



# PEE DEE LOCAL PLAN

## Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)

(2020-2023)

Submitted by:  
Joette Dukes, Workforce Development Director  
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
Local Plan  
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023**

**Local Area:**

Pee Dee Local Workforce Area

**Counties within the Local Area:**

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties

**Local Area Administrator and Contact Information:**

Joette R. Dukes, Workforce Development Director  
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments  
PO Box 5719  
Florence, SC 29502  
(843) 669-3138  
j-dukes@peedeecog.org

# Attachment B: Local Plan Requirements

The local plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate local area service delivery strategies with those that support the state's strategic and operational goals. In partnership with the chief elected officials, each local board must develop and submit a local plan to identify and describe the policies, procedures, and activities that are carried out in the local area, consistent with the strategic vision and goals outlined in the State Plan and the respective regional plan. The following guiding principles should be considered priorities and included in responses throughout the document:

- Partnership and collaboration
- Increased access to resources and services through the use of technology
- The impact of COVID-19 on the local area's workforce and strategies to facilitate rapid reemployment
- Innovation and cost efficiencies

The local plan must include:

Section I:	Workforce and Economic Analysis
Section II:	Strategic Vision and Goals
Section III:	Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies
Section IV:	Program Design and Evaluation
Section V:	Operations and Compliance

## Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

An analysis of **regional labor market data** and economic conditions, to include existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The analysis shall include:

### NEW Regional Labor Market Data 12/2022

The data provided below is labor market data for the Greater Pee Dee Region which includes three Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) and 13 counties:

#### Pee Dee LWDA:

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties

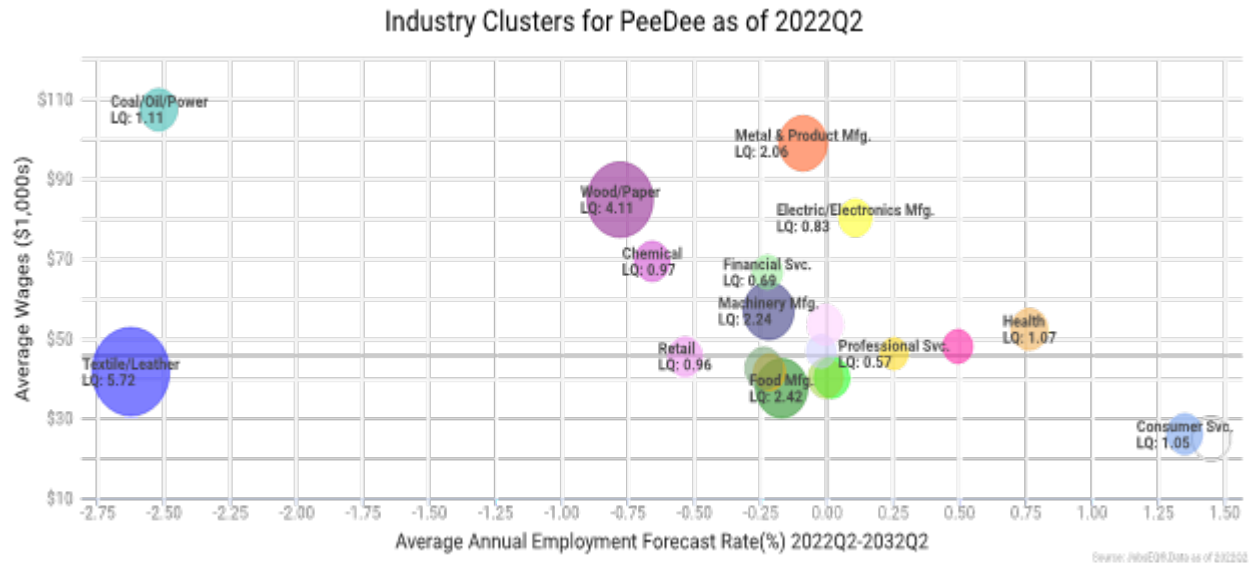
#### Santee Lynches LWDA:

Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and Sumter

#### Waccamaw LWDA:

Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg

Data reports and additional data and information solicited from various sources were analyzed to determine in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Current sector priorities were explored, and Health Care was selected as the priority sector to continue planning efforts to create the pipeline needed to meet the employment needs of employers within the region. The Industry Clusters data chart supports Health Care as being the most in-demand, fastest growing sector for the region:



### Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Pee Dee - Complete Region (WIOA) is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 47,341 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (45,050 workers) and Sales and Related Occupations (43,806). However, an analysis of industry comparisons and clusters still clearly supports the healthcare sector as an existing as well as emerging in-demand industry sector. This analysis included an analysis of the Pee Dee Region data report, which documented significant job growth and occupations that would be attainable by the targeted populations of agencies and needs of employers in the region. There is a prevalence of healthcare as a demand industry in all parts of the region. Healthcare is the only industry with growth in all three local workforce areas. The other industries are more prevalent in some areas than others and are very concentrated in singular parts of the region (e.g. Hospitality). Initial validation can be provided by healthcare representation on Local Boards, along with Technical colleges' validation of the demand for healthcare training in the region, and all three local workforce areas' validation of healthcare growth and demand across the region.

**Greater Pee Dee Region, 2022Q2<sup>1</sup>**

NAICS	Industry	Empl	Current Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5-Year History		Total Demand	1-Year Forecast			Ann % Growth
					Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	
44	Retail Trade	56,097	\$29,032	1.43	3,242	1.2%	7,492	2,995	4,472	25	0.0%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	53,139	\$23,626	1.64	181	0.1%	10,274	3,698	5,124	1,452	2.7%
62	<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	52,992	\$53,386	0.95	3,436	1.3%	5,777	2,285	2,777	715	1.3%
31	Manufacturing	38,541	\$61,295	1.23	783	0.4%	3,863	1,364	2,610	-111	-0.3%
61	Educational Services	26,879	\$45,048	0.87	-1,878	-1.3%	2,777	1,121	1,398	259	1.0%

56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	22,248	\$35,130	0.89	1,200	1.1%	2,787	973	1,583	231	1.0%
23	Construction	22,223	\$49,946	0.97	2,050	2.0%	2,313	678	1,451	184	0.8%
92	Public Administration	20,750	\$46,509	1.16	309	0.3%	2,017	740	1,192	85	0.4%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	17,393	\$26,635	1.04	327	0.4%	2,125	785	1,137	204	1.2%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	15,262	\$47,135	0.80	3,275	4.9%	1,787	647	1,033	107	0.7%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,127	\$62,701	0.43	600	1.0%	1,179	360	689	129	1.1%
52	Finance and Insurance	10,456	\$71,534	0.67	1,108	2.3%	978	320	613	45	0.4%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8,428	\$23,520	1.16	-87	-0.2%	1,468	469	676	323	3.8%
42	Wholesale Trade	8,259	\$59,332	0.57	155	0.4%	893	300	566	27	0.3%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7,824	\$44,832	1.15	98	0.3%	861	317	451	93	1.2%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,142	\$41,161	0.98	-565	-2.1%	626	248	373	5	0.1%
51	Information	3,473	\$60,414	0.45	-242	-1.3%	358	107	219	32	0.9%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,315	\$77,170	0.40	55	0.5%	212	71	137	4	0.2%
22	Utilities	2,273	\$91,911	1.16	160	1.5%	186	68	141	-23	-1.0%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	290	\$63,569	0.22	-170	-8.8%	31	9	21	2	0.6%
99	Unclassified	38	\$30,084	0.06	38	n/a	5	2	3	0	1.3%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>386,149</b>	<b>\$43,999</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>14,074</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>45,959</b>	<b>16,453</b>	<b>25,545</b>	<b>3,960</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2022Q2

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. All data based upon a four-quarter moving average

Exits and transfers are approximate estimates based upon occupation separation rates.

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2022Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2022Q2. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

## Industry Snapshot (Greater Pee Dee Region)









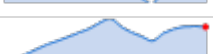
### EMPLOYMENT



### WAGES



6-Digit Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5yr History	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	15,187	\$61,572	1.05		1,285	0.6%
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	8,995	\$96,153	1.31		840	1.1%
Home Health Care Services	4,670	\$29,680	1.15		606	2.0%

Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	3,484	\$36,583	1.02		372	-0.2%
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	3,054	\$17,045	0.58		498	3.6%
Child Care Services	2,547	\$20,840	0.94		319	1.0%
Offices of Dentists	2,325	\$58,686	0.94		242	1.3%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities	1,279	\$29,117	1.18		190	2.5%
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	1,074	\$27,170	1.50		118	-0.2%
Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	1,037	\$26,086	0.95		156	2.7%
Remaining Component Industries	9,340	\$49,453	0.74		1,044	2.0%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>52,992</b>	<b>\$53,386</b>	<b>0.95</b>		<b>5,777</b>	<b>1.3%</b>






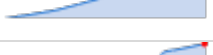



## Industry Snapshot South Carolina

### EMPLOYMENT



### WAGES



6-Digit Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5yr History	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	85,687	\$68,156	0.99		7,501	0.9%
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	48,784	\$101,491	1.18		4,706	1.4%
Home Health Care Services	19,624	\$33,975	0.81		2,641	2.5%
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	17,552	\$42,062	0.86		1,983	0.4%
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	17,250	\$18,765	0.55		2,875	3.9%
Offices of Dentists	15,091	\$59,385	1.01		1,627	1.6%
Child Care Services	13,186	\$23,244	0.81		1,731	1.6%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities	7,974	\$32,682	1.22		1,210	2.8%
Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	5,413	\$28,832	0.83		821	2.8%

Other Individual and Family Services	5,242	\$38,864	0.60		723	3.6%
Remaining Component Industries	56,343	\$49,263	0.77		6,463	2.2%

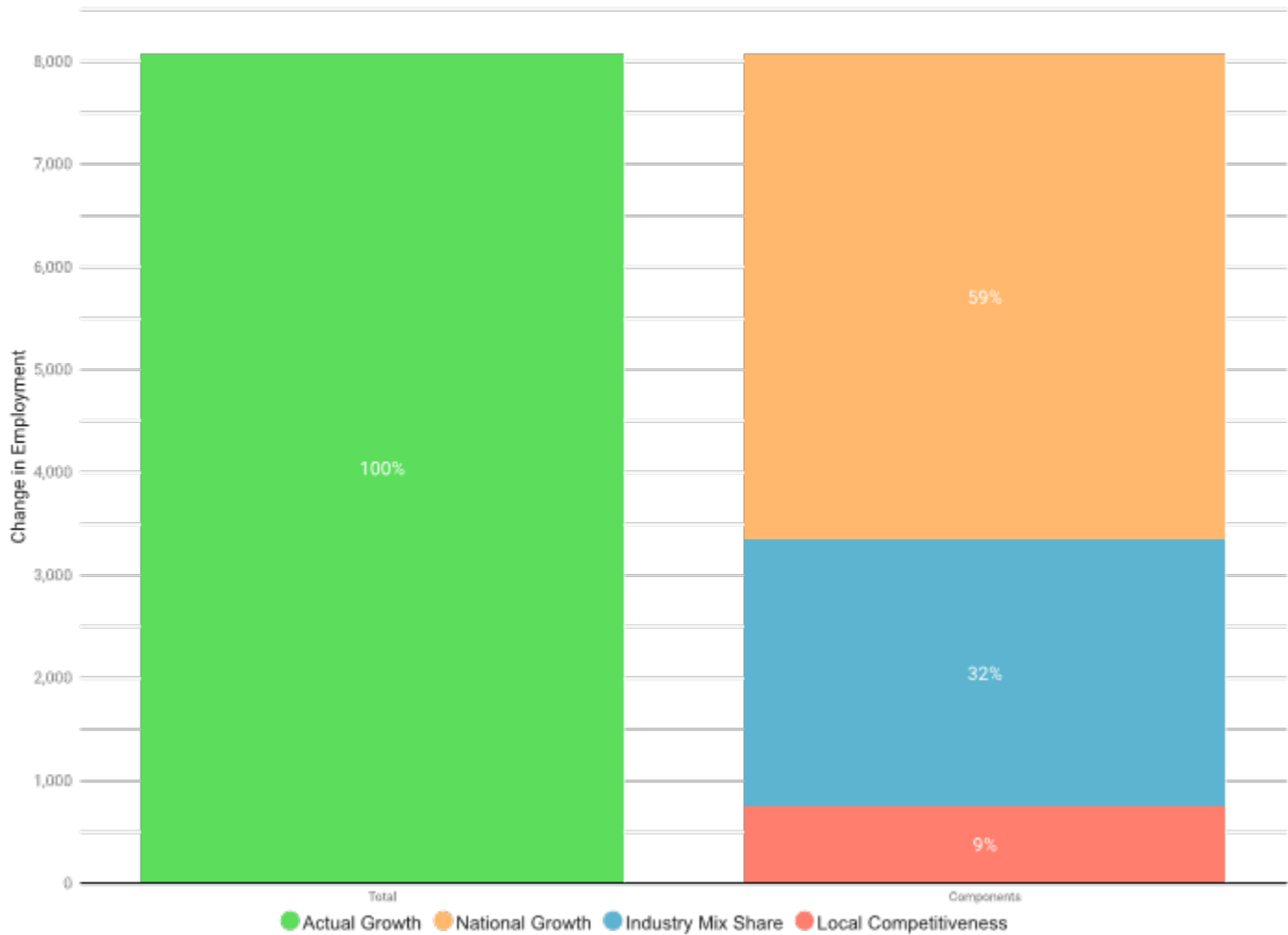
Source: JobsEQ 2022Q2

Based on the analysis of all data, healthcare is expected to grow across all areas in this region.

#### **Drivers of Employment Growth (Greater Pee Dee Region)**

Over the ten years ending 2021, employment in Health Care for the Greater Pee Dee Region added 8,079 jobs. After adjusting for national growth during this period and industry mix share, the part of this employment change due to local competitiveness was a gain of 753 jobs—meaning this industry was more competitive than its national counterpart during this period.

### Drivers of Employment Growth for Greater Pee Dee Region

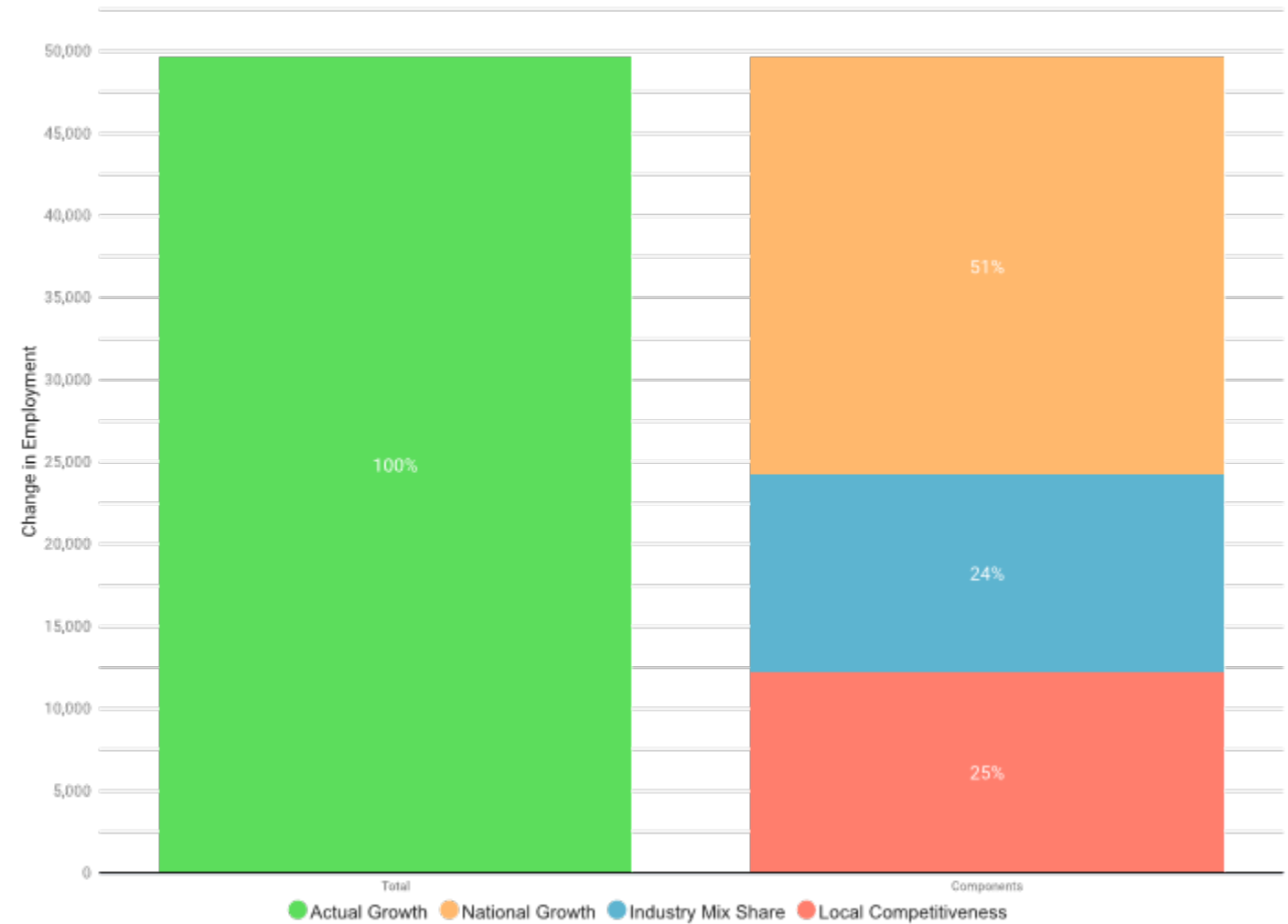


### Drivers of Employment Growth (South Carolina)

Over the ten years ending 2021, employment in Health Care for South Carolina added 49,611 jobs. After adjusting for national growth during this period and industry mix share, the part of this employment change due to local competitiveness was a gain of 12,266 jobs—meaning this industry was more competitive than its national counterpart during this period.



### Drivers of Employment Growth for South Carolina

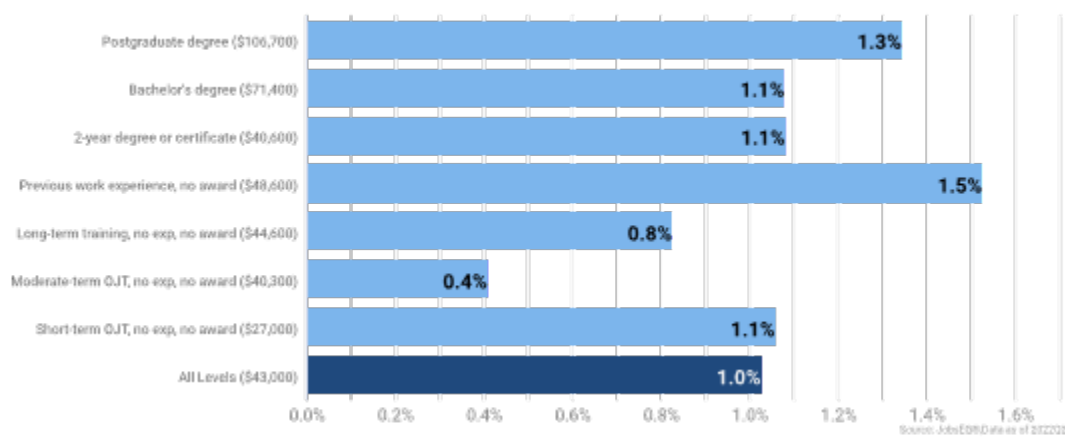


- **The knowledge and skills necessary to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including those in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;**

Data for the Pee Dee Region provided typical entry level education requirements for various Health Care occupations. For example, Registered Nurses require an Associate Degree while personal care aides require certification/licenses. Such occupations require some type of certification to meet the requirements demanded in the healthcare industry.

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Greater Pee Dee Region is projected to grow 1.0% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 1.3% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 1.1% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 1.1% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Training Required



In general, the majority of people hired by employers in the Pee Dee Region tend to have a high school diploma or equivalent with no college studies (34.4%). However, the next group of employees being hired do have some college or an Associate Degree (29.17%). Approximately 17.59% of those being hired have less than a high school diploma or equivalent while 18.79% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The top 10 educational requirements reflected in recent job postings in the Health Care field are reflected below. Most of the openings require at minimum, a high school diploma. A high school diploma is the highest level of education possessed by the largest segment of the Pee Dee, so most adults in the Pee Dee Region would meet the minimum qualifications for employment.

## Openings by Education Levels

Education Levels		Active Job Ads	
Minimum Education Level			
Associate's degree	1,437		
High school diploma or equivalent	1,338		
Bachelor's degree	752		
Master's degree	710		
Doctoral or professional degree	128		
Unspecified/other	14,640		

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

The top 25 certifications employers look for when hiring in our region are listed below. The number represents how many times the certification shows up in job postings.

## Openings by Certifications

Certifications		Active Job Ads
Certificate Name		
Basic Life Support (BLS)	3,793	
Registered Nurse (RN)	3,208	
Driver's License	2,920	
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	1,878	
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	1,319	
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	1,157	
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	1,060	
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	992	
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	986	
Medical Assistant Certification (MA)	409	
First Aid Certification	394	
The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	380	
Secret Clearance	365	
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	327	
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	242	
HAZMAT	230	
Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)	210	
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	206	
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	165	
National Phlebotomy Association Certified Phlebotomist	144	
Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (NHA)	132	
Forklift Certified	130	
Medical Technologist (MT)	108	
Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC)	108	
Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)	105	

The list below also identifies the top 10 soft skills that all employers are looking for in employees. The requirement for these skills is included in job ad postings. All these soft skills are being addressed through various workshops held through WIOA, SC Works, the technical colleges, the school districts, workforce collaborations and more.

