters and provided assistance in the development of both documents. d. Job Shop: Short seminars to provide clients with information to improve their job-search knowledge and skills. Subjects will include: self-assessment, employment applications, resumes, employment interviews, and job search methods. e. Referral for Training: Interviewer refers a client to educational or training services to develop competency in basic literacy skills or job skills in order to secure employment. f. Individual Employment Plan: Interview with client who is determined not-job-ready to develop a plan to improve employability by addressing identified barriers to employment. Planning may include career exploration, education, training and/or job search activities. g. Case Management: Interview to assist client's in resolving issues related to occupational choice, change or adjustment to include barriers to employment such as lack of educational achievement and/or basic skills proficiency, lacking or erratic employment history, family problems, or other factors precluding full employment. h. Referral for Support Services Referral for services not available from the one-stop partners to include food, shelter, health, transportation, veterans agencies, and financial counseling and services.

2. An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;

The contractual cost of this component is \$950,236, plus state agency staff and other costs of \$203,481 and overall state agency E&T operational costs of \$40,000, for an annual total of \$1,193,717. This equates to an estimate of \$85.38 per participant. Revisions will be made when better estimates of actual participants are obtained.

Budget Details for JOB SEARCH

State Agency Salary & Benefits = \$198,481

State Agency Other Costs = \$5,000

Participant Reimbursement Transportation & Other Costs = \$481,476

Program Cost – \$950,000

Total Component Costs = \$1,635,193

Overall State Agency E&T Operational Costs = \$40,000

Total State E&T Costs = \$1,675,193

3. The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;

An ABAWD waiver exists for the following counties, Barbour, Clarke, Choctaw, Conecuh, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox. The estimated individuals in these counties is 5,000, and the waiver is good through December 31, 2016.

4. The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;

All participants will be voluntary, and we are focusing in on ABAWDS.

5. The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

13,980 volunteers are expected to participate.

6. The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered

Ten 10 counties are to be served with Job Search initially, with additional counties to be added.

7. The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

Electronic counting of work registrants will be used.

8. The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS-583

Manual submission of the quarterly Form FNS–583 will be used.

9. The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i);

Alabama has an automated system that provides a non-duplicated count.

10. The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;

Alabama's participants are voluntary; noncompliance is not an issue.

11. The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;

Alabama contracts with DOL in ten (10) counties; formal interagency agreements are in place.

12. The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;

A letter has been sent to the Porch Creek tribal organization located Escambia County outlining our plans and asking for their input.

13. If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period

Noncompliance is not an issue as participation is voluntary in Alabama.

14. The payment rates for child care established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.

Child Care is not available in Alabama's E&T plan.

15. The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.

The combined amount for Alabama is \$481,476.

16. Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

Only transportation costs are reimbursed at \$25.00 per year per participant.

(b) Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)

A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)* subject to the 3-month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:
*7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients

Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;

Alabama is not a pledge state.

2. Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge

Alabama is not a pledge state.

3. A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements

Alabama is not a pledge state.

4. A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs .

Alabama is not a pledge state.

5. Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population

Alabama is not a pledge state.

6. Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement.

Alabama is not a pledge state.

(c) Plan Modification

If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.*

*7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(5)(E) as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014 .

Funding Disclaimer

Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.

Jobs for Veterans' State Grants

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG

To promote the hiring and retention of eligible veterans and eligible persons:

1. Alabama will move ahead with plans under the Accelerate Alabama initiative that will include the services provided by Alabama Career Centers affiliated with the Americans Job Center network to include veterans and eligible persons with resources and emphasis for technical training and higher education. 2. Increase business services outreach to Federal defense contractors and subcontractors, such as URS Group Inc. of Mobile for work on the Air Force's KC-46C; Northrop Grumman of Huntsville for research and development services in support of integrated missile defense; Boeing Co. for work on Army helicopters; L-3 Coleman Aerospace of Huntsville from the Missile Defense Agency. 3. Expand the AIDT training and job opportunities listing on the Alabama Job Link (AJL) <https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/> to increase priority referral of veterans and eligible persons to jobs and job training. 4. Increase employer outreach in the automotive manufacturing sector which employs many Recently Separated Veterans and pays the highest average wages of any manufacturing industry in Alabama – nearly \$75,000. 5. Encourage more veterans to enroll in the State's workforce Job-driven training, in trade, manufacturing, and shipbuilding apprenticeship programs offered through the Alabama Industrial Development Training to increase the entered employment rate of Recently Separated Veterans and long term unemployed, older veterans. 6. Expand innovative partnerships such as the initiative of the Alabama Career Center in Mobile, American Job Center affiliate that is training veterans in the welding training and certification program under a joint-venture by AIDT with the ship building industry. Historically, veterans who complete training are placed in well-paying and stable jobs.

(b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance;

Planned Deployment of Grant-Funded Staff

JVSG funds allocated to Alabama this year will support 25 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) DVOP positions and 10 FTE LVER positions. All LVER and DVOP representatives are state merit system employees. LVERs and DVOPs will be assigned to Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center (AJC) network, and other service delivery locations where mediated labor exchange activities are provided to the public, to ensure maximum effectiveness and complete integration of grant activities and services on behalf of veterans.

As described in Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41, LVERs and DVOPs have distinctly different roles and responsibilities in support of Priority of Service to veterans and Eligible Persons in service delivery programs carried out by the AJC. The activities and functions of LVERs and DVOPs funded under the grant will be carried out in strict adherence to the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter(s) 41 and 42, as amended

by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112–56, and will be subject to the provisions of the grant, and supplementary operating requirements that may be promulgated through Veterans Program Letters (VPLs), and related guidance from Veterans Employment and Training Service. All LVER and DVOP representatives as required by the Jobs for Veterans Act, as amended, will attend training at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) within 18 months of their hire date. Applications for NVTI mandated training will be submitted by the AJC manager to the State Director, Veterans Employment and Training Service, or designated NVTI coordinator, within one month of the hire date. LVER and DVOP assignments are made in consultation with the DVET.

DVOPs are to be located in proximity to community organizations and other entities serving veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE), and where DVOP outreach is effective at locating veterans and eligible persons with SBEs in need of intensive services and case management, as prescribed in current VPL guidance, such as locations within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that provide medical and benefits services, other U.S. Department of Labor grant recipients offering services to homeless veterans and veterans transitioning through ex-offender programs, with an emphasis on extending outreach to veterans and eligible persons who are educationally and economically disadvantaged. DVOPs assigned to work for managers of Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network will accept only veteran-clients referred by a career center representative and determined to have an SBE, as per the definition.

Alabama will fill LVER–DVOP vacancies by selecting applicants from hiring registers for the Employment Service provided by the State Personnel Department that only list qualified veterans and disabled veterans. Alabama, in consultation with the DVET, will immediately fill unplanned and unscheduled LVER–DVOP vacancies on a temporary basis with individuals who are currently in staff and are statutorily qualified for the LVER or DVOP position until a qualified veteran or disabled veteran can be hired on a permanent basis through the state merit system. This approach will help to keep planned expenditures on target and ensure that grant funds are applied at the planned locations as intended for providing services to veterans.

DVOP Staff

DVOP duties will be assigned in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A, as amended by VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112–56. DVOPs are Employment Service (ES) staff, with principle duties to carry out intensive services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans, and the following priority in the provision of services: (a) Special disabled veterans, (b) Other disabled veterans, (c) Other eligible veterans determined as priority, taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphasis for covered veterans under federal contracts. DVOPs service only veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) as defined by current VPL guidance. Veterans using self-service to register on the Internet-based Alabama Job Link (AJL) will be identified from reports prepared for AJC managers to determine if the veterans may have a SBE and could benefit from DVOP follow up and intensive services.

DVOP Roles and Responsibilities Listed by Task and Activities:

Intensives Services

- DVOPs will facilitate intensive services under a strategy of case management to veterans with special employment and training needs due to a SBE, as defined by current VPL guidance. These services may include any combination of services listed below, but at a minimum, an assessment of employability and a written employment plan are required in a program of case management. All services are to be documented including, assessment, career guidance, and coordination with supportive services, referrals to job training, and referral of “Job Ready” clients to career center job

placement specialists. • DVOPs prioritize services to veterans with SBEs who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, veterans enrolled as clients in a program of vocational rehabilitation administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans who are homeless, and other veterans identified as needing individual assistance and case management as determined by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training Services. • DVOPs develop and promote apprenticeship and OJT positions for veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide technical assistance to community-based organizations for employment and training services to veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide vocational and career guidance to veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide ES case management to veterans with significant obstacles and challenges to employment.

Outreach

- DVOPs will conduct outreach activities or providing services at alternative service locations to locate candidates who could benefit from intensive services and market these services to potential clients in programs and places such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP), and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and Vet Centers, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of those who are unable to obtain employment through core services.

Referral to Training

- DVOPs will work with Homeless shelters, civic and community agencies, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners in the American Job Center network, vocational rehabilitation agencies, the Alabama Industrial and Development Training (AIDT) program, and other training providers to locate and refer veterans to job-driven training and apprenticeship programs AIDT program. Veterans having a SBEs will be referred to DVOPs for intensive services. DVOPs will also be assigned to orientation sessions hosted by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) to assist potential VR&E clients to make good choices in their Chapter 31 occupational and career training.

LVER Staff

LVER duties will be assigned in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4104, as amended by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112–56, the Special Grant provisions of the JVSG, and VPL 03–14 and 04–14, to exclusively benefit veterans and eligible persons by promoting the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups, as well as those duties that facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans through the career center within the American Job Center (AJC) network of providers.

LVERs are assigned as team members in Business Service Units to (1) advocate for all eligible veterans and Eligible Persons served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in appropriate outreach activities such as job and career fairs, conducting job search workshops with employers, employer summits, coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for all veterans and Eligible Persons; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans through the labor exchange services offered under the Wagner–Peyser Act and the Jobs for Veterans Act, as amended (Ref. 20 CFR part 1010.)

The purpose of conducting outreach to employers in the area is to develop relationships, jobs, training, or training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons and the purpose of conducting seminars and establishing self-directed job search work groups is to ensure a greater number of

eligible veterans and eligible persons have the skills needed to find employment. Specific duties of LVERs are negotiated with the DVET.

Alabama LVER Roles and Responsibilities Listed by Tasks and Activities:

Expanding Capacity of the Workforce development System to Assist Veterans

- LVERs will assist and facilitate in expanding the capacity of other career center partners in the American Job Centers in providing assistance and training to veterans and Eligible Persons by taking actions to ensure veterans are provided easier access to the full range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. • LVERs will work with other workforce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize, and respond to these needs. Responsibilities may include the following activities: Train other staff and service delivery system partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues and promote the participation of veterans in employment and training, and refer veterans to training, supportive services, and educational opportunities with Career Center (One-Stop) partners and other community providers. Advocate for Veterans with Employers with Educational and Training Providers, Unions, Apprenticeships Programs, and the Business Community to Promote Employment and Training Opportunities for Veterans.