## Openings by Soft Skills

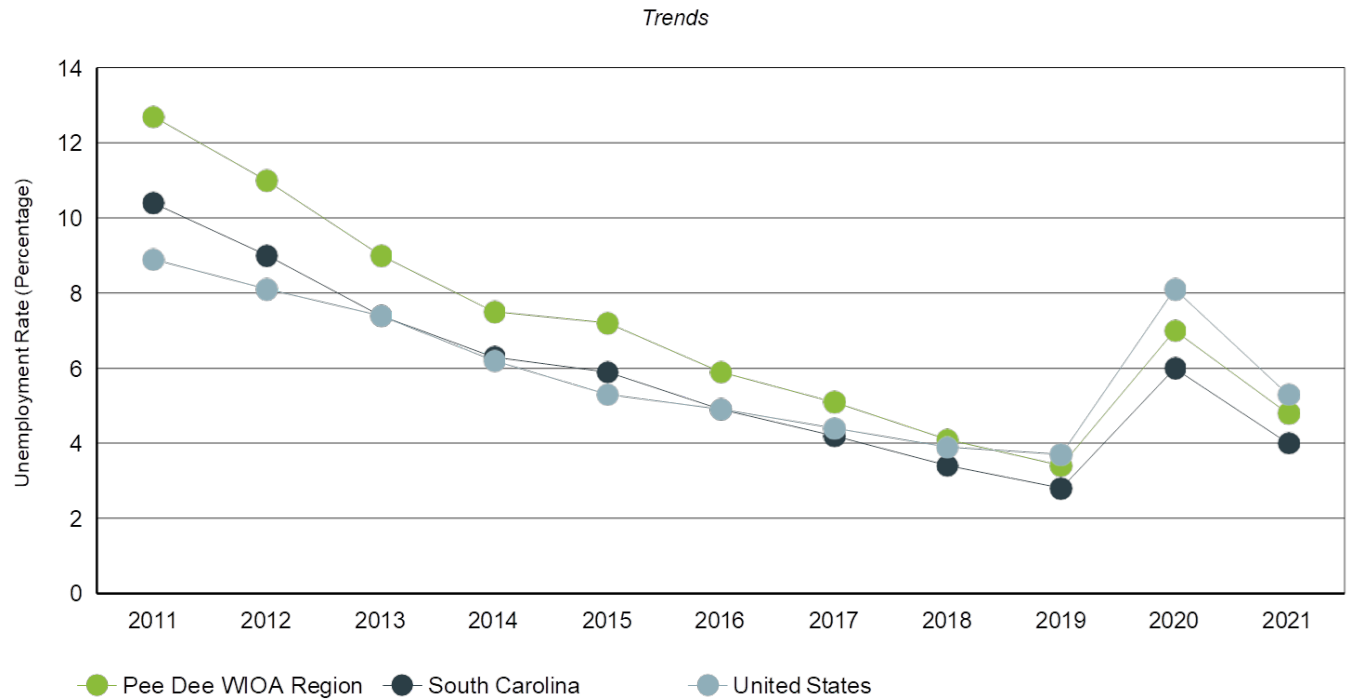
Soft Skills		Active Job Ads	
Skill Name			
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	38,880		
Customer Service	22,792		
Cooperative/Team Player	18,039		
Organization	11,259		
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	9,837		
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	8,262		
Supervision/Management	8,012		
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	7,947		
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships	7,935		
Ability to Work in a Fast Paced Environment	7,759		

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

- An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment; and

Analysis of unemployment rates reflects that the unemployment rate in the Pee Dee Region has been higher than the State for the past 10 years (2011-2021).

### Annual Unemployment Rate (Unadjusted)



Year	Pee Dee WIOA Region			South Carolina			United States		
	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate
2021	408,133	20,779	4.8%	2,269,813	94,553	4.0%	152,581,000	8,623,000	5.3%
2020	393,698	29,782	7.0%	2,191,331	139,532	6.0%	147,795,000	12,947,000	8.1%
2019	408,072	14,516	3.4%	2,256,313	64,876	2.8%	157,538,000	6,001,000	3.7%
2018	400,425	17,192	4.1%	2,202,377	77,054	3.4%	155,761,000	6,314,000	3.9%
2017	393,716	21,001	5.1%	2,166,708	95,058	4.2%	153,337,000	6,982,000	4.4%
2016	395,735	24,814	5.9%	2,174,301	111,753	4.9%	151,436,000	7,751,000	4.9%
2015	389,923	30,210	7.2%	2,134,087	133,750	5.9%	148,834,000	8,296,000	5.3%
2014	383,672	31,320	7.5%	2,082,941	139,485	6.3%	146,305,000	9,617,000	6.2%
2013	377,464	37,514	9.0%	2,034,404	163,472	7.4%	143,929,000	11,460,000	7.4%
2012	371,260	45,784	11.0%	1,992,957	197,246	9.0%	142,469,000	12,506,000	8.1%
2011	367,838	53,305	12.7%	1,957,493	227,678	10.4%	139,869,000	13,747,000	8.9%

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce

The number of Area Job Openings in the region has also fluctuated over the past year but continues to be significantly less than the number of unemployed individuals in the region. Thus, the need to create additional employment opportunities within the region.

### Area Job Openings

Period	Pee Dee WIOA Region South Carolina				Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings
	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings				
Oct-22	405,618	17,710	4.2%	11,712	2,307,838	78,578	3.3%	102,425
Sep-22	407,919	15,201	3.6%	11,667	2,315,822	75,404	3.2%	100,689
Aug-22	411,657	16,658	3.9%	11,508	2,320,199	74,521	3.1%	103,762
Jul-22	414,749	16,247	3.8%	11,213	2,323,963	75,661	3.2%	106,932
Jun-22	420,789	17,553	4.0%	10,713	2,326,245	77,941	3.2%	113,366
May-22	420,416	15,819	3.6%	10,450	2,321,969	79,129	3.3%	99,073
Apr-22	418,728	13,604	3.1%	9,888	2,312,654	79,165	3.3%	102,064
Mar-22	413,382	17,574	4.1%	9,763	2,303,599	80,747	3.4%	106,264
Feb-22	405,052	21,708	5.1%	8,070	2,295,733	82,614	3.5%	96,487
Jan-22	405,062	20,786	4.9%	6,850	2,292,300	82,242	3.5%	100,688
Dec-21	407,812	17,753	4.2%	8,768	2,286,561	84,737	3.6%	109,493
Nov-21	407,992	16,615	3.9%	10,031	2,285,949	85,167	3.6%	98,004
Oct-21	411,253	17,362	4.1%	9,615	2,284,207	86,523	3.6%	95,466

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce & The Conference Board's Help Wanted OnLine® data series  
South Carolina Data is Seasonally Adjusted

Labor Market projections reflect an 11.19% positive change in projected employment from 2018 to 2028 across all jobs. The Health Care sector continues to maintain and has a projected positive percent change of 14.93% (7,284 jobs) for this time period.

## Labor Market Projections

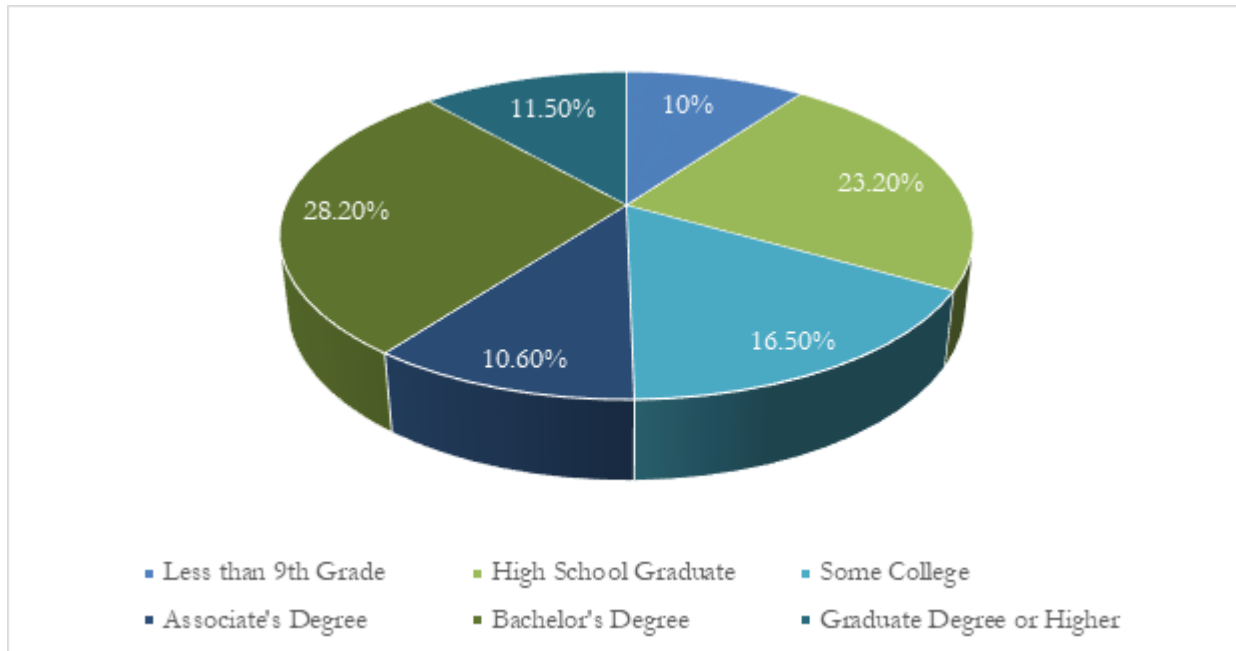
*Total Employment by Industry*  
(County/Metropolitan Statistical Area Data Unavailable)

Pee Dee WIOA Region Industry	2018 Estimated Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Change	Percent Change	Annual Percent
Total All Industries	385,065	428,158	43,093	11.19	1.07
Health Care and Social Assistance	48,803	56,087	7,284	14.93	1.40
Accommodation and Food Services	54,213	61,137	6,924	12.77	1.21
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediat	20,726	26,318	5,592	26.98	2.42
Construction	17,473	20,969	3,496	20.01	1.84
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,471	12,165	2,694	28.44	2.53
Manufacturing	38,004	40,037	2,033	5.35	0.52
Wholesale Trade	8,157	10,048	1,891	23.18	2.11
Transportation and Warehousing	10,368	11,947	1,579	15.23	1.43
Other Services (except Government)	17,733	19,084	1,351	7.62	0.74
Retail Trade	51,899	53,138	1,239	2.39	0.24
Educational Services	27,357	28,536	1,179	4.31	0.42
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6,253	7,310	1,057	16.90	1.57
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,647	8,664	1,017	13.30	1.26
Finance and Insurance	8,975	9,844	869	9.68	0.93
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,694	3,493	799	29.66	2.63
Information	3,203	3,550	347	10.83	1.03
Utilities	1,903	1,923	20	1.05	0.10
Mining	67	69	2	2.99	0.29
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,414	1,320	-94	-6.65	-0.69

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce - Industry Projections

Educational Attainment data indicates that approximately 10% of persons 25 years of age and older have received less than a high school diploma while 23.2% have graduated from high school. Approximately 16.5% have received some college education and 10.6% have received their Associate's Degree. Graduate trends for the region reflect more residents with a Bachelor's Degree (28.3%) than any other higher level post-secondary degree (11.5%).

**Educational Attainment**  
*(Population 25 Years and Older)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2019 Annual Social and Economic



## Barriers

The Pee Dee Region has many residents who face one or more barriers to employment. Different population groups may need more tailored services to address their training and employment needs. Data shows that 5,106 individuals were released in SC in 2022 and approximately 19.74% of those were in the Pee Dee WIOA Region. In the state, the average age of an inmate was 41 years old, 55% did not have a HS/GED.

EX-Offenders	
Pee Dee WIOA Region	1,008
State Total	5,106
% of state total	19.74%

Source: SC Department of Corrections

At 15 percent, the Pee Dee Region holds a high percentage of people with disabilities and the highest labor force participation rates (LFPR) for individuals with disabilities at 2.83%, just above the State's average of 2.79%. Also, for 5-17 year-old range, cognitive abilities hold the highest percentages. Mobility (ambulatory difficulty) is the highest percentage for all regions in the 18-64 year- old range.

Disability			
	Pee Dee Total	With a Disability	Percent with a Disability
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	999,487	87,436	15%

Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

Data shows that 175,374 people in the Pee Dee Region have incomes below the poverty level. The Pee Dee region represents 24.1% of SC's population who live in poverty.

Poverty			
	Pee Dee WIOA Region	SC Total	% of Population
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	175,374	726,470	24.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

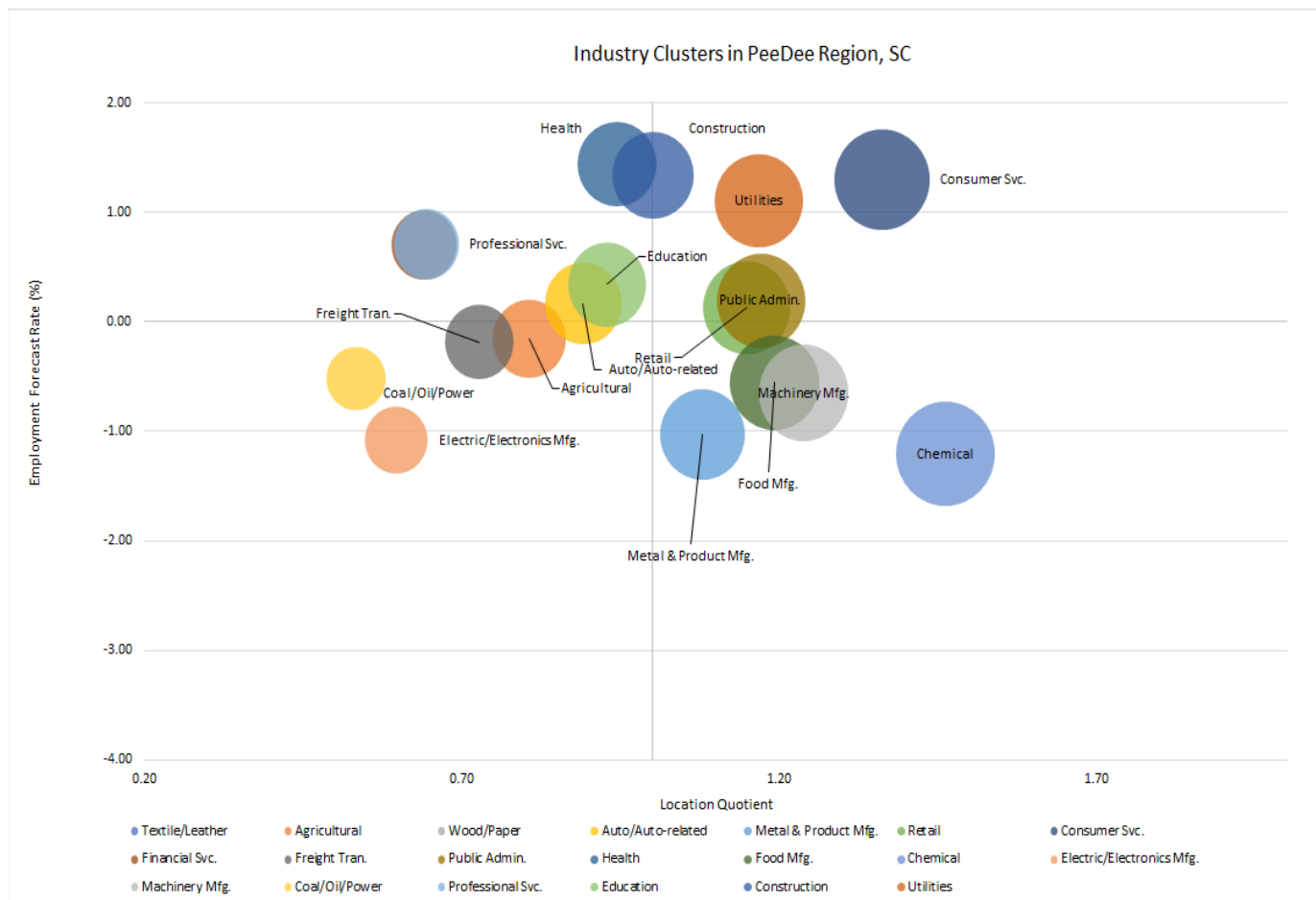
Approximately 28% of SC's homeless population are located in the Pee Dee Region. Data also shows that the majority of the 1153 homeless individuals are males. 68% of these individuals are unsheltered and 39% are adults with a substance abuse disorder. This is a very difficult group to reach since they often do not have any means of transportation, communication (ex. cell phone) or permanent address where they can be reached.

Homeless (January 2019)	
Pee Dee WIOA Region	1,153
South Carolina	4,172
% of state's homeless	27.6%

The data was collected by US Interagency Council of Homelessness

## Old Regional Data below. Skip to page 31. Replaced per State Instruction 21-09 Program Year 2022 Regional & Local Plan Modifications

Data reports and additional data and information solicited from various sources were analyzed to determine in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Explored were current sector priorities and Health Care was selected as the priority sector to continue planning efforts to create the pipeline needed to meet the employment needs of employers within the region. The data chart below supports Health Care as being the most in-demand, fastest growing sector for the region:



### Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Pee Dee Complete Region (WIOA) is Accommodation and Food Services, employing 55,895 workers. The next largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (54,281 workers) and Health Care and Social Assistance (53,023). An analysis of industry comparisons and clusters clearly support the healthcare sector as an existing as well as emerging in-demand industry sector. This analysis included an analysis of the Pee Dee Region data report, which documented significant job growth and occupations that would be attainable by the targeted populations of agencies and needs of employers in the region. There is a prevalence of healthcare as a demand industry in all parts of the region. Healthcare is the only industry with growth in all three local workforce areas. The other

industries are more prevalent in some areas than others and are very concentrated in singular parts of the region, e.g. Hospitality. Initial validation can be provided by healthcare representation on Local Boards, along with Technical colleges' validation of the demand for healthcare training in the region, and all three local workforce areas' validation of healthcare growth and demand across the region.

Pee Dee, 2020Q1 <sup>1</sup>											
NAICS	Industry	Current			5-Year History		1-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
72	Accommodation and Food Services	55,895	\$18,923	1.59	6,600	2.5%	9,855	4,015	5,058	783	1.4%
44	Retail Trade	54,281	\$26,544	1.36	2,779	1.1%	7,336	3,205	4,046	85	0.2%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	53,023	\$45,826	0.94	5,373	2.2%	5,774	2,465	2,549	760	1.4%
31	Manufacturing	39,315	\$54,909	1.23	1,365	0.7%	3,670	1,504	2,575	-410	-1.0%
61	Educational Services	29,063	\$40,185	0.92	641	0.4%	2,795	1,294	1,396	105	0.4%
	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	23,133	\$29,754	0.93	3,307	3.1%	2,846	1,131	1,541	174	0.8%
23	Construction	22,170	\$43,602	0.99	4,261	4.4%	2,490	783	1,400	307	1.4%
92	Public Administration	21,399	\$41,570	1.17	1,207	1.2%	2,003	832	1,130	41	0.2%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	17,637	\$23,382	1.02	-1	0.0%	2,065	917	1,094	55	0.3%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	13,550	\$42,774	0.76	2,803	4.7%	1,498	613	830	54	0.4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11,228	\$53,439	0.43	155	0.3%	1,073	358	604	111	1.0%
52	Finance and Insurance	9,879	\$53,062	0.64	1,023	2.2%	994	350	574	70	0.7%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9,071	\$20,591	1.16	792	1.8%	1,401	573	707	122	1.3%
42	Wholesale Trade	8,254	\$53,704	0.56	0	0.0%	861	326	540	-5	-0.1%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7,545	\$37,503	1.11	-147	-0.4%	857	349	417	92	1.2%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,210	\$35,101	1.02	-371	-1.4%	539	240	323	-24	-0.5%
51	Information	3,564	\$51,084	0.47	-214	-1.2%	332	124	219	-11	-0.3%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,513	\$77,214	0.43	396	3.5%	237	84	143	10	0.4%
22	Utilities	2,215	\$87,071	1.11	-60	-0.5%	197	72	127	-2	-0.1%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	260	\$55,138	0.16	-46	-3.2%	28	9	18	1	0.5%
	Total - All Industries	389,204	\$37,632	1.00	29,861	1.6%	44,900	18,163	24,316	2,421	0.6%
Source: JobsEQ®											
Data as of 2020Q1											

## Industry Snapshot (Pee Dee Region)

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WAGES

6-Digit Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5yr History	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	14,405	\$52,924	0.98		1,141	0.3%
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	8,888	\$83,606	1.33		835	1.4%
Home Health Care Services	4,805	\$26,633	1.18		678	3.7%
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	4,081	\$29,190	1.01		399	-0.5%
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	2,782	\$15,693	0.56		456	3.4%
Child Day Care Services	2,591	\$18,232	0.91		327	0.6%

Offices of Dentists	2,165	\$53,106	0.90	214	1.2%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities	1,718	\$26,092	1.37	255	2.8%
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	1,239	\$22,772	1.45	126	-1.3%
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities	977	\$21,625	0.79	126	0.6%
Remaining Component Industries	9,374	\$42,560	0.74	1,071	2.2%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>53,023</b>	<b>\$45,826</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>5,774</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Source: JobsEQ

## Industry Snapshot (South Carolina)

### EMPLOYMENT

### WAGES

6-Digit Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	5yr History	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	83,845	\$59,887	0.96		7,031	0.7%
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	46,128	\$91,094	1.16		4,481	1.7%
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	20,498	\$34,496	0.86		2,128	0.1%
Home Health Care Services	19,541	\$31,386	0.81		2,825	4.0%
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	15,274	\$16,260	0.52		2,554	3.8%
Offices of Dentists	14,150	\$54,346	0.99		1,452	1.5%
Child Day Care Services	13,352	\$20,098	0.79		1,759	1.2%
Continuing Care Retirement Communities	9,265	\$27,914	1.25		1,408	3.1%
Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	5,712	\$24,408	0.84		865	3.0%
Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability Facilities	5,164	\$26,364	0.71		699	1.2%
Remaining Component Industries	57,275	\$43,958	0.78		6,590	2.4%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>290,203</b>	<b>\$50,945</b>	<b>0.87</b>		<b>32,641</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

Source: JobsEQ

Based on the analysis of all data, healthcare is expected to grow across all areas in this region.

### Drivers of Employment Growth (Pee Dee Region)

Over the ten years ending 2019, employment in Health Care and Social Assistance for the Greater Pee Dee Region added 8,066 jobs. After adjusting for national growth during this period and industry mix share, the part of this employment change due to local competitiveness was a loss of 1,941 jobs—meaning this industry was less competitive than its national counterpart during this period.

### **Drivers of Employment Growth (South Carolina)**

Over the ten years ending 2019, employment in Health Care and Social Assistance for South Carolina added 54,730 jobs. After adjusting for national growth during this period and industry mix share, the part of this employment change due to local competitiveness was a gain of 6,143 jobs—meaning this industry was more competitive than its national counterpart during this period.

- The knowledge and skills necessary to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including those in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

Data for the Pee Dee Region provided typical entry level education requirements for various healthcare occupations. For example, Registered Nurses require an Associate Degree while personal care aides require certification/licenses. Such occupations require some type of certification to meet the requirements demanded in the healthcare industry.

In general, the majority of people hired by employers in the Pee Dee Region tend to have a high school diploma or equivalent with no college studies (34.45%). However, the next group of employees being hired do have some college or an Associate Degree (29.17%). Approximately 17.59% of those being hired have less than a high school diploma or equivalent while 18.79% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The top 10 educational requirements reflected in recent job postings are reflected below. Most of the openings require at minimum, a high school diploma, which is the highest level of education possessed by the largest segment of the Pee Dee so they would meet the minimum qualifications for employment.

## Openings by Education Levels

Education Levels	
Minimum Education Level	Total Ads
High school diploma or equivalent	5,431
Bachelor's degree	1,288
Associate's degree	602
Master's degree	307
Doctoral or professional degree	56
Unspecified/other	11,378

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

The top 25 certifications employers look for when hiring in our region are listed below. The number represents how many times the certification shows up in job postings.

## Openings by Certifications

Certifications	
Certificate Name	Total Ads
Basic Life Support (BLS)	597
Driver's License	552
Registered Nurse (RN)	514
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	333
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	288
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	194
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	150
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	143

### Certifications

Certificate Name	Total Ads
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	113
Secret Clearance	113
First Aid Certification	101
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	95
Medical Assistant Certification (MA)	86
The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	59
National Phlebotomy Association Certified Phlebotomist	47
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	40
Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)	38
Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic (EMT-P)	36
HAZMAT	36
Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (NHA)	34
Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	32
Forklift Certified	29
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	28
Medical Technologist (MT)	25
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	24

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

The list below also identifies the top 10 soft skills that employers are looking for in employees. The requirement for these skills is included in job ad postings. All these soft skills are being addressed through various workshops held through WIOA, SC Works, the technical colleges, the school districts, workforce collaborations and more.

### Openings by Soft Skills

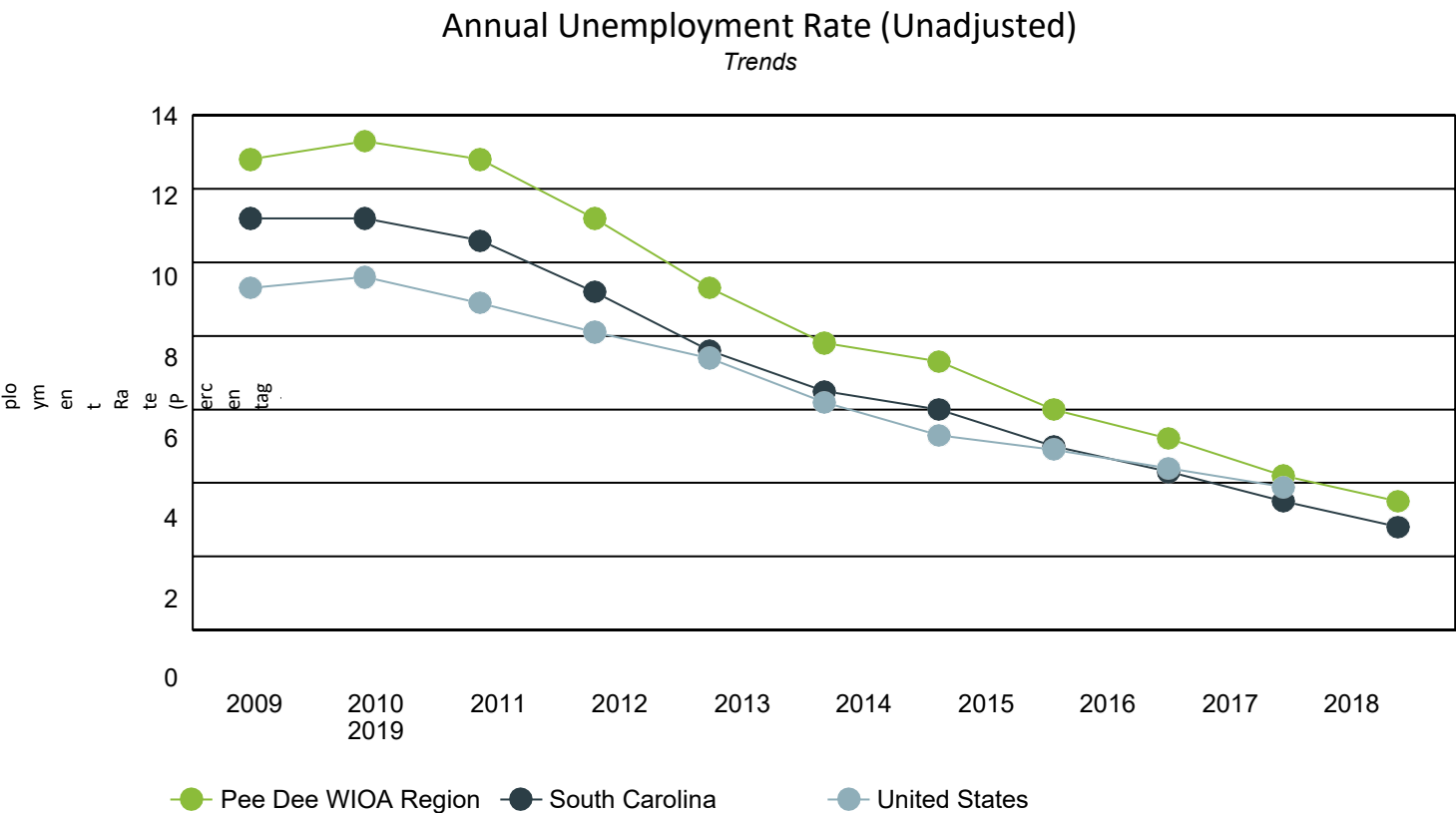
#### Soft Skills

Skill Name	Total Ads
Communication (Verbal and written skills)	7,782
Customer Service	5,106
Cooperative/Team Player	3,505
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership	2,573
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty	2,509
Organization	2,361
Supervision/Management	1,830
Detail Oriented/Meticulous	1,763
Enthusiastic/Energetic	1,709
Accountable/Responsible/Reliable/Dependable/Trustworthy	1,574



- An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment; and

Analysis of unemployment rates reflects that the unemployment rate in the Pee Dee Region has been higher than the State for the past 10 years (2008-2018).



Year	Pee Dee WIOA Region			South Carolina			United States		
	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate
2018	410,734	18,048	4.2%	2,259,057	80,882	3.5%	155,761,000	6,314,000	3.9%
2017	402,097	21,834	5.2%	2,212,845	98,921	4.3%	153,337,000	6,982,000	4.4%
2016	397,068	25,559	6.0%	2,181,587	115,213	5.0%	151,436,000	7,751,000	4.9%
2015	390,485	30,674	7.3%	2,137,158	135,838	6.0%	148,834,000	8,296,000	5.3%
2014	382,875	32,268	7.8%	2,078,592	143,753	6.5%	146,305,000	9,617,000	6.2%
2013	375,467	38,372	9.3%	2,023,642	167,326	7.6%	143,929,000	11,460,000	7.4%
2012	369,897	46,700	11.2%	1,985,618	201,260	9.2%	142,469,000	12,506,000	8.1%
2011	365,669	53,758	12.8%	1,945,900	229,623	10.6%	139,869,000	13,747,000	8.9%
2010	363,539	55,536	13.3%	1,915,045	240,623	11.2%	139,064,000	14,825,000	9.6%
2009	370,542	54,226	12.8%	1,910,670	242,075	11.2%	139,877,000	14,265,000	9.3%
2008	386,749	33,904	8.1%	1,996,409	145,823	6.8%	145,362,000	8,924,000	5.8%

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce

The number of Area Job Openings in the region has also fluctuated over the past year but continues to be significantly less than the number of unemployed individuals in the region. Thus, the need to create additional employment opportunities within the region.

## Area Job Openings

Period	Pee Dee WIOA Region				South Carolina			
	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings
Jul-20	412,761	45,203	9.9%	6,550	2,242,832	211,965	8.6%	45,266
Jun-20	411,677	44,684	9.8%	6,155	2,226,783	211,612	8.7%	37,666
May-20	386,330	59,404	13.3%	5,224	2,116,430	299,668	12.4%	38,053
Apr-20	367,085	63,610	14.8%	5,909	2,073,470	303,360	12.8%	51,518
Mar-20	420,870	16,497	3.8%	7,542	2,328,802	76,369	3.2%	57,374
Feb-20	417,557	16,845	3.9%	6,137	2,333,224	58,631	2.5%	52,662
Jan-20	414,728	16,718	3.9%	5,927	2,330,497	56,599	2.4%	52,639
Dec-19	416,354	13,159	3.1%	5,587	2,326,018	57,279	2.4%	59,953
Nov-19	417,276	11,867	2.8%	5,966	2,326,821	56,712	2.4%	55,821
Oct-19	420,430	12,411	2.9%	11,123	2,326,812	56,244	2.4%	68,386
Sep-19	420,581	10,434	2.4%	10,269	2,322,842	57,450	2.4%	66,100
Aug-19	424,516	14,639	3.3%	11,283	2,316,783	60,140	2.5%	67,729
Jul-19	428,523	15,626	3.5%	11,426	2,309,920	64,300	2.7%	68,223

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce & The Conference Board's Help Wanted OnLine® data series  
 South Carolina Data is Seasonally Adjusted

Labor Market projections reflect an 11.19% positive change in projected employment from 2016 to 2026 across all jobs. The healthcare sector, in particular, has a projected positive percent change of 20.63% (9,594 jobs) for this time period.

## Labor Market Projections

*Total Employment by Industry*  
(County/Metropolitan Statistical Area Data Unavailable)

Note: Projections are available by Workforce Investment Area (WIA). The data displayed is selected from the appropriate WIA.

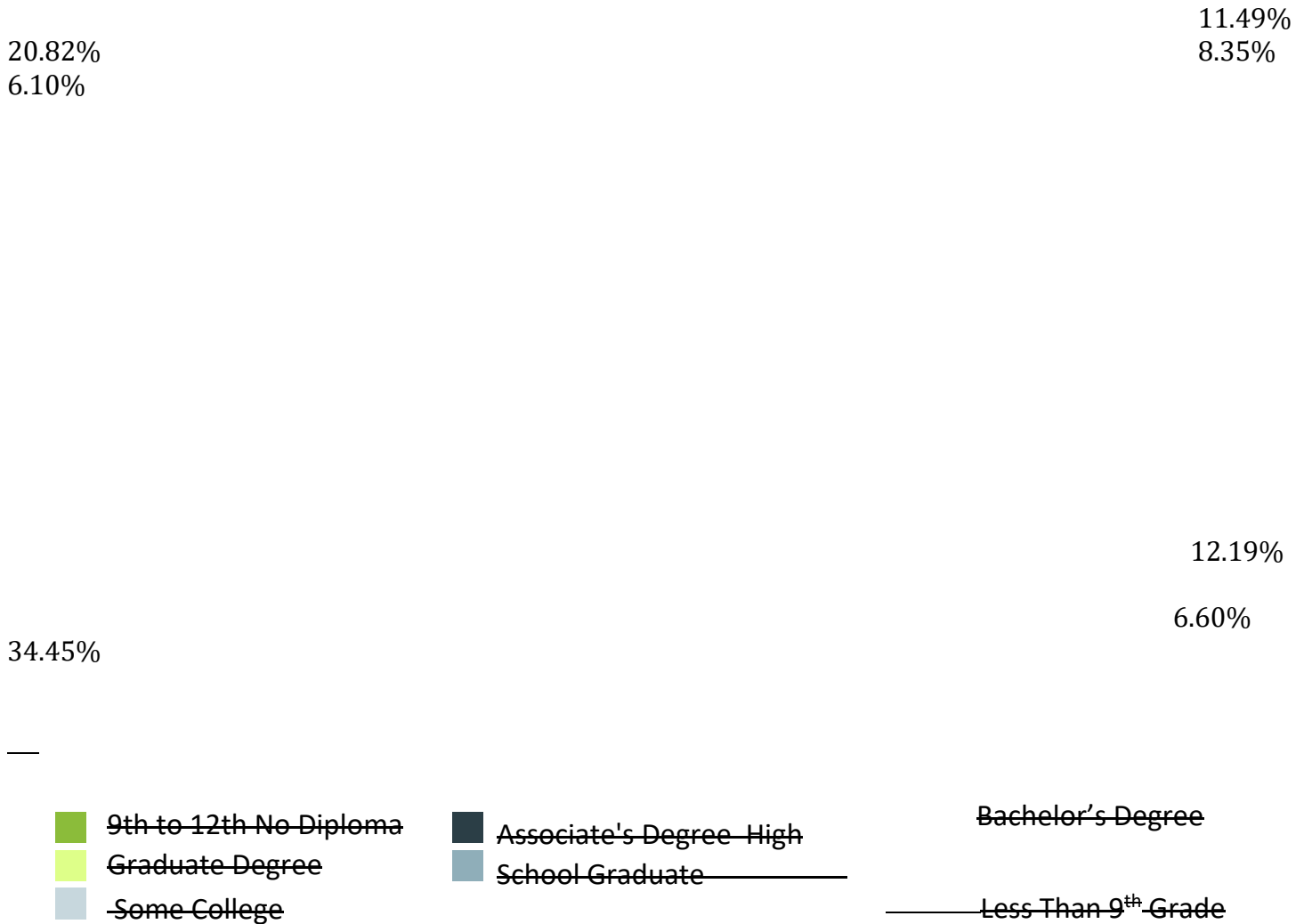
Pee Dee WIOA Region	2016	2026			
Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Change	Percent Change	Annual Percent
Total All Industries	388,985	432,518	43,531	11.19	1.07
Accommodation and Food Services	51,714	62,341	10,627	20.55	1.89
Health Care and Social Assistance	46,495	56,089	9,594	20.63	1.89
Retail Trade	51,244	55,478	4,234	8.26	0.80
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation	19,621	23,252	3,631	18.51	1.71
Transportation and Warehousing	9,363	12,150	2,787	29.77	2.64
Educational Services	28,261	30,811	2,550	9.02	0.87
Construction	16,130	18,194	2,064	12.80	1.21
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,882	12,327	1,445	13.28	1.25
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6,586	7,812	1,226	18.62	1.72
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,436	8,284	848	11.40	1.09
Other Services (except Government)	18,190	19,023	833	4.58	0.45
Manufacturing	37,542	38,273	731	1.95	0.19
Finance and Insurance	9,089	9,712	623	6.85	0.67
Wholesale Trade	3,985	4,604	619	15.53	1.45
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,364	2,709	345	14.59	1.37
Information	3,600	3,745	145	4.03	0.40
Utilities	682	686	4	0.59	0.06
Mining	179	175	-4	-2.23	-0.23
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,471	5,707	-764	-11.81	-1.25

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce - Industry Projections

Educational Attainment data indicates that approximately 11.49% of persons 25 years of age and older have received less than a high school diploma while 34.45% have graduated from high school.

Approximately 20.82% have received some college education and 8.35% have received their Associate's Degree. Graduate trends for the region reflect more residents with a Bachelor's Degree (12.19%) than any other higher level post-secondary degree (6.60%).

**Educational Attainment**  
(Population 25 Years and Older)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 2013 5-Year Estimates

## Barriers

The Pee Dee Region has many residents who face one or more barriers to employment. Different population groups may need more tailored services to address their training and employment needs. Data shows that 7,519 individuals were released in SC in 2019 and approximately 21.23% of those were in the Pee Dee WIOA Region. In the state, the average age of an inmate was 39 years old, 49% did not have a HS/GED.

EX-Offenders	
Pee Dee WIOA Region	1,596
State Total	7,519
% of state total	21.23%

Source: SC Department of Corrections

At 12%, the Pee Dee Region holds a large percentage of people with disabilities and the highest labor force participation rates (LFPR) for individuals with disabilities at 3.1%. Also, for the 5-17-year-old range, cognitive abilities hold the highest percentages. Mobility (ambulatory difficulty) is the highest percentage for all regions in the 18-64-year-old range.

Disability			
	Pee Dee Total	With a Disability	Percent
Total Civilian	1,008,789	119,983	12%
Noninstitutionalized Population			

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018

Data shows that 188,411 people in the Pee Dee Region have incomes below the poverty level. The Pee Dee region represents 24.5% of SC's population who live in poverty.

Poverty			
	Pee Dee WIOA Region	SC Total	188,411 % of Population
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	188,411	751,907	
	15.3%		

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018

Approximately 28% of SC's homeless population are located in the Pee Dee Region. Data also shows that the majority of the 1,153 homeless individuals are males. 68% of these individuals are unsheltered and 39% are adults with a substance abuse disorder. This is a very difficult group to reach since they often do not have any means of transportation, communication (ex. Cell phone) or permanent address where they can be reached.

Homeless (January 2019)	
Pee Dee WIOA Region	1,153

South Carolina	4,172
% of state's homeless	27.6%
The data was collected by US Interagency Council of Homelessness	

## 12/2022 Updates of Narrative begin here:

- **An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including available education and training opportunities. This analysis must indicate the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities necessary to address the education and skill needs of job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

### Strengths

A strength of the region's workforce development activities is the many collaborations in place to help individuals with barriers to find employment that will lead to a self-sufficient wage.

For example, for ex-offenders, WIOA in Georgetown County has a partnership with the Georgetown Re-Entry Program. SCDEW has a partnership with SC Department of Corrections that allows Workforce Consultants to visit Palmer Pre-Release Center in Florence County, Lee Correctional Institution in Lee County and Evans Correctional Facility in Marlboro County on a monthly basis to provide workforce services to incarcerated individuals prior to re-entry. Such services include assistance with resumes and applications, an introduction to WIOA, SCWOS and federal bonding. Ex-offenders who have gone through a vigorous training program through the prison system have then been enrolled in WIOA where they have been on a Work Experience and then rolled over into an On-the-Job Training opportunity. Many of these ex-offenders have been successfully hired and are doing well. The inmates are informed of the SC Works System and center locations across the state, so that when they are released, they are aware and can visit the center of their choice. DJJ is a partner on the boards' Youth Committees and its members offer expertise and collaboration on serving youth offenders.

In 2016, Northeastern Technical College (NETC) and Evans Correctional Facility applied and were approved for the Second Chance Initiative with the US Department of Education. In December 2019, five (5) inmates graduated with their associate's degrees in business marketing. On August 9, 2022, nine (9) more inmates graduated with workforce certificates in business and industrial technology. The Second Chance Initiative allows these schools to offer Pell grants to people incarcerated in state or federal prisons, mostly targeting inmates who are likely to be released within five years. NETC instructors travel to the facility to work with the inmates. NETC encourages these inmates to stay in the community and take local jobs. President Kyle Wagner says that the college has worked with local industries to provide opportunities for the inmates after they are released. Research shows that access to postsecondary education in prison can reduce recidivism by up to 48% which is the rate in which those convicted of a crime returns to prison. Due to the success of the pilot program, funding eligibility will expand in 2023 to include incarcerated individuals throughout South Carolina.

One way that the region is assisting *individuals with disabilities* is through the Disabilities Committees created under the WIOA federal law. These committees are made up of Workforce Development Board Members and other experts in the community such as Vocational Rehab, Disabilities and Special Needs and other officials. In February 2020, the Disabilities Committee of the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board held a Job & Resource Fair. The committee hosted two events in 2022. In March, 2022, 187 job seekers and 26 employers/service support organizations attended and in November, 22 vendors/employers and eighty-two (82) job seekers attended.

Also, Vocational Rehabilitation is an active, vibrant partner in each local area, providing professional services to this population, to include job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse treatment centers and staff that serves clients at various itinerant sites such as SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. SC Commission for the Blind offers individualized services for the blind and visually impaired and businesses that hire these individuals throughout the region. The Santee-Lynches Workforce Development Board received a \$53,090 grant from Able SC. One objective of this grant was to create greater job access and opportunities for individuals with disabilities by promoting and advocating for workplace inclusion. These efforts help to facilitate independence for both youth and adult persons with disabilities. It also has an objective of increasing employer knowledge of the facts concerning people with disabilities and combating potential negative attitudes towards those with disabilities. Quarterly training sessions were held for regional employers, SC Works staff and all partner agencies. Local employers commended the training and the information provided and expressed interest in continuing the training sessions on a regular basis. ~~There has been~~ During the 2019 Program Year, there was an 8% increase in the number of individuals served with disabilities through the WIOA over the previous year. The Region continues to serve individuals with disabilities through the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, but at a lower percentage rate than the previous years. This is due in part to serving fewer customers in the centers due to budget cuts and the pandemic. Moving forward, potentially quarterly or bi-annual training sessions will be discussed, partnering with Able SC to continue the momentum of educating staff and employers to provide better opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Several new collaborations have taken place following the COVID-19 pandemic to bring additional funding to the region to help individuals with barriers find employment. Of course, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund is allowing the technical colleges in the region to support students in short term training programs in in demand occupations. In January, 2021, the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments received an H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant of \$2.27 million from the US Department of Labor to serve 350 unemployed, underemployed and/or incumbent workers. (Upper Savannah Council of Governments is a partner serving 100 of the 350 to become EMTs and Paramedics.) The grant is to address the shortage of rural healthcare workers in occupations directly impacting patient care- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Phlebotomists, Pharmacy Technicians, Certified Medical Assistants (CMA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). The employer partner for the grant is McLeod Health which has hospitals and physicians' practices throughout the greater Pee Dee Region. The technical colleges in the Greater Pee Dee Region are providing training to H-1B recruits. The grant expires in 01/2025. Also, in September 2021, as part of a consortium of five local areas including the Pee Dee, Upper Savannah Council of Governments received a \$2.8 million National Dislocated Worker Grant to help provide training and employment



services to job seekers as the economy recovers from impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. In the Pee Dee, 60 individuals will receive On-the-Job Training (OJT) and supportive services. The grant expires in 2023.

Collaborations have been formed with public agencies such as the Department of Social Services, as well as private, non-profit organizations to help create employability skills boot camps that involve workshops, assessments, mock interviewing and referrals to other partner agencies that may be able to help those who are *low income*. Low income is defined as an annual income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. DSS is a viable partner and provides employment and training services to recipients of SNAP and TANF, such as resume assistance, soft skills development, job search assistance and referrals to employers and partner organizations. Project Hope is especially helpful in the Pee Dee WIOA Region as it provides funding for training and employment in the allied health field for low-income individuals, veterans, and youth aging out of foster care.

To assist the *homeless*, agencies have come together to provide housing, basic needs, employability skills training which eventually lead to a job. Partnering together has proven to be a successful means to helping homeless individuals gain employment. In the Pee Dee Workforce Development Area, the Courtney McGinnis Graham Community Shelter and Lighthouse Ministries serve as catalysts to accomplish this collaboration for supportive service needs in Florence County. The possibility of placing technology in the locations where homeless individuals, including homeless veterans, can access SC Works Online Services is being explored.

As noted, data indicates that in the region, approximately 18% of persons 25 years of age and older have received less than a high school diploma while roughly 34% have graduated from high school. Individuals without a HSD/GED are encouraged to enroll in Adult Education. Unfortunately, many individuals with a high school diploma are tested to be *basic skills deficient*, but there are many opportunities available through Adult Education for upgrading which in many cases is coupled with WIN skills' development. A win-win!

Five technical colleges are located in the Pee Dee WIOA Region (Northeastern, Florence-Darlington, Horry Georgetown, Central Carolina and Williamsburg) and along with the adult educations in each county, we have many institutions available to provide the necessary and required training to address the education and skill needs of job seekers. The Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing & Technology (SiMT), at FDTC, offers current, quality programs to employers in the Advanced Manufacturing sector, a key sector for the region. Its reputation extends beyond the region and state. The Central Carolina Advanced Manufacturing Technology Training Center in Sumter County houses mechatronics labs, robotics, computer sciences training programs. Central Carolina Technical College also has a Health Sciences Center that targets training in the healthcare field, to include licensed practical and registered nurses. Horry Georgetown Technical College has opened two new advanced manufacturing centers to house programs designed to fit the needs of industrial companies such as Mercedes, Boeing, Peddinghaus and Conbraco. The new buildings house equipment for machine tool technology, welding and advanced welding, robotics, mechatronics, and other types of programs. The necessary supportive services designed to eliminate barriers to employment are in place and each local area has entered into memorandums of understanding with various partner agencies to facilitate

job seeker access to those services. In addition, collaborative agreements are in place between employers and technical college institutions that allows for clinical training opportunities, etc. to be conducted at employer worksites to ensure that the proper training is provided to meet employer demands.

A tremendous strength for economic development in the Pee Dee Region is the opening of Inland Port Dillon in 2018. It is located on I-95 near the North Carolina/South Carolina border and is positioned within the 3,400-acre Carolinas I-95 Mega Industrial Site. The Inland Port offers importers and exporters in the Eastern Carolinas area an exciting new option. Using CSX rail to/from the Dillon market gives cargo owners the ability to control costs with maximum flexibility and minimal inland truck miles. According to a 2019 Economic Impact Study conducted by the Darla Moore School of Business, the SC Ports Authority delivers \$63.4 billion economic impact annually in South Carolina touching 1 in 10 SC jobs. In the Pee Dee, the port's economic impact is \$7.1 billion, touching 25,275 jobs and providing labor income of \$1.4 billion. The placement of the Inland Port in the Pee Dee Region will bring economic growth and opportunities for more strategic alliances.