- AJCs will promote job-driven apprenticeship training to veterans under the GoBuildAlabama initiative offered through unions and the Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute. Established by the Alabama Legislature to increase outreach to unemployed and under-employed, and expand the involvement of community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and veterans' organizations, the GoBuildAlabama program is an excellent opportunity for veterans to enter OJT and apprenticeship in the trades, in addition to employment and training programs funded under WIOA. • LVERs will maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. • LVERs will plan and participate in job fairs and employer summits to promote veterans. • LVERs will encourage streamlining of credentialing and licensing for veterans with military training comparable to the requirements of credentialing agencies and entities.

Outreach to Employers on Behalf of Veterans

- LVERs as team members of Business Service Units will develop employer relations contact plans for career centers in the AJC network, to include identifying federal contractors and recruit jobs for all veterans from local employers. • LVERs will establish, maintain, or facilitate regular contact with employers to develop employment and training openings for all veterans. • LVERs will monitor job listings by federal contractors and encourage the referral of qualified veterans who may not have been referred to those job by the Alabama Job Link automated notification/referral system.

Monitor, Evaluate and Advise Management on Services and Training to Veterans

- LVERs are administratively responsible to managers of employment services provided by career centers within the AJC network, and will assist the managers in developing quarterly reports regarding compliance with law and regulations in respect to special services and Priority of Service (P-O-S) for eligible veterans and Covered Persons. Consistent with Special Provisions of the LVER grant and Title 38 USC, quarterly reports will be forwarded by AJC managers, through the line of administrative authority, to the Director of Veterans Employment and Training (DVET) regarding compliance with federal law and regulations with respect to special services and Priority of Service for eligible veterans and Covered Persons in the provision of employment services and training, as per 20 CFR part 1010. • LVERs will perform self-appraisal of procedures and outcomes with respect to negotiated performance measures and compliance with the law, applicable regulations, and state

directives and federal grant provisions. • LVERs will analyze recorded performance data made available to them through the AJC Veterans Reports for the career center/AJC to which assigned to determine accomplishments or shortcomings towards meeting the state's negotiated performance measures for outcomes.

(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's employment service delivery system or one-stop delivery system partner network;

Program Integration and Leveraged Resources

The partnership agreements among all service providers located within the Alabama Career Center in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network and other strategic outstation activities have been established or modified to include common focus on services to veterans. LVER and DVOP services and program activities will be under the auspices of the Employment Service Division of the Alabama Department of Labor, the JVSG grantee and operator of the statewide network of American Job Centers, and a primary partner with all agencies in the Alabama Workforce Development system that includes all approved training providers in the Alabama Career Center system. LVERs and DVOPs work directly for employment service managers and are tasked to assist managers in the evaluation as to the degree of utilization of all services and training by veterans. LVERs will assist in providing training on Priority of Services to partners in statewide network.

LVERs will be assigned activities to increase public awareness that eligible veterans and Covered Persons have Priority of Service, as defined under 20 CFR Part 1010, and will assist managers in the training of POS requirements to all career center partners, within the American Job Center network, and will monitor the effectiveness and coordination among all network partners in the following endeavors:

- Individual assessments of veterans for job preparedness, referral to supportive services, job training and outreach services, and improving access statewide and local labor market information.
- Cooperation among all agencies and programs providing services and assistance to veterans to promote maximum awareness and availability of benefits among veterans, particularly veterans who may need such services or assistance in gaining employment or job training.
- Participation in state workforce development training conferences and workshops with topics regarding priority services to veterans and marketing veterans to employers. The Governor of Alabama established the Alabama Workforce Council and appointed state leaders in business, industry, education and government, to improve collaboration between educators and employers so that job-seekers can identify and participate in job-driven training that fit the skill sets needed for jobs available in business and industry. The grantee, as a member of the council, will ensure that job-driven training will recognize corresponding military skill sets, thus encouraging the participation of veterans and separating service members.
- Assisting Federal agencies to recruit veterans, particularly disabled veterans and veterans described by the Veterans Employment Service for special emphasis under Title 38 U.S.C Chapter 42 and the grant provisions, and 20 CFR Part 1010 (Priority Service for Covered Persons; and special recruitment initiatives of veterans by individual Federal agencies.)

As provided for under Title 10 U.S.C., the Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network will provide assistance to military service members and eligible spouses in transition to civilian jobs and careers through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at several military facilities in Alabama, and will provide intensive services to veterans participating in vocational rehabilitation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (US DVA), as provided under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 31.

Alabama assigned a State Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC) to work directly with Employment Coordinators the US DVA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service to coordinate the referral of “Job Ready” veterans enrolled in vocational rehabilitation services under Chapter 31 of Title 38 U.S.C. to the American Job Center for assistance in gaining suitable employment consistent with their vocational rehabilitation plans. Policy for the delivery of Priority of Service by the State, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and the Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network include the following new or existing measures:

- The first point of contact for veterans and Eligible Persons seeking services from Alabama’s Career Center system in the American Job Center network is a representative from Employment Services.
- Those who access self-services through the Internet will complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for Priority of Service and training at any point of entry into the workforce development system.
- Additionally, AJC locations will use signage, graphics, and displays to create awareness of the policy that requires Priority of Service for eligible veterans and certain Eligible Spouses.

Partnerships and Alliances with Supportive Services

The State of Alabama has made a commitment to provide the best possible services to our nation’s military service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) by establishing the Alabama Executive Veterans Network (AlaVetNet) Commission through Executive Order 42 signed by Governor Robert Bentley on December 10, 2013. The Commission is comprised of the following state agencies: Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Mental Health, Alabama National Guard, Department of Labor, Serve Alabama, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Education, Department of Corrections, Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Department of Post-Secondary Education, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Public Health, Medicaid Agency, Law Enforcement Agency, Department of Human Resources, Department of Transportation, and Office of the Chief Justice.

The Executive Order requires the AlaVetNet Commission to study and evaluate all services in the state and direct at improving the well-being of SMVF in the areas of education, employment, health, homelessness and legal assistance. The Commission also included family services. The six committees functioning under its authority developed a Long Range Plan of Recommendations to assist SMVF in the areas of Behavioral Health, Education, Employment, Homelessness, Legal Assistance and Family Services. The statewide American Job Center network is an integral partner in the coordination of all state resources and services to assist SMVF which, to the extent possible, is to be based on using best practices and innovation. With regard to economic issues for veterans, the Commission set the following long range goals:

(1) Reduce veteran unemployment in Alabama to under 5%. (2) The Commission will focus on improving public/private partnerships, identifying barriers to Veteran’s employment, incentivize proactive hiring of veterans by recognizing employers, agencies, and organizations that demonstrate excellence in supporting veterans, formally develop a statewide veterans’ entrepreneurial initiative, and support efforts of the American Job Centers to partner with private organizations that can assist veterans to find good jobs and meaningful career opportunities. (3) The Commission will develop award incentives to recognize employers who make hiring veterans a priority, and proposes to support legislation that will expand the state’s tax incentives to companies who hire unemployed veterans. AlaVetNet will work with the AJC system to implement this and the other recommendations from the Commission. Alabama hosted a U.S. Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Conference at the State Capital to establish a permanent statewide coalition of services providers to assist wounded and seriously injured veterans. This very successful event was attended by representatives from nearly every state and federal agency and many community organizations sharing a common

commitment of assisting military service members and their families and returning veterans and their spouses. The conference was an excellent opportunity for the participants to become acquainted with each other's objectives, resources and services, and to discuss ways in which they could work together to assist wounded or injured military in their transition to civilian lives. As a result, the coalition agreed to develop working relationships and define ways to share resources, and to collaborate on how to assist specific individuals with challenging disabilities to become employed and re-established in their hometowns. The JVS grantee will continue to participate in this highly effective forum for assisting challenged veterans and their families to successfully cope with re-adjustment.

Integration of VR&E Programs

The VR&E Partnership is fully integrated into the statewide AJV network as required component of the LVER-DVOP grant (Veterans Program Letter No. 01-09, dated December 11, 2008). DVOP representatives will case manage all active VR&E clients referred from VR&E counselors, in addition to veterans with other significant barriers to employment (SBE). The standard case management requirement for DVOP representatives will be to document specific services required by an Employment Service directive. DVOP representatives' primary role with VR&E clients is to assist VR&E counselors and veteran-clients to develop career objectives and an effective employment plan. Other ES case management services to be documented include an assessment of vocational or training needs and economic considerations. Employment barriers with regard to the job search are to be described with the detail needed for carrying out successful job referrals or job development with potential employers.

Services, job referrals and contact with specific employers on behalf of clients are to be documented using the AJL case management screens. VR&E clients will have a services screen entry that identifies the client as "Job Ready" or "Not Job Ready", as determined by VR&E. Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service, VR&E staff members and DVOPs will share training opportunities to apply the policies and procedures outlined in the VR&E/VETS Technical Assistance Guide (VR&E TAG). VR&E and the Employment Service (ES) will continue to jointly develop team training to improve coordination of services.

Integration with other VETS' initiatives and Programs

Alabama will continue to conduct training sessions with LVERs, DVOPs and AJC managers on development of initiatives that will promote the hiring of returning and transitioning Alabama National Guard and Reservists and other veterans, such as participants in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops. The priority group in this effort are returning Alabama National Guard and Reservists, particularly those on medical hold and awaiting medical discharge. Alabama has a partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division, to ensure that eligible separating military personnel at Warrior Transition Units are afforded employment and training services. TAP is conducted by the VETS' contractor at the US Army installations at Fort Rucker and Redstone Arsenal.

Integration into statewide AJC Training

LVERs and DVOPs funded under the JVSG will be participating in many outreach, training, and supportive service opportunities that will require continuous professional upgrade of their skills and knowledge of resources that may be available to assist veterans. For that purpose, Alabama will budget based on review of projected cost of the projected allocation to conduct an annual Alabama Veterans' Training Conference. The training agenda will be developed in consultation with the

Alabama DVET and may include professional training provided the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), in accordance with VPL No. 06–09, or an annual professional training conference to improve LVER–DVOP skills/knowledge and to foster effective working relationships with workforce development partners and agencies in the AJC network. Appropriate NVTI Off–Site course(s) of instruction and the development of an agenda for an annual Alabama Veterans’ Training Conference will be in consultation with the DVET to ensure all NVTI training and conference agenda will be in keeping with our mission. Requests for NVTI Off–Site training will be submitted per VPL No. 06–09, or the latest guidance.

Special Efforts to Homeless Veterans

DVOP staff members in the AJC at the Alabama Career Center in Mobile have developed a partnership with the 15 Place Homeless Shelters in downtown Mobile, Alabama. Many agencies and volunteer groups have expanded the membership in this coalition, which is planning several Veterans’ Stand Down events across the state this year. DVOPs will provide Homeless Veterans with job development services, and other intensive services under the case management approach to identify basic needs regarding safety, health, and shelter. Follow–up case management services in this effort will include referral to employment and WIA training providers to identify individual training needs.