Also, Business Partner Meetings are held in all three of the local areas which connect employers and workforce agencies, i.e., WIOA, SC Works, Vocational Rehab, technical colleges, DSS, etc. These meetings are designed to enable some of the workforce agencies to provide information to employers on the types of services available to them such as OJTs, Work Experience, internships, apprenticeships and more; as well as provide them a pool of applicants qualified for open positions.

## Weaknesses

Although, there are opportunities available in each local area to provide education and training opportunities, address the education and skill needs of job seekers and the employment needs of employers, more conversation is needed on how to replicate some of these programs regionally. The three local areas are aware of this and have started discussing how to "regionalize" some of these programs.

There is a weakness looming affecting the entire workforce system is that training providers are resistant regarding the resistance of training providers to track and report performance outcomes of its training programs as required by WIOA. Thus far, The US Department of Labor has provided did not issue a waiver that allows allowing training providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), [www.scpa.org](http://www.scpa.org), an exemption. Many of the technical colleges in South Carolina have expressed their concern and likelihood not to list their programs on [www.scpa.org](http://www.scpa.org) if a waiver is not provided in the future. In the Pee Dee, Northeastern Technical College (NETC), continues to list limited courses, however, far fewer than in the past. This will have a major effect on the availability of occupational skills trainings for WIOA participants. The Pee Dee Region will make has made it a priority to strengthen its work-based learning opportunities as well as seek additional partnerships with private training providers who are able to meet reporting requirements in the coming year. so as to circumvent the detriment of the pending situation.

COVID-19 brought havoc to the State of South Carolina's economy beginning in mid-March 2020. The State's unemployment rate went from a low of 3.2% in March to 12.1% in April 2020. Much of the Pee Dee WIOA Region's workforce was out of work between March 21<sup>st</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> of 2020, as many businesses were forced to lay off or furlough workers. During the pandemic, a core SC Works partner, the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, paid out nearly \$4 billion in a combination of state and federal unemployment benefits. SC Works Centers in the Pee Dee WIOA Region closed to the public for a period but continued to provide services virtually. Currently, in-person appointments are available, and the virtual menu of services is even more extensive as a result of COVID-19. According to the accompanying data, unemployment in the state went from 2.8% in 2019 to 6% in 2020, and in the region from 3.4% to 7%, however, 2021 Unemployment indicates a climb for the state to 4.0% and for the region at 4.8%

Unfortunately, PY '21 WIOA Title I allocations were reduced in each of the local areas in the Pee Dee Region. The reductions will affect both the operations and delivery of workforce services in the rural region.

## Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

***A description of the local board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency, including:***

- *Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and*

Years ago, the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board (PDWDB) formulated the following vision for the Pee Dee's workforce system- A coordinated, proactive system that aligns talent development assets with current and future business recruitment, retention, and attraction efforts to improve the economic competitiveness of the region. The Board, its staff and partners have worked hard to see this vision realized. This vision statement ~~will be was~~ re-visited, new goals ~~will be were~~ set and strategies ~~will be were~~ developed when the Board ~~meets this fall to begin~~ began its strategic planning for 2020-2024. Brianna Dennis, Executive Director, Kelley Center for Economic Development, Francis Marion University, ~~will facilitated~~ the development of the plan ~~to be completed~~ March 2021 and most recently in March 2022. The tenets of the State Workforce Board's Strategic Plan ~~will also be were~~ examined and the ~~Local Board will ensure that its plans are~~ were in line with the State's plans. In March 2022, again under the leadership of Brianna Dennis, a new vision statement for 2021-2024 was adopted as follows- *The vision of the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board is to support a unified workforce development system of strategic partnerships that are focused on support, collaboration, and progression for all businesses, job seekers, and other stakeholders in the Pee Dee Workforce Region.*

Committee meetings are held to address strategic goals and progress is discussed at every board meeting.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Board members virtually engaged to review a presentation by North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) on the Socioeconomic statistics and employment situation of the Pee Dee. Also at the Zoom conference were core and community partners. During the two-hour session, the board and partners conversed to draw conclusions from the data, identify target populations that needed attention and businesses/industry sectors that must be engaged in order for the region to experience economic growth and individual self-sufficiency. ~~Although concrete strategic goals for 2020-2023 will be made when the Board convenes to plan this fall, the following were goal worthy conclusions, most involving youths and adults with barriers to employment, that may receive particular attention:~~ Following is the list determined from August 2020 with updates noted:

#### Conclusions/Opportunities:

- The Labor Force Participation Rate for Disabled population in the Pee Dee (29.6%) is significantly lower than the state's (37.0%). Opportunity to engage this population and understand reasons disabled may not participate. (The Board's Disabilities Committee has spearheaded two successful job fairs in partnership with the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department. Special attention was given to educating employers about the accommodations available for the individuals with disabilities that they might hire.)
- % of disconnected youth (not in school, not high school graduates, not working or actively seeking employment) is high versus the state % (3.4% vs. 2.7%). Opportunity to engage disconnected youth.
- The % of Young adults not employed but actively looking for work is substantially higher than the state's. [Ages 16-19 (37.7% vs. 20%), ages 20 to 21 (23.4% vs. 13.6%) and ages 22 to 24 (14.1 vs. 11.7%)]. Opportunity to engage this population. (Eckerd Connects has made a concerted effort to recruit participants via local alternative schools, adult educations and Career and Technical Education programs. In an effort to revitalize and train new WIOA Youth Program contract staff, the LWDA used Resiliency Grant funding to send Eckerd staff to the NAWDP Youth Conference in Charlotte in November 2022. The staff returned with innovative ideas to reach disconnected youth.)
- % of Pee Dee population below poverty (22.5%) is higher than the State's (16%). Opportunity to study generational poverty, its effects and Board's potential influence to improve poverty.
- Darlington County School District has the highest graduation rate in the Pee Dee (91.5%) and the lowest dropout rate (0.9%) and both rates are better than the state averages, correspondingly at 81.1% and 2.2%. Five

other Pee Dee districts have higher graduation rates than the State average. Only 4 of 11 Pee Dee School districts have lower dropout rates than the state. Opportunity to study effective districts' programs and share with others. (Although the Pee Dee WDB no longer funds a WIOA youth contract with Darlington County Schools, its program's former Program Director, Rudell DuBose, remains with the district and serves as a liaison between SC Works and the district. Her expertise will be used to positively impact services to out of school youth.)

- Nearly 6% of the State's homeless population is in the Pee Dee (243 of 4,172). Opportunity to engage this population. (Eckerd Connects staff participates in "First Friday" activities which are held in Florence monthly. Government programs and non-profits are on-hand to offer services to the homeless population in the area.)
- The number of people not working because of barriers is large, therefore, supporting the need for WIOA and its partner programs. Opportunity for the Board to support and promote all workforce programs. (Several members of the Pee Dee's WDB actively utilize and/or support SC Works Pee Dee activities by participating in Job Fairs and Hiring Events. Also, core partners are active in the SC Works Pee Dee system and other community partners are added all the time to enhance the services to individuals with barriers.)
- The % of individuals on public assistance (food stamps, SNAP benefits) is substantially higher than the state's (21.5% vs. 13.2%). Opportunity to engage these individuals. (DSS representatives are in all of the centers in the Pee Dee to offer services to individuals on public assistance.)
- Employers report lack of Soft skills as a deficit in the Pee Dee workforce. Need to find ways to address soft skills of Pee Dee job seekers. (Eckerd Connects provides soft skills training via a two-day activity entitled Career Smart and via a virtual platform known as Success Training Institute (STI)).
- Median household income is lower than the State's by approximately \$11,000 (\$51,015 vs. \$60,293). Need for a wage study to increase awareness of employers and job seekers. (LWDA staff frequently connects with SCDEW LMI professionals to provide wage information to local industries and Economic Developers. Recently, the results were shared with a local industry that decided to make changes to its wage plan to compete with other local employers- a win-win for the employer and job seekers.)
- McLeod Health reports the highest number of available jobs (882) in the Pee Dee as of late July 2020. How can the workforce system assist McLeod and other hiring employers to find employees? Opportunity to increase business services. (The LWDA was awarded an H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant in February 2021 and McLeod Health is the partnering employer for the Pee Dee project. The plan is for McLeod to hire approximately 250 CNAs, Pharmacy Techs, Phlebotomists, CMAs, LPNs, and RNs by January 2025.)

- Many Pee Dee college educated young adults do not return to the Pee Dee. How can the Board affect the vision of the Pee Dee as a place of choice, rather than sending our brightest and best away to other areas to work? Opportunity to play a part in promotion of the Pee Dee as a great place to live and work for young adults. (The LWDA partners regularly with SC Department of Commerce's Regional Workforce Advisor to assist with and host meetings with youth in middle and high school and attract them to viable employment opportunities.)
- 61.4% of the jobs available online in the Pee Dee only require some form of OJT. Opportunity for WIOA partners to promote OJT and other work-based learning programs. (The LWDA has received two grants which include opportunities for OJT- H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant and CAREER. More will be said about these grants further in the document. The CAREER grant includes 60 OJTs and the upper limit for OJTs in the H-1B grant is 250).
- The Nursing field of study is the most common degree needed for jobs advertised in the Pee Dee in the past six months (252) Opportunity to promote nursing and to compare the list of available jobs with programs available to support preparation for these jobs. (The H-1B Rural Healthcare grant includes LPNs and RNs, so indeed the Pee Dee is able to support hundreds in the occupation over the next few years.)
- Pee Dee Veteran participation rate in the workforce is lower than the State (72.2% vs. 75.1%). Opportunity to engage this population. (In recognition of National Workforce Development month, September 2022, the LWDA recognized Sheila Glenn, Pee Dee Veterans Workforce Consultant, as the Pee Dee's High-Performing Workforce Development Professional of the Year. Sheila has been with SCDEW for 8 years in the Veterans' position. The LWDA will explore ways to have her share her expertise and recruit for the veteran's program across the workforce system during her term this year.)
- Number of juvenile cases per 1000 (42.2 vs. 32) and inmate population in SCDC facilities per 1000 population (4.5 vs. 3.9) is higher than the state's number of cases. Opportunity to engage second chance job seekers. (Local DJJ staff have been engaged with the board's Youth Committee for many years, however, recently we have entered a new partnership with State DJJ staff from the SCDJJ Career Readiness Center. The intent is to increase the number of justice involved youth served in WIOA.)
- Transportation remains a barrier to employment in rural Pee Dee, however, Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority now offers free transportation routes in most of the Pee Dee's counties. Opportunity to study routes/employers along the routes and promote job opportunities to the unemployed.
- Desire by the Board to understand "nuances" of why people are not working. Opportunity to further explore the topic.

- (Sources: JobsEQ®, a product of Chmura Economics & Analysis. Copyright© 2020 Chmura Economics & Analytics; SC Department of Education, 2019; SC Department of Juvenile Justice, 2017; SC Department of Corrections, 2019; US Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2019; SC Department of Employment & Workforce). (In November 2022, Executive Director of SCDEW, Dan Ellzey, presented results from the SC Labor Force Participation Task Force's work. The task force surveyed individuals who worked in 2019, filed for UI in 2020, but were not found in recent wage records in the state. The response rate was 4%. The most frequently identified barriers to work noted by the respondents were: lack of good paying jobs, gaps in employment history, lack of transportation, more optimal working hours and disabilities. These results will be shared with the workforce board and solutions will be explored.)

In March, 2022, the Workforce Board also set the following broad goals for the board through 2024:

- Effective on-going communication and dialogue between staff, board members, federally mandated partners and allied partners.
  - Raise system awareness externally and through effective public relations and branding strategies.
  - Identify and/or provide educational and training opportunities for the workforce region.
  - Implement mission-focused practices to promote continual improvement throughout all areas of the system.
- ***A description of how the local board will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above.***

The PDWDB has multiple strategies to work with core and required partners to align available resources in order to make sure the Pee Dee's workforce is skilled and educated. A significant strategy is the local area's identification of the position of Workforce System Coordinator. Ms. Mamie Legette has served in this role since its inception. It is her mission to increase coordination with core WIOA partners and add community partnerships to the SC Works Pee Dee System. Partner meetings are held in each county and she faithfully attends County Coordinating Council meetings to share information about services available in the SC Works System.

At WIA's inception, the Pee Dee Workforce Investment Board determined that although only one comprehensive center is required per the local area, having a presence in each county is important. As a result, there are six SC Works Pee Dee Centers- one



comprehensive and five four affiliate sites. In addition, we have established access connection points with the Florence County Library system in Florence and Lake City and Chesterfield-Marlboro EOC, Inc. (Note that the number of locations have not decreased. The State Workforce Board has provided different terminology/definitions to refer to the various center types). Over the past two years, in particular, WIOA funding allotted to the Pee Dee has been drastically cut to the point that we find ourselves at the lowest funding level since the Local Area was established in 1990. As a result, aligning local resources is more important than ever and will be a continued focus in the years ahead.

Also, the PDWDB has established a One Stop Committee which includes WDB members, representatives of core programs and workforce partners. This committee's purpose is to increase business customers, promote SC Works in the community, improve center operations and increase partner participation. The Workforce System Coordinator is the assigned staff to this committee. The committee encourages the implementation of the One Stop Certification standards and will assist in the Pee Dee Center's attainment of the standards.

Each year the mission to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with core and community partners requires significant engagement and communication. The Pee Dee LWDA has organized numerous meetings with core programs and the need for these meetings continues. The Workforce System Coordinator works with the SC Works Center site managers to encourage "local" contact with core partners.

## Section III: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

- 1. A description of the planning process undertaken to produce the local plan. The description must include how the chief elected officials, local board, and core and required partners were involved in the development of the plan.***

In preparation for completion of the Local Plan, the PDWDB met to analyze labor market data, economic conditions and employment opportunity in the Pee Dee. Core and required partners and community partners received an invitation to be a part of the discussion. Attendance for this important meeting was impressive. The group drew conclusions and declared weaknesses indicated by the data, pinpointing opportunities for the Board and the workforce system. Also, to provide additional input, the LWDA reached out specifically to Core WIOA partners for input, agreeing to follow-up on proposed solutions recommended. The LWDA Director will present the Local Plan to all six county councils, requesting their input and approval.



## **2. A description of the workforce development system in the local area, including:**

- *Identification of the programs that are included in the system; and*

SC Works Pee Dee brings together a series of partner programs and entities responsible for workforce development, education, and other human resources programs to collaborate in the creation of a seamless customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services.

The purposes of the SC Works system are as follows:

- Increasing access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need, particularly those with barriers to employment;
- Supporting the alignment of workforce, education, and economic development systems;
- Improving the quality and labor market relevance of a demand-driven workforce that meets the needs of businesses and job seekers;
- Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services; and
- Providing workforce development activities that increase opportunities of participants and that increase post-secondary credential attainment and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers, and enhance productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

### **A complete list of partners and the programs they represent follows:**

<b>SC Works Partner</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Required or Optional</b>	<b>Representing</b>
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	Florence, Bennettsville, Hartsville, Marion, & Dillon	Required	Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, TAA, RES/REA
SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department	Dillon, Florence, Marion, Bennettsville, Hartsville	Required	Rehabilitation Programs for Individuals w/ Disabilities
SC Commission for the Blind	Florence, Marion	Required	Rehabilitation Programs for

			Individuals w/ Disabilities
SC Department of Social Services	Florence, Hartsville, Marion	Required (TANF) Optional (SNAP)	TANF, SNAP Employment and Training
Chesterfield County Adult Education	Chesterfield	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Darlington County Adult Education	Hartsville	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Dillon County Adult Education	Dillon	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Florence County Adult Education	Florence	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Marion Adult Education	Marion	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Marlboro Adult Education	Bennettsville	Required	Adult Education/Family Literacy
Northeastern Technical College	Dillon	Required	Post – Sec. Career & Tech. Ed. (Perkins)
Florence-Darlington Technical College	Florence	Required	Post – Sec. Career & Tech. Ed. (Perkins)
Chesterfield- Marlboro EOC, Inc.	Cheraw	Required	CSBG Employment and Training
Goodwill	Florence	Required	Senior Community Service Employment
Heritage Services Corporation	Florence	Required	Job Corps

Telamon Corporation	Florence	Required	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
Pee Dee Healthy Start	Florence	Required	Second Chance Act
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments	Chesterfield, Cheraw, Hartsville, Dillon, Florence, Marion, Bennettsville, Lake City	Required	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth

In accordance with the Pee Dee Local Workforce Area SC Works System Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), each Partner has agreed to:

- a) Provide access to its programs or activities through the SC Works delivery system;
- b) Use a portion of funds made available to the partner's program, to the extent consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program and with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Part 200 and as supplemented by specific Federal agency Parts and CFRs, to:
  - (1) Provide applicable career services; and
  - (2) Work collaboratively with the State and Local Board to establish and maintain the SC Works delivery system. This includes jointly funding the one-stop infrastructure costs through partner contributions that are based upon:
    - (i) A reasonable cost allocation methodology by which infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to use and relative benefits received; and
    - (ii) Federal cost principles;
- c) Enter into an MOU with the Local Board relating to the operation of the SC Works system; and
- d) Participate in the operation of the SC Works system consistent with the terms of the MOU, requirements of authorizing laws, the Federal cost principles, and all other applicable legal requirements.
- e) Actively participate in the strategic planning process for the local SC Works system;
- f) Serve on the Business Services team and participate in industry or sector partnerships, as applicable;
- g) Participate in SC Works Partner meetings, as appropriate;

- h) Coordinate and integrate activities so that individuals seeking assistance will have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes; and
- i) At a minimum, provide electronic access to programs, activities and services:
  - Services provided through electronic means will supplement and not supplant those provided through the physical SC Works delivery system. The term “electronic” includes Web sites, social media, internet chat features, and telephone.

The SC Works system provides services to customers based on individual needs, including the seamless delivery of multiple services to each customer. There is no required sequence of services.

- *How the Local Board will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development programs in the local area.*

The LWDA supports many efforts to encourage alignment among the entities providing workforce development programs in the Pee Dee:

- We promote the usage of SCWOS (SC Works Online System) among partners, especially encouraging its referral capabilities;
- We deliver local SCWOS training sessions so that partners are aware of SCWOS’s unique capabilities to assist them in their programs;
- The LWDA’s Business & Industry Coordinator leads the Integrated Business Services Team which consists of representatives from local workforce programs. This Team meets regularly to coordinate services to employers and promote available employment opportunities, particularly to target populations;
- We utilize SC Works Pee Dee’s Social media sites (FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter) to promote programs and opportunities available through local workforce entities;
- We invite representatives of other workforce programs to participate on Pee Dee Workforce Board committees as Ad Hoc members;
- We provide support to technical colleges in their pursuit of workforce grants to serve the region; and
- When invited, we participate in meetings with local workforce programs to provide expertise and information about the SC Works Pee Dee System and partnering opportunities.

### ***3. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:***

- *Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment;*

COVID-19 had a significant effect on access to employment, training, education and supportive services to SC Works customers. Center staff worked extremely hard to transition to the delivery of WIOA services on a virtual platform. This was necessary because based upon the Governor's message and the Centers for Disease Control's Guidelines regarding social distancing, all of the SC Works Pee Dee Centers closed to the public on March 23, 2020. Staff continued to work in the Centers, on at least an A/B work schedule until April 7, 2020, when it was determined that the progression of the virus warranted more significant action to protect our team members. The LWDA conferred with contractor staff to determine if their team members had the tools and capacity to deliver workforce services from their homes and began to immediately establish protocol around working from home, to include revisions to the requirements of their work statements. Individual team members' calls were forwarded to their work cell phones and the main numbers at the SC Works Centers were forwarded to the IVR, as most of the calls coming in, at that point, were related to UI. Since that time, the volume of calls forwarded to the IVR became so significant that the forwarding feature would incur additional charges and needed to be discontinued. Customers calling the main numbers at SC Works Centers in the Pee Dee are now provided with the TelClaim 800 number so that they can directly reach out to the UI call center.

The services which are now provided virtually by staff to expand access to services during COVID include:

- Center/WIOA Orientation
- Eligibility Determination
- Referrals to Partner Services
- Online Career Interest Assessment
- Basic Skills Assessment
- Basic Skills Remediation
- High School Readiness
- Soft Skills Development
- Pre-Employment Training/Other Workshops
- Training Services
- Basic information re: UI

Current services being provided to businesses are as follows:

- Job Fairs and Hiring Events, both in person or virtual
- Recruitment and Screening for open positions
- Job postings in the SC Works Online Services System

- Posting Employers' Hot Jobs on social media platforms
- On-the-Job Training
- Direct Placements
- Provision of Information and referral to partners for business resources, including work opportunity tax credits and federal bonding
- Provision of basic information re: COVID-19 business resources
- Any service allowable under WIOA that is in response to an employer's expressed need and does not involve close human contact
- Rapid Response activities to employers affected by layoffs or closures

The fact that all the core programs have representation on the PDWDB works towards expanding access to core programs, particularly to target populations. At Board meetings, members can interact with one another, share about notable activities that their staff and program participants are involved in and discuss opportunities of collaboration with other programs. The Core partners include SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW), SC Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVRD), SC Commission for the Blind, and SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Adult Education (OAE). These partners use the MOU to describe ways that they will expand access to employment, training, and education to eligible individuals by working together and sharing resources. Also, the SC Works Coordinator holds partner meetings, whereby the core programs, along with other partners share the activities they provide to the individuals they serve. This provides the perfect opportunity for the various partners to talk about referral processes and co-enrollment procedures to ensure that the training and supportive needs of the populations they serve are addressed. Sometimes WIOA can provide tuition for training and another entity, such as SCVRD, can provide eyeglasses, tools or medications. Co-enrollment is always beneficial to both the participants and the partners.

- *Improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable;*
  - The LWDA works hand-in-hand with its technical colleges' Continuing Education departments in their delivery of industry-recognized trainings. FDTC, for example, provides regular communication about training programs it is offering in conjunction with local employers, sometimes tuition free to WIOA-eligible individuals. In April 2020, NETC met with SC Works Site managers for Bennettsville, Cheraw and Dillon to discuss the addition of NETC Dual Customer Service Representatives in these centers. The intent was to streamline the duplication of effort required to register for NETC and certify for WIOA Title I programs. Once the processes are

established, data can be shared more freely between the programs, requiring less duplicity of action on the part of the dually enrolled customer. Also, the Continuing Education Department announced efforts to clarify its CE offerings on its website and ensure all courses that met the PDWDB's in-demand occupations list were [www.scpa.org](http://www.scpa.org).