Other Homeless Veterans efforts are planned in the Birmingham area. DVOP staff members are organizers and active participants in the annual Metro Birmingham Alabama Homeless Veterans Stand Down, sponsored by the Birmingham VA and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter No. 4. Planning is coordinated each year with the VA Medical Center’s Stand Down event designed to “provide refuge from the streets.” Our agency is joining with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center staff, other federal agencies, military and veteran organizations, as well as community support, to provide homeless veterans and their families with basic healthcare services; assistance programs, mental health and spiritual counseling; clothing and sustenance within an encouraging and respectful environment. DVOPs in Birmingham are assigned to assist Homeless Veterans to acquire job training and work, under an agreement with the Alethia House, which recently was awarded a grant by VETS under Homeless Veterans Reintegration Act.

In North Alabama, the Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network are partners in planning an annual Homeless Veterans’ Stand Down in Huntsville, Alabama. This effort involves a large number of community and faith–based organizations, and is conducted simultaneously with a Veterans’ Day Job Fair. The AJC in Huntsville is a primary organizer for recruiting community action groups, churches, and volunteers to host networking opportunities and Job Search workshops conducted by DVOPs for Homeless and Dislocated Veterans. Information will be provided to homeless veterans on how to find employment opportunities in the locality and how to relate their skills and experience into new work in other industries and occupations.

The Dothan Career Center in the American Job Center network is a partner in planning an annual event with a community–based coalition, headed by representatives of the faith–based House of Benjamin Center, to provide a large scale Homeless Veterans’ Stand Down. With assistance from the Central Alabama Veterans’ Healthcare System, Homeless veterans will be provided health screening, medical and dental services, counseling opportunities and access to job search services. Food, personal services, and clothing donations are already pledged by several community agencies and local businesses.

In East Alabama, the Opelika Career Center in the American Job Center network, provides a staff member to serve on the planning committee for the annual Homeless Veterans and Veterans in

Need (HV/VIN) Stand Down in Columbus, Georgia, and assigns a DVOP to provide services during the event. Integration with Programs and Initiatives to Promote Veterans' Entrepreneurship

With regard to business and entrepreneurship opportunities for veterans, recent AJC training has resulted in new partnerships with organizations having resources to assist veterans open their own businesses and qualify for state tax breaks. A new American Express OPEN State of the Women-Owned Business Report ranks Alabama No. 8 in the nation in the growth of women-owned businesses over the past 17 years. Alabama is among the states leading the nation in deploying funds from the Small Business Credit Initiative offered by the U.S. Treasury. A study commissioned by USAA Insurance and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program says Huntsville and Montgomery, Alabama, are two of the best medium-sized metro areas for job-seeking veterans of the Post 9/11 era. This is an important finding, given that since 9/11, the Alabama National Guard has called more than 21,000 personnel to active duty.

By Executive Order, the Governor of Alabama created the Alabama Executive Veterans Network (AlaVetNet), commissioned to study ways to improve services to those who have served our country in uniform, in the key areas of education, employment, health, homelessness, and legal assistance, and a new state law is designed to facilitate the ability of discharged military service members to receive licensure and academic credit for military education, training, and experience.

Integration into Efforts to Promote Development of Job-driven Employment and Training Opportunities for Veterans

The Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center network as a key member in the Alabama Veterans Executive Network (AlaVetNet) will assist in the implementation of the Long Range Plan with the Alabama Business Council, Small Business Administration and the Alabama Community College System to consolidate and streamline job-driven training for veterans and separating military service members based on the needs of business and industry and the recommendations from employers, veteran employee mentoring programs, and feedback from a series of Regional Employer Summits being planned for 2015.

The statewide American Job Center network as a partner with public and private agencies in the AlaVetNet will encourage bridge training with community colleges and will work with the Alabama National Guard to offer all veterans to participate Alabama National Guard's Civilian Job Training program.

(d) The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;

The intent of the Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award Program is to encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training, and job placement services for veterans, and recognize eligible employees in the American Job Center (AJC) network for excellence in providing such services and training, or for having made demonstrative improvements in service delivery and training for veterans. The Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award program emphasizes fostering and strengthening partnerships that excel in services to veterans. As per Title 38 U.S.C., Part 4112, and the JVSG Special provisions, states are to set aside one percent of their grant award to provide Veterans' Performance Incentive Awards.

Eligibility for the Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award

This award is for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and the State's workforce development employees who provide services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act. As defined in the Alabama Labor Administrative Code, § 480-2-1-.03, the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor is responsible for the awarding of cash awards only to eligible recipients, and for the administration of the awards program, pursuant to law and the Special Provisions of the JVSG.

The Alabama Veterans Incentive Award Program as approved for Alabama stipulates that recipients of Veterans Performance Incentive Awards will be individuals. Therefore, to nominate an entire unit, such as an Alabama Career Center, or a specific unit (such as the Business Services unit), the nomination must list the members and show what contribution was made by each member in the performance or accomplishment being considered for the award. Nominees must be funded from a grant or other funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Selection of Veterans Performance Incentive Awards

Selection of awardees may involve evaluating both objective and subjective data (Ref: Veterans Program Letter (VPL) No. 02-07. Nominees must have demonstrated outstanding efforts in providing employment, job and vocational training, job placement, and other employment-related services to United States veterans or separating military personnel. Services to veterans having especially significant barriers to employment and job training, such as homeless veterans, wounded veterans or seriously injured veterans, will be afforded extra weight in the selection criteria. The nominations may include a combination of performance data, examples of team building, motivation, descriptions of improvements made to veterans' employment or training programs, and illustrations of positive feedback from job seeking veterans and business customers. Priority consideration for a performance incentive award will be provided to providers of outreach and services to veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE). As required under the JVSG, Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Awards will be obligated no later than September 30 of the Fiscal Year and liquidated no later than December 31.

(e) The populations of veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);

Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)

Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job center (AJC) network will provide comprehensive employment, training, and career placement services to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of Internet-based job services and personal assistance at Alabama Career Centers in the statewide AJC network. Alabama has more than 32,000 residents currently serving in the Armed Forces and of that nearly 13,000 in the National Guard and Reserve component. Alabama National Guard ranked fifth in numbers of troops deployed.

The Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network operates under the auspices of the Alabama Department of Labor, the state agency responsible for providing

employment services and related services to veterans, and is authorized by the Governor to make application for funds to carry out the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) to carry out the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) enables veterans to use self-services, including registration. This approach enables specialists in the DVOP to review the registrations and resumes submitted by veterans on-line and then contact veterans who appear to need further assistance. Alabama DVOP specialists prioritize their efforts with veterans who are facing significant barriers to employment (SBE) in securing employment, including veterans who appear to be having difficulty in using the Alabama Job Link (AJL) automated system.

The assignment of DVOP specialists at specific Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network is based on a strategy to ensure veterans with SBEs are priority customers in the Alabama Workforce Development system. Although many veterans can and will use the internet-based self-registration and various self-service features, veterans with SBEs are provided intensive services. Veterans who enter the Alabama Workforce Development System at an AJC (Alabama Career Center), are served initially by career center specialists. For veterans who appear to have an SBE, career center specialists will offer additional services, to include referral to a DVOP who will provide intensive services and case management services to veterans having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), as defined by Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03-14, (VPL) 03-14 changes 1 and 2, and VPL 04-14 or any future VPLs providing guidance on SBEs:

- All veterans enrolled in the Five-track Employment Program administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. As covered in a separate agreement with VR&E, a client determined to be "Job-Ready" by VR&E will be referred by a VR&E Employment Coordinator to the state's Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), who will refer the Job Ready VR&E client to an appropriate AJC manager for case management and job placement services.

Veterans with SBEs will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual's employability planning.

Locating Priority Group Veterans

Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

Employment Service Case Management by DVOP Specialists

Standard DVOP case management practices will include: 1. Assisting veteran-clients in development of job objectives and a resume. 2. Identifying significant barriers or challenges to employment. 3. Referring or assisting veteran-clients to appropriate supportive services. 4. Determining veteran-clients' economic need. 5. Identifying training or educational goals. 6. Documenting contacts with employers on behalf of individual clients. 7. Maintaining current contact information. 8. Documenting job referrals and job development for employment, internship, or on-the-job-training (OJT) opportunities for individual clients.

DVOP representatives will use the AJL case management feature to load cases into the “My Cases” portfolio. Case management review of the caseload for every DVOP representative under the AJL “My Cases” feature will be conducted by ES managers on a quarterly basis to ensure that the adherence to required practices and privacy concerns. As a self-assessment measure, ES managers will review the “My Cases” portfolio of their DVOP representatives to identify effective performances (best practices and success stories) and shortcomings in services needing correction.

DVOPs will use reports provided from the Alabama Job Link to outreach and contact Recently Separated Veterans, ages 18 to 24, and veterans receiving Ex-service members Unemployment Benefits (UCX) for the purpose of offering job placement or job training services. Veterans responding to this outreach will be provided assessment services to determine their readiness to apply for employment opportunities in their area of choice with their current skills. Assessment will include evaluating the additional skills needed for employment with employers having those jobs. This approach provides veterans with customer choice as to specific occupations for which to begin training. Veterans are also acquainted with the AJC resources that are available to pursue job-driven training in emerging industries, such as fast growing jobs in Green Industries.

(f) How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;

In affiliation with the American Job Center (AJC) network, the Alabama Veterans’ Services Program within the Alabama Career Center system shall offer comprehensive employment and career placement service to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of self-service Internet-based job services and direct assistance at AJCs throughout the state. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) system, as a point of entry for self-service registration, provides a priority service notification to veterans and covered persons at https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/mn_veterans_dsp.cfm

Veterans and persons entitled to priority services and training complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for priority services and training at the point of entry into the workforce development system. Veterans who can use AJL competently are encouraged to self-register and make maximum use of the automated access to resources. As a core service, career center specialists review applications and resumes submitted by veterans and covered persons who register for employment using self-service, to ensure that veterans’ applications clearly state job objectives and show meaningful information with regards to work history, education and training. Because veterans’ resumes are listed first in the search results and are annotated with an American flag, employers can quickly locate qualified veterans for job openings. To ensure that veterans’ receive priority in referral to job openings, the Alabama Job Link system provides 24-hour email alerts to veterans for any job listing that matches their resumes. The automated system to select qualified candidates for job openings is programmed to refer only qualified veterans in the first 24 hours of the listing, unless no qualified veterans are available.

Priority service is also provided when veterans, or others eligible for priority, are identified at intake when registering for services at any AJC, or other service delivery points. Career center specialists will ensure that each veteran completing a full application will have properly recorded their skills, education, training, job or career interests, work experience, licenses or certifications, employment availability, contact information, and other vital information. Additionally, AJCs will use signage, graphics, and displays to inform veterans and Covered Persons of priority service (as described under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 42 and 20 CFR Part 1010) and as applicable to all US DOL-funded employment services and training.

Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans' Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans' Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons. All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans' Priority in the State WIA and Wagner-Peyser Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans Program Letters addressing DVOP-LVER Roles and Responsibilities.