- We share training opportunities with Core partners and with the public via SC Works Pee Dee Social media sites.
  - We work directly with local employers to develop customized trainings that include the attainment of basic skills improvements and industry-recognized certifications, such as Beneteau Tech and Pathway to Employment for Harbor Freight Tools (more info pages 25-26).
  - We manage the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) on [www.SCPATH.org](http://www.SCPATH.org) for the Pee Dee Local Workforce Area and stay in contact with post-secondary institutions to ensure that their programs are listed if they provide training in Board recognized high demand occupations.
  - In 2016, Northeastern Technical College (NETC) and Evans Correctional Facility applied and were approved for the Second Chance Initiative with the US Department of Education. In December 2019, five (5) inmates graduated with their associate's degrees in business marketing. On August 9, 2022, nine more inmates graduated with workforce certificates in business and industrial technology. The Second Chance Initiative allows these schools to offer Pell grants to people incarcerated in state or federal prisons, mostly targeting inmates who are likely to be released within five years. NETC instructors travel to the facility to work with the inmates. NETC encourages these inmates to stay in the community and take local jobs. President Kyle Wagner says that the college has worked with local industries to provide opportunities for the inmates after they are released. Research shows that access to postsecondary education in prison can reduce recidivism by up to 48% which is the rate in which those convicted of a crime returns to prison. Due to the success of the pilot program, funding eligibility will expand in 2023 to include incarcerated individuals throughout South Carolina.
- *Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;*

In order to facilitate the engagement of employers in Pee Dee workforce development programs, the Pee Dee Local Area has established a strong Integrated Business Services Team (IBST), led by the Business & Industry Coordinator, Dianne Herrington. Ms. Herrington was initially appointed to that role in PY'18 and has been appointed by the Board each year since. This team was active during the WIA era and has only

grown in its importance and involvement since that time. The full team meets quarterly and the core team meets at least monthly. The team manages the presentation of SC's public workforce system services to employers, presents a unified, simplified explanation of available business services to employers, and keeps the core programs and partners aware of special initiatives that may be underway in the region. The result is a team that works well together to plan, organize and operate successful local and regional job fairs, to represent one another's key services, and to keep the business community informed of quality, cost savings that will strengthen their workforce and their organizations. Team members also have Business Services presentation folders that include information on all partner services that they can use in their interaction with employers. There is a strong effort made to limit the number of duplicate visits of team members to the same employers. The members also participate together to host Job Fairs and Hiring Events. The IBST has collaborated on a number of employer-specific projects to prepare a workforce that meets an employer's specific needs, such as, Pathways to Employment- Harbor Freight; McLeod Fast Track and Beneteau Tech.

During COVID-19, the Centers were not open for hosting hiring events, but prior to COVID, there were 2-3 hiring events a week. Also, temporary agencies had standing days in three SC Works Pee Dee Centers. During COVID-19, Business Services team members have been assisting employers with recruitment efforts through job orders and social media promotions. Despite the limitation of in-person interaction with employers, 9 OJT agreements were written during COVID-19. In the next four years, to engage employers, the IBST would like to:

- survey local employers, including small employers & those offering high demand occupations (survey was successfully conducted. Results will be shared elsewhere in the document);
- provide virtual and drive through job fairs (task accomplished and the usage of Brazen and drive-through job fairs/employer events are ongoing);
- interact even more with the region's chambers of commerce, downtown revitalization groups;
- make formal connection with Economic Development representatives that serve small businesses (connections with EDs have been strengthened and some who were not as active are now more engaged);
- visit "main street" businesses in small, rural communities of the Pee Dee;
- enhance relationships of businesses/industries currently serving; and
- reach out to employers to which we are not currently providing services.

The PDWDB has a Business & Industry Committee composed of employers and public partners. Its purposes are as follows:

- Leading efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers to ensure that workforce development activities meet the needs of employers, and to develop and implement promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers.



- Leading efforts in the local area to develop and implement career pathways by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.
- Supporting regional sector strategies initiatives.

The **former** Chairman of the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board is on staff with the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and he remains very active on the board. Also on the Board, we have ~~representation from a Marion County Chamber of Commerce and~~ Jeffrey DeLung, the **Director of Business Development Research and Special Projects** with North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA). As it relates to sector strategies engagement, the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area has several staff and board members engaged in the Greater Pee Dee Region Healthcare Partnership with the Santee Lynches and Waccamaw Workforce Development Areas. The initial meeting with healthcare providers and workforce partners was very successful, but COVID-19 has understandably pulled the healthcare system's energy and resources. The partnership is off to a strong start.

- *Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;*

A strategy used to be sure that the local workforce system is aware of and engaged in meeting the needs of local businesses, is to involve members of the Pee Dee Integrated Business Services Team (IBST) with local chambers of commerce. Currently, two of them are serving on a local chamber board and many serve as community ambassadors. As ambassadors, they attend new business ribbon cuttings and have the opportunity to introduce themselves as active partners with the chambers and the business community. The PDRCOG has secured membership in many of the chambers of commerce in the local area so that team members can attend various chamber events on behalf of the SC Works system. The **former** Chair of the PDWDB is on the staff of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and he always supports SC Works activities and notifies staff when there are special opportunities to showcase the system. **In 2022, he invited LWDA staff to be interviewed on Chamber Link Radio about SC Works and its services and Eckerd Connects to join him and speak with 30 youths in the Florence County alternative school about SC Works and how it may assist them with their future plans. Also, LWDA Director, Joette Dukes, hosted Leadership Florence at the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments (PDRCOG) to talk about the missions and services of the PDRCOG and SC Works Pee Dee.** Chambers are a very important, effective business intermediary and the Pee Dee strives to be involved.

The Pee Dee Workforce Development Board is business-led, with 11 of its 21 members representing the private sector in in-demand industry and occupations. Its membership is engaged and active. From the robust conversation that occurred at its August quarterly meeting, it is obvious that the Board will be strategizing more specific ways that we can

ensure that we are meeting the needs of businesses. One idea that emerged, for example, was to facilitate the conduction of a wage survey. Jeffrey DeLung, of NESAs, reported that they often get questions from businesses inquiring of wages in the Pee Dee. Also, the Business & Industry Coordinator has relayed that in planning with the Integrated Business Services Team, they would like to survey area businesses to ensure that we are meeting their needs.

Joette Dukes, Pee Dee Workforce Development Director, participated in a multi-month, multi-meeting facilitated process with stakeholders convened to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for Career and Technology Education (CATE) Programs in the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area. CATE Programs were, as part of the needs assessment, required to describe how their programs are aligned to State, regional, Tribal or local in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the State Workforce Development Board or the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Board, including career pathways or how they are designed to meet local education or economic needs not identified by the state or local board.

Using labor market data from the SC Department of Employment and Workforce Labor Market Division, along with information obtained from local businesses via survey, individuals representing CATE programs, secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, organizations representing special populations, business and industry, economic development, chambers of commerce, and workforce development evaluated the CATE programs available in each school district in the six-county Pee Dee Region to determine which programs were being offered, but not supported by labor market information. Conversely, courses needed to meet the demands of local employers, but were not available, were also identified. Schools offering programs that were not needed were required to justify their continuation and to consider replacing them with courses that support in-demand occupations in the local workforce development area. During the discussion, barriers to the establishment of career ladders for in-demand occupations were also identified. Once the plan has been approved by the State Department of Education, the workgroup will continue to meet and strategize to bring the school's course offerings in alignment with local employer's needs.

At the time of the CATE assessment, the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board's Youth Committee ~~is~~ ~~was~~ the Director of the Marion County Academy for Careers and Technology, which is the CATE Program for Marion County. In addition to his and Ms. Dukes' participation, the following individuals associated with the Pee Dee WDB or its Youth Committee participated: Mamie Legette, SC Works System Coordinator; Cheryl Lewis, Youth Committee Member & Regional Workforce Advisor for SC Department of Commerce; Les Echols, Board Chairman, Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce; Crishell Bass, Youth Committee member, representing secondary education. (In 2022, the Director of the Marion County CATE program resigned and has since been replaced. The

replacement has been named and appointed to the Pee Dee WDB and will serve on the board's Youth Committee.

- *Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development;*

Strategies to improve coordination with economic development include having the Pee Dee's Business and Industry Coordinator work together with economic development programs, particularly to promote and review Incumbent Worker Funds (IWT) applications. IWT funds allow employers to address the training needs of their existing staff and these funds are successfully utilized in the Pee Dee. This relationship has served the Pee Dee well over the years and keeps the organizations aware of the WDB's purpose and its goal to provide business services that will strengthen the available industry and new industry prospects.

Furthermore, all six Economic Development Directors of the Pee Dee Local Area are invited to attend Pee Dee Workforce Development Board meetings. Many of them have also offered presentations to the Workforce Development Board. Marion County Economic Development has invited LWDA staff to participate in Strategic Planning with Marion County leaders and these efforts are underway. Several of the Counties' Economic Development Directors invite the LWDA Business & Industry Coordinator to prospect meetings. Her purpose at the meetings is to inform the businesses about the Pee Dee workforce development system and its ability to assist them with hiring events, application review, On-the-Job Training support, promotion of its opportunities on LWDA social media pages, etc. Also, in September, 2022, Marion County Economic Director held a Workforce Summit for local employers and the LWDA and many SC Works partners discussed the public workforce system and how it could assist employers. LWDA staff is working with Marlboro County Economic Development to host a stakeholders meeting to explore ways to increase economic development activities in the county following the layoff of over 600 Mohawk Industries employees in 2022. Currently, a representative from the North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) is represented on the Board. NESA is a regional, non-profit, economic development organization that serves nine counties in the northeastern corner of South Carolina (i.e. counties in the Pee Dee and Waccamaw Local Workforce Areas). Its primary objective is to create jobs for the residents of the region by working within the existing industry base and recruiting new companies. It assists these companies by providing research assistance, infrastructure support, workforce training opportunities, regional site selection assistance and works with county partners and the state to help coordinate incentive packages.

- *Strengthen linkages between the SC Works delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.*

The SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) staff is actively involved in the Pee Dee Integrated Business Services Team and the overall workforce system. One of SCDEW's many contributions is an understanding of and direct access to information regarding Unemployment Insurance (UI). Primary to the workings of a successful workforce system made up of partners from various workforce programs, is a cross training and sharing of information relevant to the varied programs and benefits of each partner. It is a constant battle to break down walls, perceived and real, that exist between these programs. However, strong communication is urged within the SC Works Center walls and efforts are made to ensure that SC Works staff understand as much as possible about the tenets of the programs of partner agencies, such as Unemployment insurance. The communities at large still recognize the SC Works Centers as the hub for all things UI. Individuals can utilize computers in the center to register for UI. One strategy that SCDEW has engaged to improve service delivery to individuals receiving Unemployment benefits is to utilize the SC Works Online System (SCWOS) as a communication tool to inform new UI registrants about center hiring events, relevant job listings, and job fairs planned in the region. Staff can send personal emails to the email address under which the customer registered in the system, send information about jobs that specifically match the personal info the customer has entered in their personal profile in the system, and attach general announcements of workshops, local Job Fairs and invitations to visit the center when employers will be on-hand to interview and hire for their establishments.

From March 15, 2020 to August 18, 2020, SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) has paid more than \$3.81 billion in a combination of South Carolina UI benefits, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (for the self-employed and others), the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (\$600/week) program, the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC- extension of benefits for 13 weeks) program and Extended Benefits (additional 16 weeks of benefits after PEUC). During this time, SCDEW has communicated on a daily basis using email, Twitter, Facebook notifying the public and its partners of the extensive work it is doing during COVID-19. In South Carolina, the total number of initial claims rose to 719,704. In March 2022, Mr. Ellzey was invited to the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board's Retreat and he reported that SCDEW paid out \$6.6 billion since the COVID-19 pandemic began. At that time, there were on average 1,500 initial claims per week.

Weekly, SCDEW provides information regarding when individuals receiving UI benefits will exhaust their benefits so that the workforce system can be prepared when these individuals may begin to more seriously look for employment and/or job training opportunities. The Pee Dee expects its peak to be during the month of August 2020 and efforts will be made to be prepared to meet the needs of these job seekers.

4. ***A description of how the strategies discussed in Question 3 above will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the State Plan; specifically:***

- *Increasing participation in work-based (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs;*

Work-based learning, such as work experience, on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs, offer skills-based learning experiences that benefit both the trainees and businesses. It will be a priority of the Pee Dee Local Workforce Area to target more employers and opportunities for work-based activities in the years ahead. In fact, we are adding a Business Services Representative to our team in PY'20 so that more concentrated effort can be made to engage more businesses for this among other purposes. ~~We are particularly concerned about the fact that if USDOL does not issue a waiver next year to allow training providers to continue to receive WIOA funding without meeting the performance reporting requirements, the programs available through the technical colleges will no longer be accessible to our participants.~~ It behooves us to find ways to engage participants with work experience and skills to re-enter the job market via an On-the-Job Training vs. a classroom training activity. We will continue to create opportunities and support partners' efforts to have Apprenticeship Carolina speak to Pee Dee businesses and industries. In the years ahead, the Integrated Business Services Team plans to increase On-the-Job Training (OJT) and work experience contracts and partner with employers offering registered apprenticeships. The IBST will work with the employers to screen and recruit the best apprenticeship candidates and then partner to provide On-the-Job training funds when the employee begins the OJT segment of the apprenticeship. We know that this will be a successful strategy!

- *Increasing the formal assessment and provision of soft-skills training;*

At the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board's planning sessions in August 2020 and March 2022, multiple members mentioned the need for soft-skills training, particularly for younger adults. The Pee Dee is supportive of the state board's strategy to focus on this need.

- Currently, through the leadership of Adult Education, most WIOA participants receive WIN career readiness assessment and training which includes soft skills.
- Eckerd Connects offers *Career Smart* which is a strategically developed training activity that provides soft skills training to Title I adults, dislocated workers and youth participants and job seekers that visit the center and enroll for the multi-day training. Topics include critical thinking, time management, dress for success, essential interviewing skills, job search and resume tips, safety training and work ethic.
- In PY'19, in its search to partner with organizations offering virtual opportunities for youth, the Pee Dee LWDA was introduced to Success Training Institute (STI) ([simplysuccess.com](http://simplysuccess.com)) and its online soft skills certification courses. Due to the success of the STI pilot project, it is likely

that more WIOA participants will be availed this opportunity to develop their skills and confidence through this online program.

- Finally, in PY'20, we will be piloting the Virtual Job Shadow Platform. This platform will allow youth WIOA customers to engage with their Career Coaches and develop plans, complete job shadowing activities, conduct labor market research and complete soft skills training and assessments that are specific to the participant. The Virtual Job Shadow platform boasts a robust back-end reporting system so that the progress of participants can be tracked in real time. Career Coaches can create custom playlists for the youth to complete based on the needs that are identified during the assessment phase of the program. Due to lack of funding, the Virtual Job Shadow Platform was not purchased.

- *Facilitating the development of career pathways and increasing co-enrollment across partner programs, as appropriate;*

Much effort is being taken to facilitate the development of career pathways across the state and the Pee Dee. Through the CATE program, students are graduating with skills and often time certificates, that allow them to immediately access entry level opportunities in local businesses. The Regional Workforce Advisor through the SC Department of Commerce offers the Board's Youth Committee opportunities to be involved in career pathway initiatives with local middle schools and high schools. The Pee Dee LWDA has identified local in-demand occupations for which WIOA funds may be spent. It is in these occupations that individuals can study, acquire entry level employment and continue to be supported through WIOA, if necessary, to attain the next level of education required to advance, i.e., Certified Nursing Assistant to Registered Nurse.

To develop career pathways in healthcare, the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area is an active participant in the Greater Pee Dee Region Healthcare Partnership with the Santee Lynches and Waccamaw Workforce Development Areas. The Region, in collaboration with Genz Consulting launched its sector partnership on October 8, 2019, with nearly 40 healthcare leaders at its initial launch meeting. More information will be provided below regarding these efforts.

Increased communication between partners will result in increased co-enrollment. We are strategizing to identify the resources by which to keep partners abreast of "Free" employer-driven training and opportunities through ReadySC and workforce grants at the local technical colleges. Although considerable referrals are made through the SCWOS system to partner programs, there appears to be a need for technical assistance to understand the value of co-enrollment. Title I programs may offer supportive services, to include books and uniforms to individuals enrolled in partner programs that may be providing tuition assistance.

- *Implement cross-program staff training to enhance service delivery to businesses and job seekers;*

The LWDA is very pleased with and supportive of the cross-training that has been provided through the State-sponsored SC Works 101 Training that was implemented in PY'19. We remain committed to ensure that all SC Works staff and partners participate in the program to gain a better understanding of one another's programs. In all Pee Dee Counties but one, the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth program provider is Eckerd Connects. Eckerd has plans to cross-train its Adult/DW career coaches to serve young adult customers, as well. In the service delivery of businesses services, the LWDA's Integrated Business Services team has been working together successfully for many years. Active partners include Adult Education, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Department of Social Services, Wagner Peyser, Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth, Florence Darlington Technical College, ReadySC, SC Department of Commerce, Goodwill, Apprenticeship Carolina and a local school district. The team seeks to understand the members' services such that they can cross represent multiple programs when they communicate with employers and represent the SC Works Pee Dee workforce system.

In December 2022, the LWDA used funding from the Resiliency Grant to host all SC Works Pee Dee partners in a Success Summit. The purpose of the event was to honor the workforce professionals in the SC Works Pee Dee system and to provide training on topics that are important to all workforce professionals. Topics included including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Customer Service; Mental Health; and Partnering. It is our belief that this training and development opportunity will result in enhanced service delivery to businesses and job seekers in the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area.

- *Streamline intake and referral processes;*

One of the positive results of COVID-19, was that the system was stretched and partners began to develop ways that required processes could be delivered online. One of these processes for Title I was "intake". The LWDA utilized a Memorandum from SCDEW to amend its work statement to allow virtual delivery of intake, eligibility and assessment. The staff worked diligently to transition to a streamlined virtual platform. The LWDA will continue to provide SCWOS Training sessions for partners and encourage the use of SCWOS to refer and case manage shared participants, however, since most of the partners have their own state mandated systems, it is understandable that embracing an extra platform is a daunting task. The LWDA supports the adoption of a system by the State Workforce Board that would tie all workforce programs together.

- *Developing strategies that increase access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and access to identification and vital records;*



The Pee Dee Workforce Development Board shares the state's vision to increase access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and identification/vital records. In regards to transportation, the award of a Transportation Demonstration Grant from the State Workforce Board in 2018 to serve Dillon and Marion County employers and job seekers, has borne much fruit in the Pee Dee Region. Although it has taken a considerable amount of time, beginning in August 2020, public transportation is available to Dillon County residents for the first time in decades. There are even routes that connect Marlboro and Marion County residents to Dillon County employers. Similar routes are available in other communities such as Hartsville and Bennettsville. In the LWDA's pursuit of a reentry grant, staff realized that there was need for improved access to identification and vital records. The LWDA's supportive services policy allows for assistance with things necessary for individuals to participate in WIOA Title I services. For some, this may include the attainment of a social security card, driver's license, picture id, or birth certificate to go to work and/or register for occupational skills training. In regularly scheduled trainings, staff will be reminded that the LWDA's policy indeed allows for the payment of fees at such agencies as SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and SC Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to attain identification and vital records. Also, the relationship and referral process with SC Legal Services will be reviewed in the event that more serious, unique barriers are keeping individuals from WIOA participation. LWDA and contractor staff have personal contacts at SCDHEC and SCDMV if following the normal online processes is not successful or if more personal assistance is needed. The LWDA has amended its supportive services policy to allow for the provision of WIOA funds to assist the reentry population with expungement costs. Further research will need to be done to understand the current situation around affordable housing in the Pee Dee. The LWDA did gather local, state and national political representatives together on behalf of a Dillon County employer who expressed concern for the lack of reliable transportation, affordable housing and childcare for Dillon County residents. The employer sites these weaknesses as reasons it has high turnover and difficulty attaining the workforce it needs. SC Legal Services is a tremendous partner with SC Works Pee Dee and we look to its very engaged representative to keep us informed of such issues and needs in the communities we serve. Each quarter when the Pee Dee Workforce Board meets, time is allotted for the exploration of a workforce topic and perhaps these topics can be addressed to the board. ~~The staff interacts regularly with Jackie Taylor, the Priorities Populations Coordinator, to ensure that we are cognizant of these types of needs within our priority populations.~~

- *Supporting industry-led, sector partnerships; and*

As it relates to sector strategies engagement, the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area is an active participant in the Greater Pee Dee Region Healthcare Partnership with the Santee Lynches and Waccamaw Workforce Development Areas. The Region, in collaboration with Genz Consulting launched its sector partnership on



October 8, 2019, with nearly 40 healthcare leaders at its initial launch meeting. At that time, the group identified four areas of priority, around which action teams were established:

1. **Develop the Workforce Pipeline.** Several themes emerged throughout the conversation focused on developing the workforce pipeline:
  - a. **Understand workforce pipeline supply and demand.** The team discussed the need to understand workforce demand for critical occupations across the region's health care sector. They also noted the need to understand the supply from education programs to fill the demand. Critical occupations noted include RNs, Med Lab Technologists, Substance use Disorder Counselor and Licensed Addiction Counselor, and clinical staff. Understanding the pipeline supply and demand will allow healthcare providers and educators to build the workforce pipeline collaboratively.
  - b. **Develop quality clinical staff.** There is a need to increase quality staff across the region, especially in rural areas. One specific action noted is the need to increase funding for faculty to increase in enrollment in clinical programs. This would result in high- quality clinical staff in hard to staff rural areas.
2. **Advocacy.** An opportunity to use a joint health care voice to advocate for needed policy changes and regulatory barriers.
3. **Community Education.** The team discussed community education as a gap and opportunity to empower individuals to participate in their own health management. The team identified the need to increase knowledge about the type of care and resources available in order to increase primary care use and decrease ED use.
4. **Integrate care delivery across the continuum.** The team discussed the need to coordinate care across the continuum of providers in the region to ensure patients are receiving the right type of care and services and reduce ED visits. The team identified the first step to inventory what existing workgroups, partnerships, and efforts are underway to integrate delivery.

A second meeting of the full healthcare partnership was held on March 12, 2020, right as the initial COVID-19 cases were reported for the State of South Carolina. Healthcare leaders have been, understandably, preoccupied with addressing the intricacies of this pandemic. The public partners remain sensitive to their needs and have been able to connect with them long enough to discern that, especially during this pandemic, the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce remains high priority for them. We look forward to continuing to strategize with them to meet their needs. ~~in Program Year 2020.~~

At inception, the following individuals, representing the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board, were actively support actively involved in the Greater Pee Dee Region Healthcare Partnership: Debbie Locklair, Chief Human Resource Officer,

McLeod Health; local workforce board member; member of the Board's Business and Industry Committee; champion for the healthcare sector partnership; Dianne Herrington, Integrated Business Services Team Lead; Joette Dukes, Workforce Development Director; core member of Regional Team; Vicky Tyner, Regional Manager, SC Department of Employment and Workforce; local workforce development board member; member of the Board's Business and Industry Committee.

- *Sharing best practices across partner programs in order to increase awareness of partner services, promote a workforce environment of growth and continuous improvement, and support a system viewpoint.*

The Pee Dee Board's flagship strategy to accomplish this priority is the establishment of the position at the LWDA level of Workforce System Coordinator. Ms. Mamie Legette's primary purpose is to express a system viewpoint and promote continuous improvement across the system. She utilizes quarterly partner meetings to share best practices, increase the awareness of partner services and promote an environment of continuous improvement and system viewpoint. At the meetings, program representatives share and activities are undertaken that allow for communication in small groups. One such activity requires the groups to identify partner services that can be used to provide the best workforce services for an individual with multiple barriers. This discussion allows the participants to learn more about services available across programs. Ms. Legette also participates in coordinating councils in each county, sharing information and best practices from the public workforce sector.

Also, to promote a workforce environment of growth and continuous improvement, Ms. Legette has led the Local Area's efforts to ensure that each SC Works Pee Dee Center meets and exceeds the One Stop Certification Standards. This process involves the participation of all partners in the system. The standards must be periodically reviewed and utilized in every effort to bring continuous improvement to the everyday activities in the centers.

**5. A description of how the local board will work with core, required, and other partners, including economic development, to implement the strategies and services discussed in Question 3.**

As described throughout the Plan, the Board:

- Competitively procured Eckerd Connects to serve as its SC Works Pee Dee Operator. One of the roles of the Operator is to work with core, required and other partners, particularly within the walls of the SC Works Centers to support and continuously improve the local workforce system. The Operator presents a quarterly report at the Workforce Board meetings to communicate successes and opportunities;

- Designated the Workforce System Coordinator position to work with partners in the development and support of the Pee Dee's workforce system;
- Designated a Business & Industry Coordinator to lead the Integrated Business Services Team that includes partners in the delivery of services to area employers
- Will continue to engage with local and Regional Economic Development to represent the local workforce system and services to prospects, to promote and review IWT applications, to receive and utilize labor market data to better understand the region and its citizenry so it can better set goals that will bring about the success of businesses;
- Supports the attainment of the SC Works Certification standards and the continuous improvement of the system and the centers;
- Will ~~undertake~~ continue formalized strategic planning efforts that began in the fall and spring of 2020, under the facilitation of Brianna Dennis, Executive Director of the Kelley Center for Economic Development at Francis Marion University. The State Board's goals and strategies and the strategies and services described in Question 3 will be front and center in its discussions;
- Encourage the increased provision of work-based learning (WBL) activities such as On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship;
- Will utilize its committees to accomplish workforce goals and strategies- Youth, One-Stop, Business, Disabilities, Public Relations, Executive, and Membership.

**6. A description of the Adult, DW, Youth assessment processes of soft-skills and subsequent provision of soft-skills training, including descriptions of formal tools or resources utilized.**

- *Career Smart* is a strategically developed training activity by Eckerd Connects that provides soft skills training to Title I adults, dislocated workers and youth participants and job seekers that visit the center and enroll for the multi-day training. Topics include critical thinking, time management, dress for success, essential interviewing skills, job search and resume tips, safety training and work ethic.
- *WIN* has been adopted by the State of South Carolina as a tool to measure and develop the applied skills and soft skills of its population in order to be ready for successful employment with the states' employers. In the Pee Dee, the Adult Educations avail the provision of WIN testing and classroom training of the Career Readiness Courseware. WIOA Title I participants are encouraged to attain a silver WIN certification. In 12/2022, SCDEW confirmed that the State of South Carolina would continue to utilize the WIN Career Readiness Courseware.

- *Success Training Institute (STI)* provides virtual online soft skills training courses. The participants are pre- and post assessed on topics such as positive mindset, teamwork, time management, adaptability, work ethic, conflict management, professional development, communication, etc. The participants earn certifications to demonstrate the accomplishment of these skills.
- ~~Finally, in PY'20, we will be piloting the *Virtual Job Shadow Platform*. This platform will allow youth WIOA customers to engage with their Career Coaches and develop plans, complete job shadowing activities, conduct labor market research and complete soft skills training and assessments that are specific to the participant. The Virtual Job Shadow platform boasts a robust back-end reporting system so that the progress of participants can be tracked in real time. Career Coaches can create custom playlists for the youth to complete based on the needs that are identified during the assessment phase of the program.~~

**7. A description of the strategies and services for employers that may include the implementation of initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs, On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers and support the local board's strategic vision and goals.**

The following initiatives have been implemented very successfully in the Pee Dee and plans are to continue them:

- Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs- The State provides Incumbent Worker Training Funds and the LWDA locally promotes the grants and reviews the applications with the assistance of Economic Development in each county. IWT allows employers to address the training needs of their existing staff. This has been a very successful strategy for the Pee Dee with 10 employers in PY'18 and 15 employers in PY'17. Funds were not made available during PY'19, but since that time the Pee Dee LWDA has requested and received IWT funding.
- Hiring Events- During PY'19, SC Works Pee Dee hosted 97 Hiring Events and 2237 job seekers attended these events across the region! The largest number of individuals to attend an event was 200 and that was for Performance Food Service in Florence. Prior to COVID-19, we were averaging two hiring events per week. Temporary Agencies also had standing days of recruitment in three of the centers. The provision of hiring

events has increased in PY'21 and will remain a staple of the SC Works Business Services Team.

- Job Fairs- During PY'19, SC Works Pee Dee organized and/or participated in several job fairs. The provision of Job Fairs has increased in PY'21 and will remain a staple of the SC Works Business Services Team.
  - Two job fairs (Fall and Spring) are held in partnership with Florence Darlington Technical College and SC National Guard. For the spring event there were 76 employers and 363 job seekers. In the Fall, there were 81 employers and 410 job seekers, 24 of them being veterans. The Spring Event for PY'20 was cancelled due to COVID, however, 58 employers had pre-registered prior to cancellation.
  - The Disabilities Committee of the Workforce Board sponsored a Disabilities Job Fair in 2020 and 2022. Twenty (20) vendors/employers were there to share their jobs and services and sixty-six (66) job seekers attended the 2020 event. In 2022, two job fairs were held. In March, 187 job seekers and 26 employers/service support organizations attended and in November, 22 vendors/employers and eighty-two (82) job seekers attended.
  - In 2019 and in January of 2020, a Job Fair was held at the Florence Housing Authority and seven employers attended to meet 79 job seekers, 11 being Veterans. In September, 2022, the event was held in Florence Housing Authority's new location and 15 employers attended to meet 80 job seekers, 8 being Veterans.
  - A Veteran Event was held in November 2019 with SC National Guard.
  - Event in partnership with SCDEW utilizing the *Career Coach* showcasing available technical trades in South Carolina. The closure of Mohawk Industries in Bennettsville provided opportunity for the Pee Dee to host the Career Coach multiple times in 2022.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)- OJT is an activity that reimburses an employer for the extraordinary costs involved in hiring an inexperienced individual. Over the years the Pee Dee has had a successful OJT program and plans are to continue and grow this venue even further. It is recognized as the quickest, most effective way to quickly provide an employee to a business that can then train the employee in the intricacies of its business and to its liking. The Business Services Representatives screen the WIOA eligible

- candidates and promote the best matched candidate to the employer. Once selected, the BSR stays in touch with the employer, monitors the new employee's status and encourages the employer with a monthly reimbursement of training costs. In PY'19, 77 OJT contracts were written in the Pee Dee. Nine (9) of these were written during COVID-19.
- Work Experience (WEX)- Work Experience is one of the 14 youth program elements. They are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. The experience provides the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skills development. The WEX includes academic and occupational education. In PY'19, 19 youth had the opportunity to participate in this activity. There are plans to increase WEX opportunities for youth in the Pee Dee.
- Wage Survey- planned for PY'20. During the Board's planning in August 2020, the development of a wage survey was identified as a tool that would be helpful for Economic Development agencies to be able to share with prospects, to employers to know what the market was paying and to workforce programs to be able to share with participants in career exploration and planning. The feasibility of such a study will be explored with entities such as Francis Marion University, The Kelley Center for Economic Development, North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA), SC Department of Employment & Workforce and SHRM.
- Employer Survey- planned for PY'20. The Integrated Business Services Team has set a goal in the coming years to develop an Employer Survey to explore the needs of local employers so that the team can expand its repertoire of services. The feasibility of such a study will be explored with entities such as Francis Marion University, The Kelley Center for Economic Development, North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA), SC Department of Employment & Workforce and SHRM.

Per the strategic plan, the Business & Industry Committee of the board surveyed employers at the fall job fair in 2021 and the spring job fair in 2022 to determine their awareness of the Workforce Board and its activities. 33 employers participated. On a scale of 1 (not aware) to 5 (very aware), the average was 3.9%. Employers were also asked of their greatest workforce challenges and over a third listed retention and recruitment. Finally, the survey asked employers to choose services that they would like to learn more about. 70% of the responders requested information and the LWDA's Business and Industry Coordinator reached out to them. As a result, three of the employers contacted signed an OJT contract and four scheduled virtual hiring events. Two of them followed up to have more virtual hiring events.

- Customized Training-The SC Works Pee Dee Team participated in several "customized training" programs in PY '19 and post-COVID, we are hopeful to develop more opportunities.

- In January 2020, SC Works Pee Dee partners worked together to provide a customized training program for Beneteau, in Marion, SC, called *Beneteau Tech*. This 36-hour course prepared individuals for boat building manufacturing careers with Beneteau. Course topics included Beneteau company orientation, OSHA for General Industry certification, Overview of hand tools used in boat building, workforce soft skills, Six Sigma Basics, and Forklift certification. Instructional training hours were provided by Florence Darlington Technical College, Adult Education and Beneteau.
- Eckerd Connects, operator of the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in the Pee Dee Region, collaborated with Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) to create a seamless service delivery model for job seekers interested in the ManuFirstSC Certification program. The program culminated in a condensed, Lean manufacturing credential. Several employers agreed to accept successful completion of the certification program in lieu of one year's manufacturing experience including Groupe Beneteau, McCall Farms, Ruiz Foods and Sonoco.
- After months of planning and design between partners- Eckerd Connects, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Department of Employment & Workforce, Marion and Dillon Counties' Adult Education, SC Legal Services, Northeastern Technical College and Harbor Freight- an employment program, entitled *Pathway to Employment*, began to prepare individuals for a career pathway at Harbor Freight. The plan was to provide opportunities for the training in Dillon and Marion County Adult Education facilities. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the project was cancelled. On a positive note, a successful model was developed that can be replicated in the future to meet the needs of local employers and engage WIOA Core partners and community organizations.

**8. A description of how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional and economic development activities that are carried out in the local area, including how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.**

- As described in the answer to question 5 above, the PDWDB traditionally has a healthy, active relationship with the regional economic development organizations in the local area. The LWDA's Business & Industry Coordinator is asked to participate in presentations to prospective industries and talk about the various workforce incentives that SC Works has to offer.

- The PDCOG is also a partner with The North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA), a regional economic development organization that serves a nine-county region in the northeast corner of South Carolina. NESA's primary objective is to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents of the region by creating additional jobs and capital investment within the existing industry base, recruiting new companies and expanding tourism-related development. Currently, NESA is represented on the Workforce Board and is contributing greatly to the Board's understanding of the socio and economic makeup of the region and its people.
- The PDCOG also administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and US Department of Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs in the local area.
- The Board partners with the Department of Commerce's Regional Workforce Advisor to educate students, parents and industries about career clusters, lucrative career opportunities available to students with associate's degrees and certificates from technical colleges.
- Workforce staff is actively engaged with the local technical colleges, particularly the Continuing Education divisions, as these divisions are working hand-in-hand with the local industry and are best suited to promptly develop trainings that meet their immediate needs. The Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing & Technology (SiMT), at FDTC, offers current, quality programs to employers in the Advanced Manufacturing sector, a key sector for the region.

The Pee Dee Local Area is fortunate to be surrounded by organizations promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services and the Board will continue to promote these entities and find more ways to be involved. For example:

- At the SiMT, across the street from the PDRCOG, is the Gould Business Incubator. The Incubator was built to help startup businesses grow. By using the incubator, businesses get a reduced rate for office space and access to conference rooms and manufacturing space.
- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC), funded by the US Small Business Administration, is located at Florence-Darlington Technical College. It offers free services to startups such as formulation of a business idea, creation of a business plan, the process of searching for funding, etc.
- FMU Kelley Center for Economic Development also promotes small businesses and entrepreneurs. It is dedicated to the economic growth of the region through business incubation, small business outreach, and



various regional economic development initiatives. FMU has two business incubators in Florence County- at the new FMU Place at 142 N. Dargan Street and in Lake City at the Continuum. Both locations provide services such as small business assistance, professional development training for the surrounding communities, and business incubation. Eckerd Connects partnered with The Continuum this summer to provide training to a cohort of In School Youth and currently the Board is partnering with the Continuum for assistance with its Strategic Plan (2020-2024). Other projects may be considered as the Business Services Team recognizes that it would like to engage more small employers in SC Works business services opportunities.

All of these organizations are carrying out regional economic development activities and by combining our efforts, the Local Area will benefit.

## Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

### **1. *A description of the SC Works delivery system in the local area, including:***

- *How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers;*

The LWDA's Performance & Reporting Specialist and Program Monitor conduct regular desktop and annual on-site or virtual monitorings. In response to the findings or recommendations, the contractors provide corrective action plans which are reviewed by staff. The LWDA provides technical assistance as needed. Quarterly, meetings are held virtually by the LWDA with WIOA Title I staff to provide encouragement and technical assistance. Another method by which the Board ensures the continuous improvement of contractors is to select areas to improve and set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This year goals have been quantified and are in the following focus areas: recruitment and enrollment of youth with disabilities, in foster care, offenders, pregnant parenting teens; development and distribution of employer surveys regarding services provided or desired; new employer engagements/employer re-engagements by business services staff; and, increased provision of virtual and in-person employability workshops by SC Works Pee Dee partners in the system. Finally, the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board meets quarterly and contractors' performance is reviewed and discussed. If contractors' performance results are a serious concern, the Executive Committee will meet to more closely examine problems and hear from the contractor.

- *How the local board will target rural communities, including facilitating increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system through the use of technology and other means;*
  - Much of the Pee Dee Local Workforce Area is rural, with only the City of Florence being considered a metropolitan area. As a result, the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board committed years ago to have a physical SC Works Center in each county with the comprehensive center in Florence. Unfortunately, this is becoming more and more difficult as Pee Dee WIOA Title I funding is down to its lowest level since the LWDA was established in 1989. The Board may have to make difficult decisions in the years ahead, but it will be looking to increase access to services through technology. Until then, 136 public access computers are available to jobseekers in the SC Works Pee Dee Centers.
  - The LWDA is in conversation with two of its rural counties that have requested input on preparing their communities for new industries that are being pursued. Stakeholder events and/or new educational opportunities are being planned for 2023.
  - In January, 2021, the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments received an H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant of \$2.27 million from the US Department of Labor to serve 350 unemployed, underemployed and/or incumbent workers. (Upper Savannah Council of Governments is a partner serving 100 of the 350 to become EMTs and Paramedics.) The grant is to address the shortage of rural healthcare workers in occupations directly impacting patient care- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Phlebotomists, Pharmacy Technicians, Certified Medical Assistants (CMA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). The employer partner for the grant is McLeod Health which has hospitals and physicians' practices throughout the greater Pee Dee Region. The technical colleges in the Greater Pee Dee Region are providing training to H-1B recruits. The grant expires in 01/2025.
  - COVID-19 has reiterated the lack of broadband internet services in the rural areas of the Pee Dee. The LWDA is very supportive of efforts declared by the State Workforce Board Chair to secure tablets/chromebooks that can be loaned to WIOA students that need them to participate in their approved training activities. Also, the LWDA amended its Supportive Services Policy in 2021 to include the provision of tablets/chromebooks and internet services.
  - The Board's Systems Coordinator participates in activities in the rural areas, particularly those organized or supported by the County Coordinating Councils. The Pee Dee supports the efforts of the SC Office of Rural Health to educate and address the social determinants of health on the local level.

- The Board is pleased to have played a role in the establishment of the newly sanctioned public transportation routes to Dillon County and its surrounding communities. Staff will continue to support the routes and the employers along the route. Transportation is often a barrier to employment for Pee Dee residents, but this effort in Dillon County and in other smaller communities in the Pee Dee is key to improving the lives of individuals in the rural communities.
- During the summer of PY'19, the LWDA discovered Success Training Institute (STI), an online entity providing soft skills courses and the opportunity for work experiences and internships. One of the most attractive aspects of STI is that individuals can access its platform from their cell phones! The Pee Dee LWDA **expects continues** to engage more of its WIOA participants with the STI platform.
- At Northeastern Technical College, Dr. Wagner has communicated that the college has purchased Internet for all students. If students are serviced by Spectrum, they received a Spectrum modem, if Sandhills their modem, and if they are out of either of those service areas, a Hotspot has been provided. **In September, 2021, Charter Communications and Northeastern Technical College hosted more than 125 guests on its Dillon campus for a formal program and roundtable discussion focused on the *Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Equity* in South Carolina. State, regional and local leaders in agriculture, communications, county administration, education, government and healthcare sectors, workforce to include the LWDA, gathered to discuss broadband connectivity in rural and underserved areas, moderated by Dr. Kyle Wagner, President.**
- *How entities within the SC Works delivery system, including center operators and partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and*

The PDWDB is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. As stated in the SC Works Certification Management Standards, "There are consistent expectations for physical infrastructure and facilities which includes accessibility of each SC Works Center so that all job seekers and business customers can fully participate in the services offered." When re-location of an SC Works Center is considered, compliance with ADA is of paramount concern. In the past, the Pee Dee

Local Area has contracted with Able SC to assure the accessibility of its centers to individuals with disabilities and has used the civil engineer at the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments to perform assessments at the centers. These activities will continue.

SC Vocational Rehabilitation & SC Commission on the Blind are strong core partners. ~~Prior to COVID-19 epidemic,~~ Vocational Rehabilitation staff ~~held have~~ regular hours in each of the SC Works Centers, participated in the activities of the Integrated Business Services Team and in the customized training efforts that took place in PY'19. Also, SC Vocational Rehabilitation's Manufirst program was very successful in the Pee Dee.

The Pee Dee LWDA has a Disabilities Committee that focuses on ensuring that the workforce system is addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. In PY'19 ~~and twice in 2022,~~ the committee hosted ~~a successful~~ Job Fair~~s~~ targeted specifically to this community. ~~Twenty (20) employers/community organizations and sixty job seekers attended.~~ Both SC Vocational Rehabilitation and SC Commission on the Blind are represented on the Board's Disabilities Committee and each of these two partners will be engaged to provide training to SC Works Pee Dee staff. LWDA staff holds quarterly Technical Assistance Meetings with all staff and these meetings will be utilized at least once annually for the purpose of training SC Works Pee Dee staff in how to effectively address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Assistive Technology is available in the Centers to ensure the vision impaired customers have access to services. ZoomText is a software that brings advanced text magnification and powerful reading tools to a computer. Vision impaired customers' experience surfing the web, creating a document, or emailing and ZoomText allows them to see and use the computer applications more easily than ever before. Also, the Assistive Technology designated computer is equipped with such products as a large monitor, an adjustable table for wheelchair users, a modified keyboard, joystick and trackball. SC Commission on the Blind partners will be engaged to ensure that staff in the centers are familiar with the capabilities of the assistive technology available.

- *Identification of the roles and resource contributions of the SC Works partners.*

As described in Section III, Question 2, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed upon and signed with core programs included in the Pee Dee workforce development system. In the MOU, shared resources are identified that can be used to provide services in the SC Works Centers in the local area. Resources include staff time, workshop facilitation, space & reasonable rent for SC Works Centers, usage of phones, copiers, internet, computer resource rooms, etc.

- Title I- Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs- In the Pee Dee, title I programs are administered by Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments

(PDRCOG) through contracts with Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. (SC Works Center Operations and Adult/DW programs, Youth), and Darlington County School District for WIOA Youth Programs.

- Title II- Adult and Family Literacy Act Program- Administered by local Adult Educations in each county and Florence Literacy Council serves individuals reading at levels below 3-4<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Title III- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program- Administered by SCDEW in the SC Works Pee Dee Centers
- Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Act Programs- In the Pee Dee, SC Vocational Rehabilitation has a Local Office in Florence and in Bennettsville. SC Vocational Rehabilitation staff keeps appointment hours in various SC Works Centers. Also, SC Commission for the Blind (SCCB) has one representative in the Pee Dee Area that also keeps appointment hours in the comprehensive center.
- Required One-Stop Partners, are also a viable part of the programs in the SC Works Pee Dee system. They include:
  - Career and Technical Education (Perkins)- Represented by Florence-Darlington Technical College; Northeastern Technical College
  - Community Services Block Grant- Administered by Community Action Agencies (CAA)- Pee Dee CAA in Florence, Dillon and Marion County; Darlington County CAA; and Chesterfield-Marlboro EOC in Chesterfield and Marlboro Counties.
  - Indian & Native American Programs- no longer available via Pee Dee Indian Development Council
  - HUD Employment & Training programs- Administered by HUD Housing Projects in each county
  - Job Corps- A Job Corps representative recruits from the SC Works Florence Center on a regular basis. Bamberg Job Corps Center is in Bamberg, SC.
  - Local Veterans' Employment Representatives & Disabled Veterans' Outreach program- Administered in the Centers by SCDEW
  - National Farmworker Jobs program- Administered by Telamon Corporation
  - Senior Community Service Employment program- Administered by Goodwill Industries. Prior to COVID-19, Goodwill participants assisted the SC Works system by providing customer assistance in the Center Resource rooms.
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)- Administered by SC Department of Social Services (DSS)
  - Trade Adjustment Assistance programs- Administered by SCDEW in the centers. Participants are case managed by WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker staff
  - Unemployment Compensation Programs- Administered by SCDEW in the SC Works Centers

- YouthBuild- Administered by various organizations competitively procured by DOL. There are no YouthBuild programs in the Pee Dee Local Workforce Area., but there is one in Kingstree, in the Pee Dee Region.

Also, workforce development activities in the Pee Dee Local Area are being delivered by various educational institutions, faith and community-based organizations and human services organizations. One such organization is Jobs for Life (JfL). Established in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1996, JfL addresses the root causes of unemployment, underemployment, and disengagement with work by uniting churches, businesses and community organizations and facilitating positive transformation within lives and communities. Two of the LWDA's staff members have attended JfL trainings and continue to support its efforts. Another non-profit active in partnership with SC Works is Connie's Workforce Connections that exists to eliminate barriers to employment that other agencies or organizations may not be able to fund. It assists in eliminating simple barriers that could cause a job seeker not to get hired and/or that could cause an employed person to lose their current job. The PDRCOG's One Stop System Coordinator participates in Coordinating Council meetings in each county at which these entities share information about the services they are providing. We have six Coordinating Councils in the Pee Dee.

## ***2. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.***

The Pee Dee Local Area has a wide array of training activities available to adult and dislocated workers. Since competition is stiff, slack or low-quality programs are the exception and not the rule. Listed below are some of the training activities:

- SC Works Pee Dee Centers- In every SC Works Pee Dee Center, there are computer labs available to the general public. Individuals can access the internet to work on WIN's Career Readiness Courseware software to improve WIN scores, Aztec Learning software to improve basic skills, access through SC Works Online System (SCWOS) to ALISON which is one of the leading FREE online learning websites. ALISON offers courses on a variety of topics, including tutorials on Microsoft® Word, Excel and Access; Google Gmail; understanding potential workplace safety issues; basic economics; and even identity theft. All courses on ALISON are accessible for free. Also, workshops are offered in basic computer skills, interviewing, applying for jobs, etc.
- In September and October 2022, the LWDA actively promoted the SC Chamber Education and Workforce Foundation's UpSkill-A-Thon Competition. It was a month-long competition that allowed South Carolinians ages 16 and up to upskill, reskill, and be introduced to new skills via learning pathways based on high-demand career fields.