The Alabama strategy leverages improvements in technology to enable career center specialists to locate and review the resumes of veterans using on-line self-services for the purpose of offering helpful advice or suggestions on presenting their skills and abilities to prospective employers, because the AJL data system is designed to support employers searching for key words, then automatically flags the resumes of veterans and Covered Persons who are identified as qualified candidates within the parameters entered by the employer. This advantage offers veterans and Covered Person a Priority in Service and enables an employer to contact them directly, with or without a referral through a posted job order.

To ensure priority of service is being provided to Veterans the JVSG Coordinator/LVER's will use State Performance Data to conduct analysis of referral to DOL funded training programs, job referrals and Career Center services. In Alabama priority is given to Veterans in the use of Career Center resources i.e. Computers and internet access either by having a separate resource room or by designating computers for Veteran priority of service.

(g) How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and one-stop delivery system partner staff:

1. job and job training individualized career services,

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly documented and effective. Jobs and job training will be provided as cited by paragraph (a) above.

2. employment placement services, and

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by

DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly documented and effective. Employment placement services will be provided as cited by paragraph (a) above.

3. job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons;

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly documented and effective. Job-driven training will be provided through OJT program, apprenticeship programs in conjunction with educational providers.

(h) The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff; and

Grant Funded Staff Name— Date Appointed —Training Completed Chapman, Greg — 04/01/1998— 2/17/2009 Garner, Charlotte Y.— 10/16/2014 — 05/08/2015 Daugharty, William— 10/01/2010— 05/10/2011 Sneed, Nicarde— 10/16/2014— 06/15/2016 Harold, Walker— 06/02/2015— 03/18/2016 Brothers, Johnny— 12/01/1994— 12/5/2011 Jackson, LC— 03/03/2014— 4/29/2016 Tatum, Terris— 10/01/1979— 1/29/2016 Gossett, Robert— 10/16/2014— 09/27/2013 Merritt, Maxwell— 10/01/2010— 9/12/2012 Drake, James “Dave”— 10/07/2013— 11/7/2014 Smith, Susan B.— 04/01/2014— 08/08/2014 Sasnette, Gerry— 02/01/2015— 07/31/2015 Flemons, Carlston— 02/18/2014— 8/1/2014 Scannell, Brian— 12/01/2010— 5/13/2011 William, Hardy— 06/02/2015— 9/22/2015 Kidd, Mae F.— 12/29/2014— 09/04/2015 Reeves, Steven B— 12/22/2014— 12/22/2014 Hyatt, Catina L.— 02/04/2015— 02/04/2016 Sterling, Joel— 3/06/2015— 07/31/2015 Owen, Lisa Diane— 06/04/2013— 3/21/2014 Bryan, Renaldo— 08/20/2012— 8/16/2013 Treadwell, Robbie A— 06/17/2013— 2/14/2014 Perkins, Dan— 06/02/2015— 01/11/2016 Warren, Phillip— 11/01/2014— 09/04/2015 Bowen, Nicholas— 10/01/2010— 04/29/2016 Turberville, Irvin— 08/01/2014— 06/05/2015 Cieutat, Donal(DVOP/ISC)— 02/01/2011— 06/24/2012

(i) Such additional information as the Secretary may require.

At the time of plan submission, no addition information was requested by the Secretary.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

At minimum, in the SCSEP stand-alone submission and the SCSEP portion of the Combined State Plan, States should comprehensively cover the following elements.

(a) Economic Projections and Impact

States must:

1. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older

workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))(May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)

The American workforce will shift dramatically in the years ahead. Many projections indicate by the year 2020, there will be more Americans over the age of 65 than 18 years or under. Alabama will be affected by this workforce shift. The mature worker is a resource that states cannot afford to lose. As Thomas Nelson, Chief Operating Officer at AARP said, "The mature workforce is undoubtedly one of the greatest untapped resources of developed countries. Engaging these workers should be of the highest priority." Alabama could not agree more. ADSS and its partner agencies will strive to train and develop our mature workers to take advantage of these future employment opportunities.

According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Labor Market Information Division (LMI), the following are the top ten occupations that may potentially employ workers age 55 and older. This data is based on a 2011 Occupation/Employment Survey.

• Food Preparation and Serving Workers • Cashiers • Waiters and Waitresses • Retail Salespersons
• Truck Drivers • Janitors and Cleaners • Nurses Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants • Secretaries • Registered Nurses • Cooks

Many of these occupations, including food preparation, cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and retail sales start at the lower end of the pay scale. However, ADSS and its partner agencies will seek to place older workers in higher paying jobs where possible, including truck drivers, secretaries, and nurses.

2. Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

LMI projections indicate that Alabama will be substantially impacted by the "graying" of its population over the coming decade. In fact, its aging rate will outpace developments in most other states and the nation as a whole. The pool of persons ages 55 and older is projected to grow by 30% over the next ten years, compared to only a 4% growth rate for the 16–54 age group. Persons age 55 and older will account for nearly 75% of the projected increase in the nation's working-age population in the next decade, a historically unprecedented development. Alabama will be a part of this dramatic shift in the workforce.

What does this mean to the employment situation for older workers in Alabama? It means tremendous opportunity for seniors who want to stay in the workforce, or re-enter it after having retired. Many leading national corporations like Home Depot and CVS have discovered the value of the older worker, and have put programs in place to keep older workers on staff, or hire them back as consultants. Those companies that choose to ignore this "age wave" will struggle to keep their workforce intact in the very near future. Due to the decrease in the number of young people entering the workforce, jobs will be there for older workers who want to work.

These demographic and labor force changes in Alabama in the coming decade will pose a number of important challenges for the state's private and public sector employees and the workforce development system as a whole. In the years ahead, most employers will have to substantially increase the number of older workers on their payrolls and restructure their hiring practices to accommodate greater numbers of older workers.

Some of the strategies we will utilize include the following:

- Provide a single point of entry through our 350 plus Senior Centers in the state, who will work closely with the One Stop Career Centers.
- Develop training for employers that clearly defines the benefits of retaining mature workers.
- Conduct statewide outreach to mature adults to create a new way of thinking about retirement, and to make individuals aware of the educational opportunities available to the mature worker.
- Analyze possible disincentives that exist in the current system that would discourage the involvement of older Alabamians.

The Alabama Department of Senior Services SCSEP program will strive to improve the employability of our seniors, and extend the work lives of older Alabamians, especially the economically disadvantaged.

3. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))

The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations LMI Division has provided a “New Hires by Industry” report which lists the top ten industries employing workers 55 and older in Alabama.

The top ten industries are the following:

- Administrative and Support Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Ambulatory Health Care Service
- Food Services
- Specialty Trade Contractors
- Truck Transportation
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- General Merchandise Stores
- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers
- Construction

Alabama has analyzed the state’s occupations projections. We identified those occupations providing significant employment opportunities for SCSEP participants due to growth or high

turnover. In identifying these occupations, ADSS considered the profiles of the SCSEP participants being served, including their employment history, educational level, and work skills as well as the particular challenges of those most-in-need. Consequently, Alabama concentrated on occupations requiring short-term or moderate-term on-the-job-training.

Overall, Alabama's workforce will increase an annual average growth of 1.35 percent, which is slightly higher than the nation's 1.23 percent projected growth. Many of the occupational titles appropriate for SCSEP participants are in growing industries. For example, healthcare occupations will continue to grow at a fast pace due to the aging of the state's population. Healthcare and social assistance employment will continue to grow over the next decade. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.

Other industries exhibiting significant growth are the office and administrative support occupations, food services, and retail.

State Grantee will work collaboratively to address issues ensuring host agency assignments are truly providing skills training to meet the needs of both participants and employers. Sub-grantees will continue to utilize the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), in partnership with the participant and host agency supervisor, ensuring community service employment assignments are providing skills training that meet the needs of the participant and host agency. Sub-grantees will monitor participants at least once every six months at their community service employment assignments. During those visits, sub-grantee staff will review and update the IEP with both the participant and host agency supervisor.

Sub-grantees will continue to monitor the training to ensure participants will be prepared for unsubsidized employment through the acquisition of transferable skills in demand by local employers. In addition, where applicable, sub-grantees, in partnership with participants, will develop IEPs that combine community service employment with other permissible training (e.g., classroom training or on-the-job experience (OJE) in the private for-profit sector) as funding permits.

While realizing some seniors may not be best suited for many of the manufacturing and construction jobs in the state, there will be other opportunities for mature workers to "back fill" jobs in industries showing significant growth. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.

Alabama's continued economic growth cannot be realized without including mature workers in workforce planning and training efforts.

(b) Service Delivery and Coordination

States must:

1. Provide a description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

(A) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))

SCSEP is a mandated WIOA partner. Alabama's SCSEP looks forward to improving our coordination and collaboration with Alabama's WIOA during the next four years by looking to implement the following strategies to benefit SCSEP participants:

1. Identify training for seniors in soft and occupational skills including those seniors with disabilities.
2. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify financial assistance and financial planning supportive services for SCSEP participants;
3. Work with the WIOA and One Stop System to identify senior friendly user technology and identify resources to secure the technology, such as WorkKeys, as a career readiness tool for participants;
4. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify and encourage SCSEP participant participation in work-related training and education activities;
5. Identify literacy resources in Alabama and work to build partnerships and improve coordination of these resources with WIOA and SCSEP; encourage participation by SCSEP participants in these programs.

(B) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities to be carried out in the State under the other titles of the OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(h))

SCSEP state grantees are co-located with the Area Agencies on Aging and the Regional Planning and Development Commissions/Councils of Governments (COGs). The AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's have networks of partners, stakeholders, sub-grantees and member governments which are ideal locations for training and employment. A traditional partnership is reflected in the United Way Agencies that have been a major source of both training and employment. New and emerging partners are the community foundations which are assuming a regional character that approximate the regional service areas of AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's. The community foundations are creating networks of partnerships which they fund; that overlap the SCSEP, AAA, Regional Commission and COG partnerships and have the potential of being a source for training and employment. SCSEP is a part of an emerging trend of regionalism and networking that has become the new template for both public and nonprofit agencies.

The purpose of SCSEP is to provide training opportunities for older individuals who want to re-enter the workforce. Gaining additional or enhanced job skills improves their employability. Job training is provided by host agencies that are either 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organizations or government agencies. SCSEP provides valuable training opportunities while increasing the capacity of these host agencies to fulfill their missions.

The mission and goals of SCSEP and its many host agencies overlap the mission and outreach of other OAA funded activities and programs. For example, one of the primary missions of OAA funded entities is to be the single-point-of-entry (or "no wrong door") for older or disabled consumers. Frequently, consumers have needs that can only be met monetarily. The network of host agencies working with SCSEP enhances the capacity of the aging network to meet these needs and make

good referrals to host agencies that may provide direct or indirect financial assistance. In addition, the consumer may see employment as an option to meet income needs.