Participants were granted access to trainings and certifications through LinkedIn Learning.

- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)*- OJT is and has always been a cornerstone activity for the Pee Dee. OJT allows for immediate employment for the individual and the opportunity for the employer to train the individual to the specifics of the job available. The employer receives up to 75% of the wages of the individual during the agreed upon training time.
- *Four Year Colleges* - Coker College, in Hartsville, and Francis Marion University, in Florence- Two four-year colleges with stellar reputations are available to students in the Pee Dee. Of course, only curriculums that will provide for employment in-demand industry sectors and occupations are on the Eligible Training Provider List. Due to the lifetime maximum of \$14,000, typically WIOA can only fund students at these institutions in their last four semesters of training.
- *Adult Education and Family Literacy*- Adult Education Programs exist in all six Pee Dee Counties. These Adult Education programs offer a range of program accessibility, certified instructors, current curriculum materials, instructional resources, and career transition services. Through these programs, students can move towards a high school diploma (HSD), high school equivalency degree (HSED) and/or National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), as well as transition to post-secondary education and/or employment. They also offer classes for basic literacy skills, English language improvement, family literacy and college preparatory skills.
- *Technical Colleges*- Northeastern (NETC), in Cheraw, and Florence-Darlington (FDTC), in Florence- Two technical colleges in the Pee Dee offer credit and non-credit certificates, diplomas and degree programs, and short-term training programs that allow individuals the opportunity to efficiently train for a specific occupation or industry. Additionally, technical colleges deliver high-quality, cost effective continuing education training. Both technical colleges offer transfer and articulation agreements to SC's four-year institutions, allow students to continue their education and ultimately earn a baccalaureate degree.
- ~~*Project Hope*~~ Project HOPE provides funding for training and employment in the allied health field for low-income individuals, youth aging out of foster care and veterans.
- ~~*TRADE*~~ The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA Program), provides assistance to workers who have been adversely affected by foreign trade (Dislocated Workers). Benefits include training, job search allowances, job relocation allowances, trade readjustment allowances (TRA), case management and employment services and access to the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). The TAA program gives an advantage to dislocated workers affected by foreign trade, as

training budgets are more robust, these DWs are eligible for payments during training, to include allowances to search for work and relocate.

- *Academy for Careers Technology, Mullins, SC*- Located in Mullins, SC, ACT offers a very reputable Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program for adults and dislocated workers.
- *Proprietary Training Schools*- Several proprietary schools exist in the Pee Dee, especially to provide certifications in the medical field. Professional Medical Training Center and Pee Dee Medical are examples.
- *Truck Driver Training Schools*- In the Pee Dee there are many Truck Driver Training Schools. Florence-Darlington Technical College, as well as, proprietary schools offer the program.
- *Apprenticeships*- The LWDA strongly supports joining employers that have Apprenticeship programs and will agree to hire WIOA eligible adults, dislocated workers and youth. WIOA can assist employers with the required OJT funds, as well as, training dollars for the required training hours. In the NETC area, several manufacturers utilize apprenticeships, such as, Schaeffler Group USA, INA-Cheraw, AO Smith, Domtar, Agape, Mar-Mac Wire, Palmetto Brick and Wyman Gordon. In the FDTC area, McLeod Health and other manufacturers have apprenticeships.
- *H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant (Level UP grant)*- In January, 2021, the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments received an H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant of \$2.27 million from the US Department of Labor to serve 350 unemployed, underemployed and/or incumbent workers. (Upper Savannah Council of Governments is a partner serving 100 of the 350 to become EMTs and Paramedics.) The grant is to address the shortage of rural healthcare workers in occupations directly impacting patient care- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Phlebotomists, Pharmacy Technicians, Certified Medical Assistants (CMA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). The employer partner for the grant is McLeod Health which has hospitals and physicians' practices throughout the greater Pee Dee Region. The technical colleges in the Greater Pee Dee Region are providing training to H-1B recruits. The grant expires in 01/2025.
- *Comprehensive and Accessible Reemployment through Equitable Employment Recovery (CAREER) National Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG)*- In September 2021, as part of a consortium of five local areas including the Pee Dee, Upper Savannah Council of Governments, Upstate, Lower Savannah and Worklink received a \$2.8 million National Dislocated Worker Grant to help provide training and employment services to job seekers as the economy recovers from impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. In the Pee Dee, 60 individuals



will receive On-the-Job Training (OJT) and supportive services. The grant expires in 2023.

Also, Career services are provided by all Parties in the SC Works Centers. Career Services include but are not limited to:

- *Initial Assessment:* Begins with intake and focuses on determining a customer's job readiness level, including workforce skills and access to appropriate services.
- *Job Counseling:* Either individually or in group sessions that helps the jobseeker make the best use of the information and services available.
- *Job Referral:* Services that are tailored to the needs of specific employers and jobseekers. Both workers and employers may also choose to post job announcements and resumes on an electronic system that is open to all.
- *Employer Services:* Access to labor market information; recruitment, screening, and referral of qualified applicants; access to economic development information and resources; posting job vacancies; offering customized job training options; connecting firms to SC Works information; technical assistance on assessment, recruitment, and human resource strategies; advocating for targeted employers in key economic sectors; and assistance with major layoffs and plant closures.
- *Labor Market Information:* Current and projected occupational supply and demand information, current occupational wage information; occupational skill standards; nonproprietary information on employers; and information on education and training program outcomes, including completion rates, placement rates, and wage rates of graduates.
- *Information and Referral:* Access to information regarding services needed by jobseekers, such as income assistance, housing, food, or medical care. Referrals to off-site services within the system are made electronically in accordance with this agreement.
- *Training Related Information:* Access to and information about vocational exploration, basic skills and literacy training, job search skills, self-employment/entrepreneurial training, training leading to the award of skills certificates, work-based learning, two-year or four-year degree programs and state-approved apprenticeship programs.
- *Unemployment Insurance Information:* Phone accessibility to file for unemployment insurance benefits. Internet Claims filing is done via the internet. Partner staff provides basic assistance to individuals filing an initial claim.
- *Eligibility Determination:* Access to information regarding employment and training services needed by job seekers and eligibility for federal and state funded programs.

- *Outreach/Orientation/Intake:* Promoting local workforce services and activities to provide individuals with the information necessary to register for programs.
- *Performance Information on Local SC Works Centers:* How the local area is performing on the local performance measures and any additional performance information with respect to the SC Works delivery system in the local area.
- *Follow-up Services:* Including retention services and counseling regarding the workplace.

**3. A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.**

The LWDA's Business & Industry Coordinator works closely with the State's Rapid Response Team to ensure that businesses and industries that announce layoffs or closures receive the services that they and their affected employees are entitled to. A preliminary meeting takes place with industry's site management to provide information about Unemployment Insurance and WIOA services. If allowed, the Business & Industry Coordinator, assisted by members of the Integrated Business Services Team, will meet with the affected employees to explain the tenets of the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and/or Trade Act. For example, an industry in Marion County is closing and the Pee Dee Business Services representatives will be going onsite to provide assistance with resumes and interviewing workshops. They are also reaching out to employers that are hiring to participate in an onsite Job Fair at the affected industry. A large manufacturing facility with over 500 employees in Marlboro County closed. Resume services were offered onsite and scheduled to accommodate employees' shifts. Marlboro County Economic development director and Pee Dee Business Services representatives coordinated two offsite job fairs. These are the types of customized workforce activities that the Board supports in the delivery of services to individuals affected by layoffs and closures.

**4. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.**

The Pee Dee Local Area has established a strong standing Youth Committee that is reflective of the many youth workforce investment activities in the local area. Members represent Career and Technology Education (CATE), a non-profit afterschool center, the Regional Workforce Advisor (RWA), Job Corps, Department of Juvenile Justice, SC Youth Advocacy Program (foster care), and Telamon to name a few.

Most of the training activities described in answer to question #2 are also available to youth, to include On-the Job Training, Four Year Colleges, Adult Education, Technical

Colleges, Proprietary Training Schools, Truck Driver Training Schools, etc. An exemplary short-term program that is offered to youth in preparation for employment is “Career Smart Training”. This training addresses dressing successfully for an interview, resume development, interviewing skills and a financial literacy workshop regarding paycheck best practices. WIOA defines youth as 14-24, therefore, allowing more options for training available to this population. Through contracted providers, WIOA offers workforce investment activities to out-of-school youth ages 16-24. ~~Pee Dee WIOA youth programs offer the GED Incentive Program through which over nearly 800 dropouts have attained their GED since 2010.~~ Currently available in the Pee Dee are ~~eight (8)~~ five (5) Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) programs. Eligible youth can go to South Carolina’s Bamberg Job Corps Center for employment training and the Job Corps representative often uses the SC Works Pee Dee Centers as a recruitment hub.

SCVRD partners with the S.C. Department of Education and local school districts, SCVRD provides services to general and special education students with disabilities. SCVRD services are designed to prepare these students for career-oriented, competitive employment.

SCVRD’s responsibility is to provide job preparedness and other appropriate services for eligible high school students who will enter competitive employment or participate in services leading to it prior to leaving school. School districts are responsible for academic curricula and, when able, may provide students with vocational curricula that lay a foundation for that pursuit, such as career awareness and exploration; appropriate work behavior; job-shadowing; school and community-based work experiences, etc.

SCVRD’s transition services are a coordinated set of activities conducted by local school districts and SCVRD for and with high school students. These services are to be provided in accordance with individual student needs and interests leading to the achievement and maintenance of competitive employment. The focus is on five categories: 1) Preparatory Experiences 2) Work Experiences 3) Personal Development and Leadership 4) Connecting Services and 5) Family Involvement.

“Project Search” is an exemplary project that SCVRD’s Florence Area office implemented in 2018. This program requires interns to work in an integrated setting, year-round, at least 16 hours a week, and earn a prevailing wage. Its focus is on young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism. SCVRD partners with a local school to assist students with internships at McLeod Hospital. The current success rate is 100 percent!

- 5. A description of how the fourteen youth program elements are integrated in program design, including a description of partnerships or formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program.**

Local WIOA youth contractors must make all 14 program elements available to youth participants, but not all services must be funded with WIOA youth funds. Contractors may leverage partner resources to provide program elements that are available in the local area. If a contractor does not fund an activity with WIOA title I youth funds, the contractor must have an agreement in place with the partner to offer the program element and ensure that the activity is closely connected and coordinated with the WIOA youth program if enrolled youth participate in the program element. They are as follows:

- *Tutoring and Study Skills Training and Instruction*
  - For out-of-school youth, participants receive services in the WIOA computer lab or with the local Adult Education program. This includes tutoring in core curricula courses by certified teachers on an as needed basis, assistance with homework or other assignments, basic skills upgrading utilizing the Aztec Learning Systems software and WIN Learning's Career Readiness Courseware. Career Coaches coordinate services on an individual basis for each participant.
- *Alternative Secondary School Services*
  - Participants receive services at the Alternative Secondary school assigned to the district in which they reside or another approved agency that is K-12 funded. Services must be approved by the school district and lead to a high school diploma or GED. Career Coaches coordinate services on an individual basis for each participant.
- *Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences*
  - Work experiences are coordinated by the Career Coaches to assist youth in acquiring the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. The purpose is to provide the participant with the opportunity for career exploration and skill development. Assessment results assist career coaches with placing students in appropriate work experience sites.
- *Occupational Skills Training*
  - Training services are coordinated by the Career Coaches in conjunction with the participant based on expressed interest and skill levels. Training is provided by technical colleges, vocational schools, Adult Education Centers and proprietary training centers. Training is aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
- *Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.*

- Contractors provide workforce preparation training to participants for specific occupations utilizing ~~Career WIN's~~ Career Readiness Courseware, and other available training to assist in advancement in their chosen career. ~~WIN® is~~ Career Readiness Courseware is utilized to ensure that participants have the skill levels required to maintain employment in their chosen career. In South Carolina, Adult Education has been challenged to develop Integrated Education and Trainings (IET) which involve delivering basic skills programming and occupational skills training at the same time. This requires coordination between the Adult Educations and the technical colleges and results in trainings that allow individuals to begin their educational journey on a career pathway.
- *Leadership Development Activities*
  - Leadership development opportunities encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors. Participants are encouraged to enroll in courses and programs and attend workshops that will assist in developing leadership skills. Citizenship training, community service learning projects and teamwork training are all viable activities that will reap positive results in the lives of youth.
- *Supportive Services*
  - This service is provided on an as needed basis as identified by the career coach on the Individual Service Strategy. The contractor identifies the method (in-kind, arrangement with another agency, or cash assistance) by which supportive services are provided. The Career Coach coordinates services and resources with partner agencies in the local area to assist participants in achieving their goals. These agencies are utilized first before assistance is funded by WIOA. Supportive Services Provisions are further outlined in the contractor's statement of work and in an instruction.
- *Adult Mentoring*
  - The contractor identifies individuals that will serve as adult mentors to participants. Mentors help participants develop positive attitudes, character building skills, leadership skills, as well as, encourage good performance. Mentors serve as role models and impart standards or expectations to youth with respect to employment decisions, self-sufficiency, education achievement and life skills.
- *Follow-up Services*
  - Follow-up services are provided for 12-months after exit to participants. Career Coaches have regular contact with participants in

assisting them with securing better paying jobs, career development or furthering their education. Contact is made on a monthly basis via telephone, text message, Facebook, face-to-to, etc. These contacts are documented in the case notes section of the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). The types of services provided and the duration of the services are determined based on the needs of the individual.

- *Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling*
  - Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling is conducted by the career coaches or other agencies that the contractor has partnered with to offer services that are not provided by the contractor. Services include assistance with problems in school/training, employment difficulties, alcohol and drug abuse, etc. Counseling sessions are conducted face-to-face or by phone. Participants are referred to partner agencies on an as needed basis.
- *Financial Literacy Education*
  - In PY'19, the Board's Youth Committee invited T.D. Bank to present to the committee and the youth contractors, its youth financial literacy program. As a result, The FDIC's Money Plus curriculum may be utilized. Eckerd Connects includes financial literacy in its *Career Smart* activity in which all youth have the opportunity to participate.
- *Entrepreneurial Skills Training*
  - Contractors partner with school districts that offer Entrepreneurial classes to offer training to participants. They utilize speakers from business and industry to offer workshops on starting a business, how to offer a product, the process and the end results. Junior Achievement, WIN Learning's Career Readiness Courseware and SCOIS are also utilized. A strong partnership has been established with the Kelley Center for Economic Development which serves Entrepreneurs specifically. Each month free workshops are provided to small and emerging businesses and these opportunities are shared with youth interested in starting their own businesses.
- *Services that provide labor market and unemployment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration services.*
  - Contractors utilize SCWOS to review local labor marketing information and relevant career opportunities available. Also available are DOL's My Skills My Future (myskillsmyfuture.org) and Career Onestop websites (careeronestop.org). Contractors also coordinate and implement participant visits to the SC Works Centers

to attend workshops that support job seekers and businesses, become familiar with all the services the centers have to offer.

- *Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.*
  - Contractors utilize ~~WIN's Career Readiness Courseware~~ ~~WIN Learning's Career Readiness Courseware~~, USDOL's My Skills My Future and Career One Stop websites, and SCOIS to identify career interests. Contractors also coordinate and/or partner with the high schools for participants to attend FAFSA workshops, Essay writing workshops, SAT and ACT workshops, college tours, college application day etc.

**6. *If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), what is the LWDA's policy that further defines how to determine if a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. If your area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency, a local policy is not required.***

The LWDA received State Instruction Number 19-05, issued May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, which states that "if an LWDA chooses to use this second definition of basic skills deficient, expanding beyond the sole use of TABE, the LWDB must issue a policy defining how a youth is basic skills deficient under this definition." The LWDA ~~plans~~ ~~is willing~~ to give further consideration to this offer ~~in PY'20~~, especially in its service to youth with disabilities.

**7. *A description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.***

The LWDA utilizes partner meetings to share information among education and workforce programs. As training and workforce funds become more and more limited, the avoidance of duplication of services and partnerships between programs become more and more important. The LWDA's System Coordinator is also involved on coordinating councils and other teams throughout the region and communicates opportunities and services to system partners and staff. The Business & Industry Coordinator is also in contact with readySC, the Department of Commerce and Apprenticeship Carolina through its quarterly Integrated Business Services meetings. Leadership of Adult Education and both local technical colleges, NETC and FDTC, are represented on the Pee Dee Workforce Board and these entities keep the LWDA abreast of post-secondary programs and activities available on their campuses. We often discuss opportunities for collaboration and coordination. Many shared workforce activities have resulted and will continue.

The key component of coordination is communication and information. The Local Board established its Youth Committee to bring together the various educational and social programs serving youth in the local area together. It is through this board that information about existing workforce investment activities in secondary and post-secondary education programs are being discussed. Job Corps is also represented on the Committee and a representative from Job Corps visits the SC Works comprehensive center to recruit on a regular basis. The Local Area's Career and Technical Education Centers are represented on the committee by Marion Academy for Careers and Technology. The Regional Workforce Advisor (RWA), Cheryl Lewis, bridges the gap between business and education communities and facilitates collaboration on how best to prepare a workforce that meets industry demands. She reports each quarter on workforce activities planned for the area.

**8. *A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation, child care, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.***

Title I Career Coaches are allowed to provide limited supportive services to participants on a case by case basis for transportation, childcare, emergency housing situations, support of career & training services (uniforms, books, fees, testing, etc), legal aid services (expungements) and referral to medical services. Oftentimes, an individual can attain all the training dollars he/she needs from lottery funds, Pell grant, and other scholarships. In situations like these, it is reasonable to assume that WIOA could provide assistance with transportation and childcare expenses if needed to enable the individual to attend training. The Local Area's policy allows direct payment to child care providers or limited cash payments to participants based upon the number of children for which childcare is needed. In PY'21, the Pee Dee's Supportive Service Policy was updated to allow the provision of tablets/laptops and internet.

In regards to transportation, Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), pdrta.org, has a healthy transportation route system in and around Florence County and it is seeing growth in other counties through community partnerships. In the past few years, routes have been added within Bennettsville, Hartsville, and in August, 2020, Dillon, and Cheraw. There is a route from Lake City and Marion County to Myrtle Beach for employment opportunities in the hospitality industry. Also available are various private transportation services.

Again, the Workforce System Coordinator is an active part of all the County Coordinating Councils whose purpose is to share the availability of programs for the citizenry. The Coordinator shares about SC Works and takes information back to the centers about various assistance that may be available for system clients.



**9. *A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the SC Works delivery system.***

One of the Local Area's strategies for maximizing coordinating, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication of services provided through the SC Works delivery system is to make it a priority to ensure that all SC Works Pee Dee partners have a clear understanding of all services in the system to better serve customers and share the commitment to provide high-quality customer service. In PY'15, SCDEW committed to cross train its Wagner-Peyser staff with other SCDEW funded staff in the centers. This cross training allows for staff's increased ability to address a customer's needs no matter their barriers to employment. Unfortunately, many of the DOL programs available in the SC Works Centers have restrictions on the activities in which particular staff can be involved. Although staff may be available to assist, doing so would be against the language of the legislation and may result in a reprimand from supervisors or potential sanction by DOL.

Staff for the SC Works Centers are extremely limited making it difficult to provide seamless customer service. As a result, the Local Area has had to strategize with SCDEW on numerous occasions over the years to ensure that SC Works Centers are fully staffed. Recently, more partners are providing staff and services in the SC Works Pee Dee Centers. One of the strategies to address staff needs is to make sure that partners signing the MOU consider allowing their staff persons to spend time assisting in the Resource Room, or at least, offering its programs' services at the local center(s). One of the roles of the Center Manager is to ensure that the Centers have adequate staffing during hours of operation. However, due to funding and staff shortages, several SC Works Centers have to close for a lunch hour because of the Local Area's rule that at no time can one staff person work alone in a center. The Board's SC Works Committee closely evaluates the traffic in the centers to determine if changes need to be made in the coming year(s).

All of the SC Works centers with the exception of the comprehensive center in Florence, closes at 4:00 pm each day. This allows for the staff to participate in cross training activities, continuous improvement strategizing and process improvement team meetings. These meetings allow for maximized coordination and improved service delivery in the SC Works Centers.

A strategy that SCDEW has engaged to improve service delivery particularly to individuals receiving Unemployment benefits is to utilize the SC Works Online System (SCWOS) as a communication tool to inform new UI registrants about center hiring events, relevant job listings, and job fairs planned in the region. They have recently implemented the practice of sending text messages to UI customers for the purpose of outreach. Staff can also send personal emails to the email address under which the customer registered in the system, send information about jobs that specifically

match the personal info the customer has entered in their personal profile in the system, and attach general announcements of workshops, local Job Fairs and invitations to visit the center when employers will be on-hand to interview and hire for their establishments. In general, SCWOS is an incredible tool that, if fully utilized, has the potential to overhaul the way the SC Works Pee Dee system interacts with its customers. Therefore, another of Pee Dee's strategies for improving our delivery system is to make it a priority to maximize the utilization of SCWOS and its array of resources.

***10. A description of how the local board will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under the WIOA Title II, including how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements.***

The PDWDB is committed to supporting, engaging and partnering Title I and Title II activities. A healthy relationship between Title I and Adult Education exists in the Pee Dee Local Area. A decade ago, Marion County Adult Education invited then Paxen Learning Services (now Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.), Title I Operator, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program provider, to co-locate with them in an effort to maximize resources. Both entities had resources to offer individuals who were basic skills deficient, needed WIN and/or a high school equivalency. This partnership laid the groundwork for future co-locations of Title I and II activities in the region. In 2015, Darlington County Adult Education offered space to host the SC Works Hartsville site. Efforts resulted in an extraordinary setting for a shared computer resource area, a small conference room, a classroom for employment workshops and an area for Title I staff to meet with its customers one-on-one. Also, in PY'15, the Board's Title I youth provider at the time, Paxen Learning Services, moved its central operations to Poynor Adult Education's facility in Florence. Although the Title I youth program is no longer housed at Poynor Adult Education, this partnership between Title I and II in Florence County broke down walls of misunderstanding and made it another model example of sharing resources. Adult Educations in other locations have hosted SC Works partner meetings and adopted a formal referral process between the programs. For PY'22, some Adult Educations received additional funding from the State Department of Education to increase their visibility in the comprehensive centers. For SC Works Florence this means that two days a week a representative will be in the center to provide career readiness assessments and make/receive referrals. Currently, Adult Education is represented by Ms. Carol Hill, Adult Education Director for Florence County, and Ms. Hill brings a wealth of experience and information to the Local Workforce Board.