Many OAA activities are coordinated under the Aging & Disability Resource Center, (ADRC) including training, cross-training, and outreach. The following actions will be taken to enhance the partnership between OAA (AoA, CMS) funded programs, host agencies, and other community partners:

Goal: To coordinate SCSEP activities with the activities of other OAA funded programs

Objective 1: ADSS will take the lead to encourage intra-agency cross-training that will increase staff members' knowledge of all OAA funded programs and activities, thereby increasing the coordination of services and activities.

Objective 1.1: ADSS will develop training materials for each OAA funded program.

Objective 1.2: ADSS will provide cross-training opportunities and also develop testing to gauge the success of cross-training. Training may be in the form of webinars, seminars, joint-program meetings, etc. Testing may be web-based, multiple choice, standardized, or other forms.

Objective 1.3: ADSS will implement team meetings as needed, where Project Directors, Program Managers, Program Coordinators, and other staff can discuss planned activities, program needs, and client needs.

By facilitating communication among programs and program coordinators, ADSS will ensure that activities get the maximum "bang for the buck." For example, if the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is planning an outreach, then SCSEP can participate in this outreach or, at the very least, provide intake forms or materials for distribution to its target population. Another example: if SCSEP is planning a job fair and wants assistance with publicity, the nutrition program can include a flier to the senior center managers or include an article in the monthly nutrition newsletter.

Objective 2: ADSS will take the lead to encourage inter-agency cross training among its major partners.

All grantees will continue to develop partnerships and collaborate with other public and private entities that bring quality and valuable resources to the table, for the benefit of the participants. We have working relationships with faith-based organizations in the community serving low-income individuals who need supportive services, including training and employment. As we learn of other agencies that benefit our participants, we will engage with them to establish partnerships that advance each of our missions.

(C) Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

ADSS will continue to coordinate with partner agencies to enhance services to older Alabamians. Some examples of programs and partners that serve our seniors include the following:

The Alabama Department of Human Resources operates the JOBS Program to help recipients of Family Assistance (FA) find and keep jobs. This includes supportive services such as transportation

and clothes. This help is available to all recipients of FA regardless of age. In addition, many counties have a JOBS Task Force where they pull together civic and faith based groups, employment agencies and employers to help individuals get jobs. These groups are open to any interested individual, program or agency and participation is encouraged. Job readiness classes funded by DHR are available in a variety of counties and are open to anyone below 200% of the federal poverty line. These classes vary in length from a few days to four weeks and cover a wide range of topics. Emphasis is on how to find a job and the soft skills needed to keep a job.

The Adult Protective Services Division and County Departments work to protect elderly and disabled adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to prevent unnecessary institutionalization. DHR also partners with the Job Access Reverse Commute grant (JARC). DHR currently provides TANF match money to both the Department of Transportation and ADSS to provide transportation to low-income Alabamians.

Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, medical, and health care, education, and other community services and amenities. Efficient and affordable transportation services provide seniors independence to quality of life activities.

Currently SAFETEA-LU, the federal transit law requires projects selected for financial assistance under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom (NF), and the Elderly Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs be derived from a coordinated transportation plan. Coordination plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Plans are developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public. The Alabama Association of Regional Councils has produced twelve coordinated transportation plans that include all of the regional councils respective planning areas. Plans are updated every four years.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is the designated state unit recognized by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to deliver independent living (IL) services to older adults who are blind in the State of Alabama. The ADRS has a long history of providing rehabilitation teaching services for seniors who are blind. Within ADRS, the Older Alabamians System of Information and Services Program, referred to as the OASIS Program, provides IL services to older adults with visual impairments.

The OASIS Program is designed to meet the needs of both rural and urban segments of the population of elders who are visually impaired throughout Alabama.

The overall goal of the OASIS Program is to enhance the level of independence among the State's elderly population who are blind or visually impaired. To be eligible for the OASIS program individuals must be age 55 or older, reside in the State of Alabama, and be blind or functionally visually impaired.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), the largest division within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, helps Alabamians with disabilities achieve independence through employment. VRS provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist adults with disabilities in becoming employed.

To be eligible for VRS services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment and must be able to benefit from services in terms of going to work. For Alabamians with disabilities, VRS represents much more than a monetary return. Much

like the SCSEP program, VRS helps clients gain employment, which creates pride, dignity and independence for our seniors.

The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Volunteer Service coordinates the AmeriCorps State program and also works closely with local faith-based and community organizations particularly those involved in disaster preparedness and response. Through the network of AmeriCorps State programs annually hundreds of volunteers are engaged in communities across Alabama serving to meet critical needs.

AmeriCorps programs engage people of all ages and they actively recruit people with disabilities. Other national service programs operating in the State of Alabama include Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA.

(D) Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

Older workers and the pre-existing programs authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA), including Alabama's SCSEP, are now considered part of Alabama's comprehensive workforce development system. Alabama's SCSEP is an integral partner in the Alabama workforce development delivery system. This participation offers an unprecedented opportunity to assess the needs of mature and older workers in a unified and coordinated manner, at a time when those workers represent a dominant portion of the workforce. Older workers are likely to need and seek workforce development services in order to allow them to remain in the workforce at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP participation in Alabama's workforce development delivery system affords new opportunities to improve services to older workers overall.

For those who need to remain part of (and even participate in training and retraining activities) the state's civilian labor force, their ability to use the workforce development system effectively will be critical to improving their skills and remaining in the labor force at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP plans to continue participation in Alabama's major labor market and job training initiatives.

(E) Actions the State will take to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

All SCSEP operators in Alabama shall, to the extent feasible, establish and maintain cooperative relationships and working linkages with other employment and training programs, to include activities conducted under the Workforce Investment Act and with affiliated agencies concerned with senior citizens. A major objective of coordination is to avoid the duplication of services and expand employment opportunities for senior workers. It is also desirable to provide a variety of services and training opportunities that respond to the needs of senior workers by linking them with services and programs provided by the Area Agencies on Aging.

To make certain the State Plan is inclusive and as comprehensive as possible, organizations engaged in older worker activities and employment services for older workers were invited to provide information on their activities that would be pertinent to workforce development. Local senior worker programs will be encouraged to work collaboratively with WIOA One-Stop Centers to maximize the effectiveness of the training and placement process. ADSS is a partner in the Workforce Investment Board's delivery of workforce development services. Entities responsible for WIOA activities will continue collaborating to create a delivery system that enhances access to services and improves

employment outcomes for individuals receiving those services. SCSEP participants train at many of our One Stop Career Centers. Several of our SCSEP project directors are represented on the local boards. The WIOA included SCSEP as a required partner in the One Stop delivery system to ensure older workers have access to information about the range of employment related services available to them. An “umbrella” or “blanket” Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being used to define the roles and responsibilities of the Career Center (One–Stop) partner agencies for the provision and improvement of employment and training services to Alabama citizens residing within the 65 county Alabama Workforce Investment Area (AWIA). The MOU is between the Alabama Local Workforce Investment Board and the Career Center partners, including ADSS. It establishes guidelines for the partners to create and maintain cooperative working relationships. The blanket MOU, being more general in nature, works best to set direction while allowing flexibility.

The WIOA intends that all job seekers and persons looking to further their careers will be able to access the employment, education, training, and information services they need at Career Centers in their neighborhoods. The Centers offer core services (available to all adults with no eligibility requirements), intensive services (available to those individuals who are unable to find jobs through core services alone), and training services. In this age of limited resources, it is essential for programs to ensure they are not duplicating the efforts of others, and are using funds in the most effective and efficient manner. Some of the ways our programs cooperate to provide the best employment services possible for the older population are through joint planning sessions, information sharing, recruitment, cross referral of training, joint training, and development of a network of community service providers for older persons.

(F) Efforts the State will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations .

Forty–five percent of the state’s SCSEP–eligible population is rural. SCSEP’s definition of rural is based on Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes, defined at the census tract level. Forty–three of Alabama’s 67 counties have 100 percent rural populations.

Rural Service Delivery Challenges and Strategies to Address These Challenges

Grantees’ greatest obstacles to providing SCSEP services in rural areas and assisting participants to find unsubsidized jobs are all related to shortages: of resources, services, and jobs, particularly in more isolated areas.

Lack of Adequate Transportation

Lack of adequate transportation significantly hinders SCSEP service delivery in rural areas. Area Agencies on Aging have identified transportation as the number one priority need for seniors in their annual plans. The minimal transportation available in small towns is on–demand assistance geared toward persons with disabilities and to taking people to doctor appointments. Although the majority of SCSEP participants drive their own cars, for those who do not have cars or are no longer able to drive, the lack of transportation poses a significant barrier to SCSEP participation and to finding and retaining unsubsidized employment.

Strategies that Grantees will employ to address rural transportation needs include the following:

- Seek to place participants and rotate participants in community service assignments as close as possible to their residences.
 - Seek host agency assignments that have transportation resources.
- Grantees will contact school districts and child care networks/facilities to determine in which rural

areas the school bus is a feasible alternative. For example, if community service assignments with a school district or child care facility are feasible and appropriate for participants' career goals, Grantees will seek to negotiate with agencies to enable participants to use the same bus or van transportation provided for children to travel to and from their community service assignments. Faith-based organizations providing community services may be able to serve as host agencies and provide transportation.

2. Describe the long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (Alternately, the State may discuss this in the State strategies section of strategic plan if submitting a Combined Plan.)

SSAI's sub-grantees have well-established partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce. Sub-grantees often attend meetings in order to network with local business representatives. Through training provided by SSAI, sub-grantees regularly get on a Chamber's agenda to engage employers by promoting both SCSEP and job ready participants. In PY2014, SSAI Field Support Program Officers introduced an Employer Outreach Kit to a pilot group of sub-grantees. The kit includes both three-minute and ten-minute talking points, a PowerPoint presentation, general presentation tips, suggested wording for an elevator pitch, and advice on how to handle both cold and warm calls with employers. This kit has been proven to save a great deal of preparation time and has increased sub-grantee staff confidence about engaging employers. Further improvements to the kit will be made as we expand its use in future program years.

To promote employer outreach, SSAI Program Officers also work with sub-grantees to identify other employer organizations in order to increase the visibility of SCSEP. For example, SSAI promotes sub-grantee engagement with local chapters of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a professional association of human resources professionals from various employers. These professionals are usually involved with hiring and tend to be focused on ensuring a diverse workforce, including mature workers. In addition, many of these SHRM chapters have a committee of volunteers willing to give their time to nonprofits. They can be a great resource for educating participants about what their companies look for in a new employee, helping prepare for interviews, and writing résumés that will get read.

Other SSAI employer outreach training focuses on showing sub-grantees how to approach the hidden job market by establishing relationships with their local, county and state economic development councils and accessing their press releases of future or growing business announcements. SSAI staff trains sub-grantees to approach these employers with the goal of establishing relationships as business partners. Job Development training of sub-grantees will remain multi-focused. One area of focus will continue to promote the identification and targeting of local employers by using the internet, especially in rural areas. Another focus will be on the basics of how to conduct employer outreach. The training to be provided includes group activities, role plays, and videos about job development. Another area of focus will be to provide technical assistance geared towards developing advanced networking skills of both sub-grantees and SCSEP participants.

Furthermore, as we increase employer engagement, SSAI will also increase exploration of on-the-job-experience (OJE) as a method of expanding employer engagement. While OJE has not been widely utilized by our sub-grantees in the past, the Program Officers will actively promote OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers.

3. Describe the long-term strategy for serving minorities under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))

Targeted recruitment efforts must be incorporated into program operations to increase minority enrollments if identified as a concern based on data contained in the quarterly progress report. Additional recruitment efforts in minority communities could include advertising in minority newspapers, canvassing local venues to promote the program by displaying brochures or posting fliers, speaking to minority groups and organizations, and communicating with faith-based organizations that are frequented by minority members of the community. To address underservice and disparities in outcomes, SSAI developed its Analysis of Sub-grantee Service to Minorities in PY14. This report provides, at the sub-grantee level, the breakdown of service to minorities by race and ethnicity. Specifically it reports (1) the number served during a specific time period, (2) the Census Bureau's estimate of SCSEP-eligible people by subgroup, (3) the SCSEP percent served by subgroup, (4) the numerical difference between the SCSEP-eligible percent and those served by subgroup, and (5) subgroups who are notably underserved. This report provides an easy-to-understand and data-rich analysis of where the sub-grantee needs to focus. Further, it facilitates more focused dialogue and recommended actions between SSAI and sub-grantee staff. Staff and sub-grantee reaction to the report has been positive and they indicate that it is making a difference. As one staff said, ensuring service to minorities "has become a much bigger focus for me this year over the prior year. With the newly developed SSAI reports, it has allowed me to provide more detailed and informed assistance to sub-grantees individually and in group meetings." This tool enables SSAI staff to provide its sub-grantees more support and targeted enrollment technical assistance.

Some of the interventions that have resulted in increased service to minorities that are being replicated include: use of multi-lingual participant staff (e.g., Spanish), enlisting and partnering with host agencies that serve underserved subgroups and referral programs among current participants who are part of an underserved subgroup. One sub-grantee asked its minority participants to refer family members and friends who might qualify for SCSEP. Similar interventions are being implemented to promote employment among minority SCSEP participants. Specifically we are promoting job development and job fairs that focus on minority-owned businesses and inviting minority business persons to speak at SCSEP workshops.

4. List needed community services and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location(s) of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

Alabama is comprised of sixty-seven counties with a 2015 population estimate of 4,858,979 residents. The most populated counties include Jefferson, Mobile, Madison, Montgomery, and Shelby County. Fifty-one of the 67 counties in Alabama meet the threshold for persistent unemployment, which is met when the annual average unemployment rate for a county is more than twenty percent higher than the national average for two out of the last three years. The following counties have persistent unemployment indicating a significant barrier to employment:

Barbour County, AL Bibb County, AL Bullock County, AL Butler County, AL Calhoun County, AL Chambers County, AL Choctaw County, AL Clarke County, AL Clay County, AL Cleburne County, AL Coffee County, AL Colbert County, AL Conecuh County, AL Coosa County, AL Covington County, AL Crenshaw County, AL Dale County, AL Dallas County, AL DeKalb County, AL Escambia County, AL Etowah County, AL Fayette County, AL Franklin County, AL Geneva County, AL Greene County, AL Hale County, AL Henry County, AL Houston County, AL Jackson County, AL Lamar

County, AL Lauderdale County, AL Lawrence County, AL Lowndes County, AL Macon County, AL Marengo County, AL Marion County, AL Mobile County, AL Monroe County, AL Montgomery County, AL Perry County, AL Pickens County, AL Pike County, AL Randolph County, AL Russell County, AL Sumter County, AL Talladega County, AL Tallapoosa County, AL Walker County, AL Washington County, AL Wilcox County, AL Winston County, AL

5. Describe the long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))

In keeping with the DOL's principle of continuous improvement, ADSS will strive to increase our "Common Measures Entered Employment" rate by 5% each program year through 2019. Additionally, Alabama will make every effort to meet the higher of the state and national goals each program year.

In order to meet and exceed our goals, ADSS will continue to develop new relationships, as well as foster current relationships, with local and national employers throughout Alabama. ADSS will work to educate employers on balancing their workforce needs with the "aging workforce". Efforts will also be made to identify and train local HR Managers and their staff on "The Myths of Hiring Older Workers", thus allowing them to become engaged with our mission to find employment opportunities for SCSEP participants'.

ADSS will employ a variety of means to monitor and achieve state and national goals, such as providing ongoing and continuous training for sub-grantee staff as well as using a variety of management reports to track progress. Some of the strategies sub-grantees in Alabama use to place participants' in unsubsidized employment are:

- Offering job-seeking skills training courses
- Enforcing job search requirements and written IEP's
- Contacting participants with job leads
- Ensuring quality training is being provided through host agency assignments
- Requiring participants to register at local One-Stop Career Centers
- Encouraging participants to attend local job fairs

National grantees will continuously monitor the performance of sub-grantees with regard to unsubsidized placement. Sub-grantees identified as at risk for not meeting this performance measure will be provided additional technical assistance and training specific to identifying "job ready" participants and how best to identify unsubsidized employment opportunities.

6. Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of **performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment**, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

Over the next four years ADSS, along with national grantees, will work collaboratively to consider practical approaches to address challenges in recruiting most-in-need individuals as well as best practices for preparing these individuals for unsubsidized employment. Below are some examples of strategies that will be used:

- ADSS will seek to establish semi-annual collaboration meetings with other national grantees with the goal of sharing best practices, identifying challenges and developing strategies to overcome those challenges.
- ADSS will seek to improve participation and coordination of services between SCSEP and One-Stop Career Center partners.
- ADSS will identify and provide additional training opportunities and resources for participants, thus better preparing participants for entry into unsubsidized employment.
- ADSS will continue to be an active WIOA partner and advocate for meaningful services for the seniors of Alabama. All national grantees and sub-grantees in Alabama remain committed to fulfilling SCSEP's dual mission of fostering individual and economic self-sufficiency as well as providing community service opportunities for those that we serve.

(c) Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

States must:

1. Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

State Grantee Allocations Total National Grantees Allocations PY 16 Total ED Based on Census PY 15 State Grantee Allocation PY 16 State Allocations PY15-PY16 Change PY 15 National Grantee Allocation PY 16 National Grantee Slots Available PY15-PY16 Change Alabama 810 165 165 0 645 645 0 Autauga County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Baldwin County, Alabama 25 5 6 1 15 19 4 Barbour County, Alabama 6 8 6 -2 Bibb County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Blount County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Bullock County, Alabama 2 3 2 -1 Butler County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Calhoun County, Alabama 22 5 5 0 18 17 -1 Chambers County, Alabama 9 3 3 0 7 6 -1 Cherokee County, Alabama 6 5 6 1 Chilton County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 6 6 0 Choctaw County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 3 2 -1 Clarke County, Alabama 6 3 2 -1 6 4 -2 Clay County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Cleburne County, Alabama 3 4 3 -1 Coffee County, Alabama 8 3 3 0 6 5 -1 Colbert County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Conecuh County, Alabama 5 1 1 0 3 4 1 Coosa County, Alabama 3 1 1 0 2 2 0 Covington County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 8 6 -2 Crenshaw County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Cullman County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 13 13 0 Dale County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 6 7 1 Dallas County, Alabama 12 4 3 -1 10 9 -1 DeKalb County, Alabama 15 4 3 -1 14 12 -2 Elmore County, Alabama 7 8 7 -1 Escambia County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 7 7 0 Etowah County, Alabama 21 5 5 0 16 16 0 Fayette County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Franklin County, Alabama 6 1 1 0 6 5 -1 Geneva County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 5 4 -1 Greene County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Hale County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Henry County, Alabama 5 2 3 1 2 2 0 Houston County, Alabama 18 5 6 1 11 12 1 Jackson County, Alabama 12 2 2 0 11 10 -1 Jefferson County, Alabama 107 26 26 0 72 81 9 Lamar County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Lauderdale County, Alabama 15 3 3 0 13 12 -1 Lawrence County, Alabama 7 7 7 0 Lee County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 11 13 2 Limestone County, Alabama 11 2 2 0 10 9 -1 Lowndes County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Macon County, Alabama 5 2 2 0 4 3 -1 Madison County, Alabama 35 5 6 1 25 29 4 Marengo County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 4 4 0 Marion County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Marshall County, Alabama 16 3 2 -1 17 14 -3 Mobile County, Alabama 71 17 16 -1 52 55 3 Monroe County, Alabama 7 2 2 0 4 5 1 Montgomery County, Alabama 30 31 30 -1 Morgan County, Alabama 18 5 5 0 12 13 1 Perry County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Pickens County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Pike County, Alabama 7 6 7 1 Randolph County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0 Russell County, Alabama 13 2 2 0 9 11 2 St. Clair County, Alabama 14 2 2 0 11 12 1 Shelby County, Alabama 15 2 3 1 10 12 2 Sumter County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Talladega County, Alabama 16 2 2 0 14 14 0

Tallapoosa County, Alabama 9 7 9 2 Tuscaloosa County, Alabama 24 5 5 0 18 19 1 Walker County, Alabama 14 3 3 0 12 11 -1 Washington County, Alabama 3 5 3 -2 Wilcox County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Winston County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0

2. List the cities and counties where the SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate if and where the positions changed from the prior year.

State Grantee Allocations Total National Grantees Allocations PY 16 Total ED Based on Census PY 15 State Grantee Allocation PY 16 State Allocations PY15-PY16 Change PY 15 National Grantee Allocation PY 16 National Grantee Slots Available PY15-PY16 Change Alabama 810 165 165 0 645 645 0 Autauga County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Baldwin County, Alabama 25 5 6 1 15 19 4 Barbour County, Alabama 6 8 6 -2 Bibb County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Blount County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Bullock County, Alabama 2 3 2 -1 Butler County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Calhoun County, Alabama 22 5 5 0 18 17 -1 Chambers County, Alabama 9 3 3 0 7 6 -1 Cherokee County, Alabama 6 5 6 1 Chilton County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 6 6 0 Choctaw County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 3 2 -1 Clarke County, Alabama 6 3 2 -1 6 4 -2 Clay County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Cleburne County, Alabama 3 4 3 -1 Coffee County, Alabama 8 3 3 0 6 5 -1 Colbert County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Conecuh County, Alabama 5 1 1 0 3 4 1 Coosa County, Alabama 3 1 1 0 2 2 0 Covington County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 8 6 -2 Crenshaw County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Cullman County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 13 13 0 Dale County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 6 7 1 Dallas County, Alabama 12 4 3 -1 10 9 -1 DeKalb County, Alabama 15 4 3 -1 14 12 -2 Elmore County, Alabama 7 8 7 -1 Escambia County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 7 7 0 Etowah County, Alabama 21 5 5 0 16 16 0 Fayette County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Franklin County, Alabama 6 1 1 0 6 5 -1 Geneva County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 5 4 -1 Greene County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Hale County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Henry County, Alabama 5 2 3 1 2 2 0 Houston County, Alabama 18 5 6 1 11 12 1 Jackson County, Alabama 12 2 2 0 11 10 -1 Jefferson County, Alabama 107 26 26 0 72 81 9 Lamar County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Lauderdale County, Alabama 15 3 3 0 13 12 -1 Lawrence County, Alabama 7 7 7 0 Lee County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 11 13 2 Limestone County, Alabama 11 2 2 0 10 9 -1 Lowndes County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Macon County, Alabama 5 2 2 0 4 3 -1 Madison County, Alabama 35 5 6 1 25 29 4 Marengo County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 4 4 0 Marion County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Marshall County, Alabama 16 3 2 -1 17 14 -3 Mobile County, Alabama 71 17 16 -1 52 55 3 Monroe County, Alabama 7 2 2 0 4 5 1 Montgomery County, Alabama 30 31 30 -1 Morgan County, Alabama 18 5 5 0 12 13 1 Perry County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Pickens County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Pike County, Alabama 7 6 7 1 Randolph County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0 Russell County, Alabama 13 2 2 0 9 11 2 St. Clair County, Alabama 14 2 2 0 11 12 1 Shelby County, Alabama 15 2 3 1 10 12 2 Sumter County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Talladega County, Alabama 16 2 2 0 14 14 0 Tallapoosa County, Alabama 9 7 9 2 Tuscaloosa County, Alabama 24 5 5 0 18 19 1 Walker County, Alabama 14 3 3 0 12 11 -1 Washington County, Alabama 3 5 3 -2 Wilcox County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Winston County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0

3. Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

SCSEP staff counsel sub-grantees monthly as to the status of the variance and provide technical assistance to ensure that the sub-grantee will serve the number of authorized positions per county by June 30, 2016. SCSEP staff confers with sub-grantees on issues related to service such as: recruiting new host agencies; conducting outreach to attract applicants to the program; and figuring out program operations issues that may be impacting enrollment of new participants. For example, SSAI staff is working with sub-grantee Jefferson County Commission to recruit new Host Agencies in Jefferson County.

SCSEP staff look to review both the total variance as well as the “snapshot variance” taken from SPARQ at the end of each quarter. For example, Morgan County, which is served by North–Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, currently has 13 participants enrolled for 12 authorized positions; however, the service level since July 1, 2015 for Morgan County is over 100%. In such cases, more emphasis will be placed on enrolling participants in counties which have been underserved, such as Cullman County, also served by NARCOG, in which only 8 participants have been served for 13 authorized positions.

4. Explain the State’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

A. moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

Section 508 of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments requires grantees to seek an equitable distribution of program resources and participant slots throughout the state. Therefore, equitable distribution (ED) is a cooperative effort, and each grantee in the state participates in the process. Alabama fully embraces the equitable distribution of SCSEP positions and has worked closely with the national sponsors to implement a plan that addresses under–served and over–served counties in the state.

ED within each state is based on the latest Census information about the percentage of poor elderly in each county. The data comes from the American Community Service (ACS), which incorporates the 2010 Census for population counts and age. The equitable distribution report of SCSEP positions by grantees in the state provides the information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of people being served in Alabama. The report reflects both under–served and over–served areas and contains information on counties served, distribution factors, equitable shares, current number of positions, and increases or decreases in participant slots.

ADSS serves a coordinating role and ensures equitable distribution of employment through Title V SCSEP with the national contractors and local project directors. ADSS allocates Title V funds to Councils of Local Government and Area Agencies on Aging for local SCSEP administration.

With the continued cooperation of the national grantees, ADSS will coordinate any slot transfers necessary to meet equitable distribution, and will continue to coordinate this process.

Any county slot adjustments will be made only after approval by DOL. ADSS will continue to work with the national grantees to move slots from over–served to under–served counties. Since there are no excessively over–served or under–served counties in Alabama, equitable distribution will be achieved in the time frame required, with no disruption to participants.

B. equitably serves both rural and urban areas.

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C. serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)

The State continues to ensure that in selecting eligible individuals for participation in SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- (1) Are 65 years of age or older;
- (2) Have a disability;
- (3) Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
- (4) Reside in a rural area;
- (5) Are veterans (or, in some cases, spouses of veterans);
- (6) Have low employment prospects;
- (7) Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop delivery system; or
- (8) Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness.

The stipulated priorities are applied in the following order: (1) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics; (2) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), who do not possess any other of the priority characteristics; (3) Persons who do not qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act (nonveterans), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics.

5. Provide the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))

All Grantees State Grantees National Grantees Total 55+ Population(a) Total 55+ Population Under 100% Poverty Level(a) Percent of Slots for Age Eligible Population Under 100% Poverty Level

Alabama	810	165	645	1,313,281	149,620	0.54%	Autauga	6	0	6	13,382	1082	0.55%	Baldwin	25	6	19			
	60,063	4622	0.54%	Barbour	6	0	6	7,684	1120	0.54%	Bibb	4	0	4	5,898	633	0.63%			
	16,545	1735	0.58%	Bullock	2	0	2	2,968	394	0.51%	Butler	6	0	6	6,511	1103	0.54%			
	33,383	4231	0.52%	Chambers	9	3	6	10,818	1618	0.56%	Cherokee	6	0	6	9,224	1147	0.52%			
	8	2	6	11,902	1300	0.62%	Choctaw	4	2	2	4,633	673	0.59%	Clarke	6	2	4			
	4,411	504	0.60%	Cleburne	3	0	3	4,595	588	0.51%	Coffee	8	3	5	13,855	1470	0.54%			
	17,292	1757	0.57%	Conecuh	5	1	4	4,395	1024	0.49%	Coosa	3	1	2	3,783	599	0.50%			
	6	12,521	1473	0.54%	Crenshaw	4	0	4	4,230	712	0.56%	Cullman	16	3	13	24,229	2898	0.55%		
	2	7	13,253	1673	0.54%	Dallas	12	3	9	12,031	2350	0.51%	De Kalb	15	3	12	19,378	2643	0.57%	
	Elmore	7	0	7	20,070	1364	0.51%	Escambia	9	2	7	10,813	1682	0.54%	Etowah	21	5	16		
	0.55%	Fayette	4	1	3	5,604	686	0.58%	Franklin	6	1	5	8,619	1073	0.56%	Geneva	6	2	4	
	0.60%	Greene	4	2	2	2,907	705	0.57%	Hale	4	1	3	4,671	879	0.46%	Henry	5	3	2	
	Houston	18	6	12	28,853	3072	0.59%	Jackson	12	2	10	16,865	2193	0.55%	Jefferson	107	26	81		
	174,886	20438	0.52%	Lamar	4	2	2	4,834	734	0.54%	Lauderdale	15	3	12	28,727	2696	0.56%			
	Lawrence	7	0	7	9,895	1243	0.56%	Lee	16	3	13	28,788	2833	0.56%	Limestone	11	2	9		
	0.53%	Lowndes	3	0	3	3,208	705	0.43%	Macon	5	2	3	5,927	937	0.53%	Madison	35	6	29	
	6689	0.52%	Marengo	6	2	4	6,468	1231	0.49%	Marion	6	2	4	10,135	1129	0.53%	Marshall	16	2	14
	26,206	2783	0.57%	Mobile	71	16	55	109,026	13347	0.53%	Monroe	7	2	5	6,939	1482	0.47%			
	Montgomery	30	0	30	55,654	5670	0.53%	Morgan	18	5	13	33,288	3068	0.59%	Perry	4	0	4		
	0.54%	Pickens	6	2	4	6,195	1122	0.53%	Pike	7	0	7	8,096	1282	0.55%	Randolph	7	1	6	
	0.51%	Russell	13	2	11	13,657	2202	0.59%	St. Clair	14	2	12	22,995	2384	0.59%	Shelby	15	3	12	
	48,591	2613	0.57%	Sumter	4	2	2	3,923	804	0.50%	Talladega	16	2	14	23,454	2999	0.53%			
	Tallapoosa	9	0	9	13,640	1608	0.56%	Tuscaloosa	24	5	19	44,417	4051	0.59%	Walker	14	3	11		
	20,707	2576	0.54%	Washington	3	0	3	5,093	585	0.51%	Wilcox	4	2	2	3,462	825	0.48%			
	8,117	1344	0.52%	Winston	7	1	6													

6. Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

A. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State

Reside in urban and rural areas within the state

About 90% of Alabama's total land surface is considered rural, with 54 of 67 counties counting being classified as rural. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 41% of the total population lives in these rural areas.

It is the goal of all grantees operating the SCSEP program in Alabama to serve rural and urban areas equitably. While we are managing to provide services in each of the rural counties we serve, it is becoming increasingly more of an issue, due to the economy. More time is required to work with those residing in rural counties, due to the increased travel time needed to reach these participants. We are working to partner with community based organizations and state agencies in rural areas to provide services that would benefit our seniors.

Because education is a key element to gainful employment, we will encourage partnerships with universities, community colleges, and local communities to work with sub-grantees in rural areas to provide better training mechanisms, including online classes and distance learning. A major focus

will include changing the public's negative attitude and stereotypes about older workers through education and best practices programs; and promoting the advantages of hiring older workers, especially in rural areas, to public and private sector employers.

Rural and urban SCSEP participants in Alabama need greater transportation options. Access to transportation has a direct impact on a participant's ability to secure and retain employment.

In a related initiative dealing with rural/urban populations, ADSS is working with the Federal Transportation Administration on the United We Ride (UWR) program, because transportation is a huge barrier for seniors in general and particularly for low income seniors who want to work.

B. Have the greatest economic need

Greatest economic need means the need resulting from an income level at or below the poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (42 U.S.C. 3002(23).)

• According to the 2010–2014 American Community Survey 5–Year Estimates, 18.9% of individuals in Alabama were below the federal poverty level, as compared to 15.6% nationally. The average monthly earnings in 2014 for people in Alabama was \$3,626 as compared to \$4,457 nationally. • For Alabamians over 55 years of age, the most recent numbers report that 11.4% percent are at or below 100% of the Federal poverty line.

C. Are minorities

According to the Resident Population by Race and State 2010 Census Statistics, the race of Alabama residents is broken up by the following: *Alabama Population by Race

White Alone 3327891

Black or African American Alone 1269808

Two or More Races 76428

Other 58618

Asian Alone 58322

American Indian/Alaska Native Alone 25181

Statewide, the Latino or Hispanic population grew 145% since the last U.S. Census, adding 109,772 people to the state's population, and nearly 78,000 people 65 years of age and older. Latino's now make up 4.0% of the population, compared with 1.7% as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. The largest increases in Latino population were in Jefferson, Madison, and Shelby counties, specifically in more urban geographic areas. The average age of the Hispanic population in Alabama is 23.7 years of age, indicating that the flux has not occurred within the 55 and older population as rapidly as the under 55 years of age population. To address the growing Hispanic population in Alabama, Senior Service America Inc. (SSAI) received funding from the AARP Foundation for a Latino/Hispanic Elders Peer Community Interpreters project. This project focuses on three unmet needs: (1) the needs of low income 50+ Hispanic workers at risk due to prolonged unemployment and financial insecurity; (2) the need of our publicly funded social service and workforce

development systems to substantially improve their outreach and service to Hispanics; and (3) the need to develop policies that would support "Community Interpreters" as a critical element of a larger plan to reduce the impact of Limited English proficiency as a barrier to employment and services. SSAI's "Community Interpreters" project recruits, trains, deploys, and provides ongoing support to a minimum of 25 low income 50+ Hispanics who serve as Community Interpreters in 18–22 social service and workforce development agencies in greater Birmingham, AL, and Charlotte, NC. The goal of this project is for the peer Community Interpreters to increase the number of unserved, unemployed and underemployed 50+ Hispanic workers accessing available employment and social services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, African American's represent 26.5% of the state's population, however the concentration of African Americans in certain counties over others shows the significant differences in geographic distribution of the population by race. The Asian population in Alabama remains low at 1.2% across the state.

D. Are limited English proficient.

This population has not been active in SCSEP in Alabama, with 1% of the population currently being served in the state being classified as limited English proficiency

E. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

Greatest social need means the need caused by non–economic factors, which include: Physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, which restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks or threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently. (42 U.S.C. 3002(24)).

- The number of people in Alabama who have not attained a high school diploma was 17.4% in 2014 while the national number was 13.6%, and the number of people with a Bachelor's degree or more was 23.1% compared to 29.3% nationally. In 2010, the total number of people over 65 in Alabama with no high school diploma was 20.5%, while the percentage of SCSEP participants in Alabama being served by Easter Seals who do not have a high school degree or equivalent was 24%. • According to the 2010–2014 American Community Survey 5–Years estimates, there are a total of 376,525 Veterans residing in Alabama, which is about 7.8% of the total Alabama population. According to the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System, 10% of the State and Easter Seals SCSEP participants are classified as Veterans.

7. Describe the steps taken to avoid disruptions to service for participants to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data becomes available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Older individuals often feel vulnerable during times of change. SCSEP grantees in Alabama will make every effort to avoid participant disruptions by reassuring participants and their host agencies that a change of grantee in a particular area will not affect participants' SCSEP enrollment. Although the schedule for participants' receipt of their paychecks may vary somewhat from Grantee to Grantee, the mailing and direct deposit of participant paychecks will continue on a regular, dependable schedule.

Changes in Grantee and/or Grantee Service Area

DOL allocates SCSEP—subsidized community service positions to each county using a formula based on the number of individuals ages 55 and older with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level in each county. Participants may need to be transferred to a different Grantee if Grantees agree to trade counties to consolidate their service areas and improve the efficiency of their operations.

National Grantee service areas are changed or realigned by DOL. When there is a change of Grantee or Grantee service area, the state will proactively seek to avoid a disruption in service for participants and host agencies.

Changes in the Number of Positions in a County

Other situations may occur where positions in a county may need to be increased or reduced over time, including these situations:

- Census updates on SCSEP—eligible population in counties, such as occurred in 2012, affect the equitable share, or number of positions allocated to a county;
- Grantees seek to improve the equitable balance in counties by shifting enrollments from over-served areas to under-served areas.

Strategies to Avoid Participant Disruption

When there is a change in Grantee and/or Grantee service area, the SCSEP State Coordinator will direct the following actions:

- Host a conference call with the grantees involved to ensure that they develop a transition plan and timetable for:
 - o informing participants and host agencies in advance;
 - o transferring records;
 - o holding orientations for participants and host agencies;
 - o and supporting continuity in administrative and programmatic functions.

When positions need to be shifted from over-served to under-served counties, Grantees will carry out the following actions:

- Use a gradual approach to redistribute the slots via attrition; and
- Encourage and work intensively to assist job-ready participants in over-served counties to find unsubsidized employment.

A Transition Plan will be implemented that has proven effective in ensuring minimal disruption to participants, host agencies, and the community. Alabama has experience in exchanging service areas with national sponsors. We have worked through and enjoyed smooth transitions. The process includes Notification of Change, Right of First Refusal, Notification to Participants, Record of Transfer, and Participant Placement.

Primary consideration is given to participants when decisions must be made about re-distribution of program positions. Unsubsidized employment is the optimum method for avoiding disruptions to participants in the program, and this policy is applied to the greatest extent possible.

No participants will be terminated for purposes of moving positions to coincide with any new census data or change in grantees. Instead, increased efforts will be made to assist participants through other local SCSEP sponsors, and to aggressively work with participants to obtain unsubsidized employment.

The state will follow the Department's recommendation of a "gradual shift that encourages participants in subsidized community service assignments to move into unsubsidized employment to make positions available for eligible individuals in the areas where there has been an increase in the eligible population."

In addition, ADSS will not transfer positions from one geographic area to another without collaboration between all grantees and approval by the Department of Labor. This collaboration between ADSS and national grantees allows for smooth transitions for SCSEP participants, with minimal disruption of service.

SCSEP Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State has established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from:

Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; Yes

State and local boards under WIOA; Yes

Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Yes

Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Yes

Grantees under Title III of OAA; Yes

Affected Communities; Yes

Unemployed older individuals; Yes

Community-based organizations serving older individuals; Yes

Business organizations; and Yes

Labor organizations. Yes

State Comments on SCSEP Assurances

Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	68.00	72.30	68.00	75.30
Dislocated Workers	75.00	75.00	75.00	78.00
Youth	56.00	50.00	56.00	53.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	63.00	63.00	63.00	64.00
Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	86.00	70.40	86.00	73.40
Dislocated Workers	91.00	72.00	91.00	75.00
Youth	61.00	61.50	61.00	64.50
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	84.00	66.00	84.00	67.50
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	2,459.00	5,250.00	2,459.00	5,550.00
Dislocated Workers	3,888.00	6,000.00	3,888.00	6,300.00
Youth	1,750.00	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	13,002.00	4,400.00	13,002.00	4,500.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 3

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	50.00	52.80	50.00	53.80
Dislocated Workers	50.00	52.50	50.00	55.50
Youth	50.00	49.80	50.00	52.80
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
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Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	41.00	41.00	42.00	42.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

All cells on this table should read "baseline".

Based on the Required Elements for Submission of the Unified and Combined State Plan Modifications Under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act released on February 18, 2016 the Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) Program will use baseline data for the first 2 years for all six of its indicators listed below and will therefore not submit expected performance levels for these indicators until this data has been established and can be used to negotiate adjusted levels of performance.

Employment in the second quarter

Employment in the fourth quarter

Median Earnings

Credential Attainment

Measurable Skill Gains

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level			

User remarks on Table 7

Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)

ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

April 24, 2015 Department of Economic and Community Affairs Workforce Development Division
401 Adams Avenue Post Office 5690 Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690 GOVERNOR'S
WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2014-10

SUBJECT:

1. Purpose. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Transition This transmits the following TEGL:

Number Date 23-14 03/26/15 Subject Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Transition

2. Discussion. The purpose of TEGL No. 23-14 is to provide guidance and planning information to states, local workforce areas, and other recipients of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I youth formula funds on the activities associated with the implementation of WIOA.

In order to continue implementation prior to the final rule, a series of WIOA Operational Guidance documents that provide the needed implementation information will be issued in the form of Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs). These Operational Guidance TEGLs will inform the system about how to begin the important planning and reorganization necessary to comply with new WIOA statutory requirements for the upcoming Program Year (PY) 2015 (beginning July 1, 2015). The Operating Guidance TEGLs will provide a framework for program activities until the regulations are finalized. TEGL 23-14 is one in the ongoing series of Guidance.

Regarding the implementation of youth programs, TEGL 23-14 states that while previously issued TEGL No. 19-14 (discussed in GWID PY2014-07) says "States will receive their first WIOA

allotment for the youth programs in April 2015 and will begin full implementation of WIOA for the Youth Program at that time," this was imprecise. Operational implementation of the WIOA youth program begins on July 1, 2015, with all provisions taking effect July 1, 2016. The PY 2015 WIOA youth allotment that is distributed in April 2015 is for preparation and programmatic activities for WIOA youth program implementation on July 1, 2015. In addition, states and local workforce areas are encouraged to use allowable transition funds to prepare for implementation of the WIOA Youth program. Page 2 Directive No. PY2014-10

TEGL 23-14 further discusses youth program planning and provides operational guidance for WIOA. This includes discussion on the transition from the required minimum thirty (30) percent expenditure rate for youth formula-funded programs on out-of-school youth under WIA to the new required minimum seventy-five (75) percent expenditure rate for youth formula-funded programs on out-of-school youth under WIOA and how the percentage is calculated. Other topics include Youth Standing Committees, transitioning in-school youth programs, changes to the youth program elements, the new eligibility criteria, and many other programmatic changes. Examples of successful out-of-school youth programs currently meeting the seventy-five (75) percent expenditure rate are provided for research as well as a list of resources to help states and local areas successfully transition.

3. Action. This Directive should be distributed accordingly to local areas, workforce staff, and partners. Local area staff should review TEGL 23-14, and use presented strategies and resources to transition their youth programs to the WIOA.

ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM Department of Commerce
Workforce Development Division 401 Adams Avenue Post Office Box 5690 Montgomery, Alabama
36103-5690 September 11, 2015 GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO.
PY2015-03

SUBJECT: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Providers Policy

1. Purpose. This directive transmits the State's policy regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Eligible Training Providers List in order to continue eligibility and to provide the procedures for potentially new training providers.

2. Discussion. Under WIOA, States shall establish initial eligibility for WIA eligible training provider and certified training programs in order to continue to be eligible to provide training services until December 31, 2015. WIOA initial eligibility (for all current training providers on the ETPL) expires on December 31, 2015. All current training providers and their current programs are grandfathered in as eligible training providers. Procedures are included in this policy for current training providers to seek continued eligibility. Under WIOA, the State shall also establish a procedure to determine the eligibility of new training providers. The criteria and procedures for new training providers are included in the attached policy. It is the responsibility of the Workforce Development Division to collect the required information from all Eligible Training Providers, who provide services to WIOA participants in Alabama. This Directive supercedes all previous directives regarding policies, collection of performance, costs and other information on the ETPL including GWDD No. PY2002-03 through PY2011-23, change 2.

3. Action. It is the responsibility of the local workforce development areas and the training providers to review the attached policy and instructions and adhere to the established procedures.

Attached are the policy and forms to use in the continued eligibility process and/or the application process for new training providers. The required information is to be submitted to the Workforce

Development Division and information updated on the website, www.ETPL.alabama.gov, for each current program by December 31, 2015. Training providers are required to enter the information on the Eligible Training Provider List website. Training providers are strongly encouraged to keep the performance information listed on the ETPL website up-to-date. Training providers' information will be reviewed at least every 24 months for renewal purposes. Training providers, who fail to follow the continued eligibility instructions by December 31, 2015, will be removed from the ETPL without exception.

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2015-03