Also, in the formulation of the Board's definition of "basic skills deficiency" which is a necessary eligibility/priority consideration in WIOA, the Test for Basic Adult Education (TABE) and WIN® were selected as tools to use to measure a Title I enrollees' basic skills levels. In the Pee Dee Local Area, the adult education entities are the sole

providers of TABE and WIN® testing, there again, strengthening the partnership. Individuals who need upgrading may enroll in classes provided by Adult Education to improve their WIN® scores. ~~In its consideration of expanding the definition of basic skills deficiency in PY '20, Board staff will involve Adult Education, among other workforce entities, in the discussion.~~

In terms of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements, the Board will follow the lead of the SC Department of Education, as it did in 2018 when it participated for the first time and **in 2021**. If the process remains the same, the board will participate as follows:

- When notification and information regarding the upcoming Adult Education RFP and WIOA requirements for the local board's approval is received by the Board Chair and Workforce Administrator, that information will be forwarded to a review committee appointed by the local board. An outline of the proposal review process and timeline will also be provided.
- Review committee members will attend the LWDB Proposal Review Training to be held via live webinar. It is understood that, during the webinar, review committee members will be provided with an overview of the proposals, instructions on how to review proposals, and how to use the proposal review rubric. It is further understood that LWDB members will have an opportunity to ask questions during the webinar, that a webinar playback option will be available, and that a point of contact will be available during the review process to answer questions and to clarify any information.
- Any LWDB members with potential conflicts of interest will recuse themselves from the review process. For example, technical college representatives will not review any proposals if a technical college within their area submits a proposal.
- It is understood that, upon receipt of all grant applications, SCDE - Office of Adult Education staff will screen all applications to determine eligibility to apply for funds. All applications deemed eligible will be sorted by their LWDA and packaged for hard-copy or electronic transmittal to the Board Chair and LWDA Administrator. The package also will include the rubric and review instructions.
- Board members will use the rubric to review each proposal for alignment with their Local Plan.
- Once the review process is complete, all forms and other supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Office of Adult Education for consideration in the grant competition process.

- It is understood that SCDE - Office of Adult Education staff will review LWDB comments and feedback on Local Plan and one-stop alignment and consider the results of the review.
- It is understood that the Pee Dee Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements.

***11. A description of how the local board will coordinate with partner programs to conduct affirmative outreach to include members of groups protected by the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188, including individuals of various religions, racial and ethnic backgrounds, individuals of limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals of different age groups and sexes.***

The PDWDB is committed to:

- make efforts to use SC Works partner resources and consult with SC Works partners about ways to improve outreach and service for protected groups;
- ensure staff awareness of outreach efforts through training and orientation;
- consult with appropriate community service groups about ways in which to improve its outreach and service to various populations;
- share information about programs and/or activities to schools or community service groups that serve various populations; and
- review Census or other reliable information on an annual basis to determine the protected groups in the area who could potentially use WIOA Title I programs and activities.

## Section V: Operations and Compliance

- 1. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local SC Works system. This includes agreements between the local board or other local entities with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, such as the cross-training of staff, technical assistance, the use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.***

2020 MOU submitted. 2022 MOU submitted and included in the attachments.

**2. A description of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the chief elected official(s).**

Since 1990, the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments (PDRCOG) has served as the administrative entity and financial recipient of federal workforce funds, presently known as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the Pee Dee Local Area. The PDRCOG is one of ten regional planning and technical assistance organizations in South Carolina and is organized by state law to serve local governments in six counties, namely, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion and Marlboro Counties. The Council is governed by a 26-member Board of Directors appointed by County Councils in each of the six member counties. The Board also includes members of the state legislature who serve in an ex-officio capacity. The Council is financially supported by per-capita contributions from the six member counties, an appropriation from the State of South Carolina, direct service contracts and other sources. The mission of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments is to assist local governments and organizations in a wide variety of planning, economic development, workforce investment and other technical services that will help meet the human and physical development needs of the region. More information can be found at [www.peedeecog.org](http://www.peedeecog.org).

Each year the PDRCOG is audited by an independent auditor. Management is responsible for maintaining accurate financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Consistently, the PDRCOG has had an unmodified opinion on the financial statements, with no audit findings, no instances of non-compliance and no significant deficiencies related to management's internal control procedures.

**3. A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.**

(The latest RFP was released in December 2021 and the process described here was utilized.) As in previous years, the PDRCOG will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purpose of soliciting interested entities to submit proposals to provide WIOA Title I activities in the SC Works Pee Dee workforce system. The RFP will be sufficiently advertised on SC Business Opportunities (SCBO) website, SC Works Pee Dee website, and e-mailed to entities that have previously requested to receive RFPs from the PDRCOG's workforce division. Once the proposals are received per the specifications set forth in the RFP and they are deemed to be responsive and "cost/price reasonable" by workforce staff, the PDWDB's Executive Committee, or such prescribed committee, will independently evaluate the proposals based upon prescribed criteria. Members of the committee will be asked to disclose any real or perceived "conflict of interest". In its evaluation, the Committee will consider relevant information in determining the appropriateness of funding proposals, such as whether or not the entity: has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain

them; has the ability to meet program design specifications at a reasonable cost, as well as the ability to meet performance goals; has a satisfactory record of past performance (in the area for which the application is being made); has the ability to provide services that can lead to the achievement of economic self-sufficiency; and has a satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability; has the necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operating controls; and has the technical skills to perform the work, among other things. The scores as determined by the committee members will be tabulated and the proposals will be ranked per their order of points received. An individual proposal must receive at least 70 points to be considered at all. The entity receiving the highest evaluation score will be deemed the recommendation of the committee to the full board for funding. Entities that do not receive the contract award are granted the opportunity to appeal the board's decision.

The PDWDB conducts all procurement transactions in a manner providing full and open competition. The RFP identifies all evaluation factors and their relative importance. All responses are honored to the maximum extent practical. Technical evaluations are made of all applications received. Awards are made to the responsible firms whose applications are most advantageous to the program.

**4. Agreed upon local performance goals after negotiations are finalized.**

<b>WIOA TITLE I – ADULT</b>	<b>Program Year 2020 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2021 Goal</b>
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	79.90%	80.40%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	79.10%	80.10%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$4,750	\$4,800
Credential Attainment Rate	57.10%	58.70%
Measurable Skill Gains	47.50%	49.50%

<b>WIOA TITLE I – DISLOCATED WORKER</b>	<b>Program Year 2020 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2021 Goal</b>
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	83.80%	84.30%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	79.50%	80.30%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$7,100	\$7,150
Credential Attainment Rate	61.00%	61.70%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.70%	47.30%
<b>WIOA TITLE I – YOUTH</b>	<b>Program Year 2020 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2021 Goal</b>
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	76.60%	77.10%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	72.00%	72.80%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$2,917	\$3,000
Credential Attainment Rate	68.60%	69.10%
Measurable Skill Gains	48.00%	49.00%

Pee Dee Program Year 2022 and 2023 WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

<b>WIOA TITLE I – ADULT</b>	<b>Program Year 2022 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2023 Goal</b>
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	80.4%	80.4%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	81.1%	81.1%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$5,442	\$5,442

Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	54.1%	54.1%
<b>WIOA TITLE I – DISLOCATED WORKER</b>	<b>Program Year 2022 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2023 Goal</b>
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	82.7%	82.7%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	80.3%	80.3%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$7,150	\$7,150
Credential Attainment Rate	65.6%	65.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	57.1%	57.1%
<b>WIOA TITLE I – YOUTH</b>	<b>Program Year 2022 Goal</b>	<b>Program Year 2023 Goal</b>
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	76.6%	76.6%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	73.8%	73.8%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$3,500	\$3,500
Credential Attainment Rate	71.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.0%

**5. Description of actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce area, including:**

- The effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement to assess their one-stop centers;



The Pee Dee Workforce Board has a history of embracing innovation and continuous improvement. Effective 2010- 2011, the Pee Dee Workforce Board received Recognition and Certification by SCDEW for fulfilling “requirements of applicable sections of the WIA of 1998, having established a local board with appropriate, optimum policy-making authority; established a youth council; and maintained sound fiscal and performance practices.” The Pee Dee Workforce Investment Board also received designation as a “High Performing Board” by meeting all seven elements of the Local Workforce Investment Board Standards adopted by the State Workforce Investment Board. The current PDWDB deems it important to remain a high-performing workforce development area and it too embraces the tenets of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria.

The PDRCOG’s SC Works System Coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating continuous improvement efforts, spearheaded activities to complete the SC Works Self-Assessment Tool, along with the PDWDB’s SC Works Committee. The initial efforts undertaken to certify each One Stop in 2010, resulted in a clearer understanding by all partners of the baseline expectations and the continuous improvement efforts that would need to take place in order to ensure that SC Works Pee Dee System was offering quality services to all customers. The LWDA utilized the completed assessments to identify areas within the system that need improvement. The System Coordinator, with the assistance of other workforce staff, is addressing opportunities for improvement by studying the day-to-day activities of the workforce centers; establishing policies and procedures to address areas of deficiency; convening process improvement teams comprised of front-line staff to address areas of concern; identifying partner resources to address some of the requirements of the certification; and educating center personnel regarding the standards associated with SC Works certification for their center(s).

In February of 2019, the SC Works Certification Standards were finalized by the State. The workforce staff will lead the centers and core partners through completion of the SC One Stop Certification Self-Assessment tool. The tool is divided into 3 sections:

1. System Standards for Employer Services
2. System Standards for Job Seeker Services
3. SC Works Management Standards

The SC Works System Coordinator and the Operator used State Instruction Number 18-11 to evaluate each SC Works Pee Dee location. They worked to ensure that each location, at least, met the baseline measures of the Certification Standards while being cognizant of continuous improvement. Processes are implemented and continuously monitored to ensure that progress is being made and that the SC Works Centers and SC Works delivery system are meeting and ultimately exceeding each baseline measure set forth by the State.

As of July 2019, each SC Works Pee Dee location has been certified. It is our goal to provide high-quality services to the customers that we serve; to provide access and opportunities to job seekers and provide them with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with wages that will sustain them and their families and, enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other human resource assistance, to include education and training for their current workforce.

Utilizing *State Instruction 21-06, SC Works Certification Standards*, the Local Area staff and Workforce Board members evaluated and certified the centers as required by June 30, 2022.

- *A description of fiscal and program performance goals beyond the federal measures and how progress will be tracked and made publicly available;*

### **Fund Utilization Rate**

State Instruction 17-05, *WIOA Fund Utilization Policy*, states that “Each local workforce development board shall ensure that an annual 70 percent fund utilization rate is met for each of the WIOA Title I funding streams (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth).”

In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, each year, prior to July 1, the Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Board will continue to obligate the vast majority of its funds in contracts with providers of WIOA Title I career and training services. By the end of the program year and barring unforeseen circumstances, nearly 100% of the funds will be obligated (i.e. expended or committed through contractual agreements) and that sets the local area on track to meet the minimum required expenditure rate of 70%.

Additionally, to allow adequate time to invest earmarked funds, funds transfer requests between the adult and dislocated worker programs will be made by December 1 of the program year (assuming the notice of funds authorization for the Fiscal Year Money (with October 1 effective date) has been released.

Based upon the monthly financial status reports submitted to the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, the staff of Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments will review obligation and expenditure rates on a monthly basis to ensure that it is on track to meet the State’s requirements. Specifically, by the end of the first quarter, we expect that at least 17.5% of our available funds are expended and by the end of the second quarter, at least 35% is expended. Any shortfalls in these goals will be evaluated and corrective action taken, as necessary. This practice has worked well for us in the past and we will continue it in the coming years.

### **Participant Cost Rate**

State Instruction 17-04, Change 1, *Participant Cost Rate Policy*, states that “Effective July 1, 2018, each local workforce development board shall ensure that WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker expenditures, including Rapid Response for additional assistance funds, meet a minimum participant cost rate of 30 percent.” The local area will take the following specific actions to ensure compliance with this minimum required rate:

1. Participant costs will be budgeted at a minimum of 40% of total planned costs for the year.
2. The local area will conduct continual and critical evaluation of its need to incur overhead (non-participant) costs, taking the following into consideration:
  - Staff and operating costs, to include those directly associated with providing case management and operating the SC Works Centers.
  - Exploration and implementation of the virtual services as a permanent and longer-term solution and further reducing the number of SC Works Centers.
  - Increased business outreach to invest money available for participants in on-the-job training (OJT), linking them with classroom training opportunities from other funding sources when possible.
  - Utilization of the flexibility in the local area’s policy which allows up to 75% reimbursement for OJT provided that certain criteria, including business size, is met.
  - Exploration of the use of local funding to provide Incumbent Worker Training opportunities with employers and setting aside up to 20% of its allocation to support this work-based-learning opportunity. This is a non-traditional use of local funding in the Pee Dee Workforce Development Area.
  - The local area will continue to provide supportive services in accordance with its local policy and be more vigilant about seeking to support participants who may have training funds from (an)other source(s) but need financial assistance that supportive services can provide.
  - The local area has begun and will continue to actively seek to expand and diversify its funding to allow us to budget our staff in support of other opportunities that support the Board’s mission.

As mentioned above, the initial indicator that will facilitate the achievement of the 30% participant cost rate is to ensure that the budgeted rate is sufficiently high enough to account for any participant dollars that end up not being invested by the end of the program year. We have determined that 40% is an appropriate minimum

threshold. This indicator will be reviewed in the budgetary process and with every budget modification that is processed.

The local area will continue to monitor the participant cost rate on a monthly basis, using the Excel spreadsheet provided by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, to ensure that it is on target to meet the 30% minimum investment by the end of the program year. If the participant cost rate is not at 30% as of December 31 of the program year, a critical evaluation of what needs to be done to achieve the rate by June 30 will be conducted and corrective action immediately implemented to do so.

The local board, in collaboration with Eckerd, intends to establish measurable benchmarks associated with new business engagement, which will drive our ability to invest in on-the-job training and incumbent worker training, with emphasis on engaging or re-engaging businesses that have not recently participated in these opportunities. These local benchmarks are currently under development.

The LWDA reserves the right to request a waiver of the 30% participant cost rate requirement in support of the CAREER Dislocated Worker, H-1B Rural Healthcare, and other grants it receives that support participant costs but are reliant upon WIOA Title I staff to provide administrative and case management support.

#### Priority of Service

The Priority of Service Policy (State Instruction Letter 15-17, Change 2) requires that, for those Title I Adult participants receiving individualized career services and training, 70 percent be low-income or basic skills deficient. The Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area ensures compliance with this policy by actively recruiting and conducting outreach to these priority populations. The local area has established working relationships with the adult education providers in each of its six counties and Department of Social Services staff is co-located in three of its six SC Works Centers. Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Area's priority of service policy is contained in the Pee Dee LWDA Instruction #16-01 and is as follows:

Adults who receive services from WIOA-funded staff beyond self-service and information must be determined eligible, enrolled and considered a participant for WIOA Title I services. Individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are low-income, to include recipients of public assistance, or who are basic skills deficient;
- Second Priority: Individuals who are low-income, to include recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient;

- Third Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income, or are not recipients of public assistance, and are not basic skills deficient; and
- Last: Individuals outside of the groups given priority.

The LWDA also will perform reviews of WIOA eligibility applications and will monitor for compliance with the policy. Each month the LWDA will utilize SC Works Online Services Reports to determine the percentage of newly enrolled Adult participants that meet the priority of services policy. If the LWDA is at or above the 30% enrollment limit of Adult participants who are NOT priority, the contractor will be advised to take precautions in enrollment decisions until such time the monthly inquiry indicates that the 30% limit is not exceeded. The Contractor is required to demonstrate a targeted recruitment effort of priority populations and recruitment efforts will be evaluated as a part of the regular contractor monitoring.

### **Tracking and Public Availability**

All of the above metrics will be tracked by staff of Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments on a monthly basis and will, at a minimum, be reported on a quarterly basis at the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board meeting, which is advertised and open to the public. Additionally, any information re: the indicators will be made available upon any interested party's request.

The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments and SC Works Pee Dee websites have been updated and information can now be easily uploaded by staff. A tab has been created on the SC Works Pee Dee website for the upload of this information.

~~The Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments and the SC Works Pee Dee websites in their current state do not lend themselves to regular updates to the information by staff. All changes must be made by an outside party. Both websites are under construction. When they have been upgraded, the local area will explore the feasibility of uploading these and WIOA-mandated performance outcomes on the website for easy access by the public.~~

- *A description of the methodology used by the local board to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds; and*

The Pee Dee Local Workforce Development Board uses the full-time equivalency model for allocating SC Works Center infrastructure costs.

Shared costs are allocated on the basis of a partner's number of staff assigned to work in a facility (enjoying the benefits of being in the building) on a weekly basis and counted proportionately by day as defined below:

- **One Day - .20** (20% of a work week);
- **Two Days - .40** (40% of a work week);

- **Three Days - .60** (60% of a work week);
- **Four Days - .80** (80% of a work week); and
- **Five Days - 1** (100% of a work week).

Staff assigned to work only “half-days” in a facility on a weekly basis are counted proportionately as defined below:

- **One Day - .10** (half of 20% of a work week);
- **Two Days - .20** (half of 40% of a work week);
- **Three Days - .30** (half of 60% of a work week);
- **Four Days - .40** (half of 80% of a work week); and
- **Five Days - .50** (half of 100% of a work week).

Affiliate locations where services are provided only on a monthly basis are not included in the proportionate share. In those instances, there are generally no costs to share as the space is offered at no cost to the system. All required partners are expected to contribute at least .10 FTE to the SC Works Center serving their service area.

- *A description of the roles and contributions of SC Works partners, including cost allocation.*

SC Works Pee Dee brings together a series of partner programs and entities responsible for workforce development, education, and other human resources programs to collaborate in the creation of a seamless customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs’ services.

The purposes of the SC Works system are as follows:

- Increasing access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need, particularly those with barriers to employment;
- Supporting the alignment of workforce, education, and economic development systems;
- Improving the quality and labor market relevance of a demand-driven workforce that meets the needs of businesses and job seekers;
- Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services; and
- Providing workforce development activities that increase opportunities of participants and that increase post-secondary credential attainment and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers, and enhance productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

In addition to their agency's specific requirements for serving its customers and in accordance with our local works Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), each Partner has agreed to:

- (a) Provide access to its programs or activities through the SC Works delivery system;
- (b) Use a portion of funds made available to the partner's program, to the extent consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program and with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Part 200 and as supplemented by specific Federal agency Parts and CFRs, to:
  - 1. Provide applicable career services; and
  - 2. Work collaboratively with the State and Local Board to establish and maintain the SC Works delivery system. This includes jointly funding the one-stop infrastructure costs through partner contributions that are based upon:
    - (i) A reasonable cost allocation methodology by which infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to use and relative benefits received; and
    - (ii) Federal cost principles;
- (c) Enter into an MOU with the Local Board relating to the operation of the SC Works system; and
- (d) Participate in the operation of the SC Works system consistent with the terms of the MOU, requirements of authorizing laws, the Federal cost principles, and all other applicable legal requirements.
- (e) Actively participate in the strategic planning process for the local SC Works system;
- (f) Serve on the Business Services team and participate in industry or sector partnerships, as applicable;
- (g) Participate in SC Works Partner meetings, as appropriate;
- (h) Coordinate and integrate activities so that individuals seeking assistance will have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes; and
- (i) At a minimum, provide electronic access to programs, activities and services:
  - Services provided through electronic means will supplement and not supplant those provided through the physical SC Works delivery system. The term "electronic" includes Web sites, social media, internet chat features, and telephone.

The SC Works system provides services to customers based on individual needs, including the seamless delivery of multiple services to each customer. There is no

required sequence of services. Career Services are provided by all parties in the SC Works Centers. Career Services are described in Section III.2, however, includes Initial Assessment, Job Counseling, Job Referral, Employer Services, Labor Market Information, Information and Referral, Training Related Information, Unemployment Insurance Information, Eligibility Determination, Outreach/Orientation/Intake, Performance Information on Local SC Works Centers and Follow-up Services.

**6. A description of how adult and dislocated worker training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including:**

- *If contracts for training services will be used;*  
~~There are no plans to use contracts for training services at this time.~~ Although the Pee Dee's primary mechanism for delivering and funding WIOA-sponsored training for participants will remain Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), the Pee Dee LWDA reserves the right to use training contracts instead of an ITA (or in combination with an ITA) in certain circumstances as allowed under the WIOA Final Rule and State Instruction #21-02.
- *How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs; and*  
 Not applicable (NA)

ITAs will be used for participant training costs, except in the following instances:

1. On-the-job training (OJT), which may include paying for the OJT portion of a Registered Apprenticeship program (RAP), customized training, incumbent worker training (IWT), internships, paid or unpaid work experiences, and transitional employment;
2. The PDWDB determines that there are an insufficient number of ETPs in the LWDA to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs;

One example of "insufficiency" is when no ETP program is available for an identified (either state or local) in-demand occupation or industry and the only way to procure the training would be through contracting directly with a provider.

This determination process will include a public comment period for interested providers of at least 30 days. Training contracts must be approved by the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board and will be placed with providers who have demonstrated effectiveness delivering the training proposed for the contract and are offering training that are for in-demand occupations as defined by the Board. Priority consideration will be given to



training that leads to post-secondary educational credentials and for which there are no other sources funding to support.

Criteria for demonstrative effectiveness includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Financial stability of the organization
  - Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services in the following areas: program completion rate; attainment of the skills, certificates, or degrees the program is designed to provide; placement after training in unsubsidized employment; and retention in employment;
  - How the specific program relates to the workforce investment needs identified in the local plan
  - For customized training programs, contracts will not be placed with training providers, employers or a group of employers who have displayed poor patterns of training, hiring, or retraining participants from previous customized training programs.
3. To use a training services program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in a LWDA by a community-based organization or other private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment;
  4. The PDWDB determines that the most appropriate training could be provided by an institution of higher education or other providers of training services in order to facilitate the training of a cohort of multiple individuals for jobs in-demand sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit consumer choice.
  5. The PDWDB determines that a pay-for-performance contract is suitable.

Additionally, the PDWDB may determine that providing training through a combination of ITAs and contracts is the most effective approach and reserves the right to use it to support placing participants in Registered Apprenticeship Programs and similar types of training.

Training providers, regardless of training mechanism used, must meet the minimum requirements listed in State Instruction 21-02 and performance criteria established by the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board to be approved and remain a WIOA-funded training option.

- *How the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.*

The PDWDB will continue to rely upon the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs. Once a decision is made to support a participant in training, the participant is directed to

review the ETPL to make its training provider selection. To ensure that the opportunity to review the list was provided, the participant is asked to sign a form entitled, ETPL Acknowledgement Form.

Training programs only appear on the ETPL if they provide training that is in support of the Board's approved high demand sectors/occupations. It would be important to note that when a participant expresses the desire to receive training from a particular training program that may not be on the approved list but does provide training in approved occupations, efforts are made to engage this potential provider to encourage their participation and application to [www.scpa.org](http://www.scpa.org).

Staff of SC Works will continue to promote the full array of training options available to customers based upon their assessed needs. In the event that it is determined that a mechanism other than the traditional ITA is more suitable for a participant, based on his/her assessment, those options will be thoroughly explored with the participant before a determination is made about which option is most appropriate.

**7. A description of the process used by the local board to provide a ~~10-day~~ 7-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of the businesses, labor organizations, and education.**

The various ways that the Board will use to provide interested entities the opportunity to comment on the Plan prior to submission include:

- Post the Local Plan to the [www.scworkspedee.org](http://www.scworkspedee.org) website and request comment within ~~10~~ 7 days, per State Instruction Number 21-09.
- Post a link to the Plan on SC Works Pee Dee social media outlets.
- Alert partners to access the Plan on the website and request further comment/review.
- Direct Board members to the website to view the completed Plan and make comments. The Board consists of representatives from business, labor organizations and education.
- Notify the Pee Dee's six county council administration offices that the Plan is completed and input is welcome. Also, during this time, the Workforce Development Director will be corresponding with county councils to acquire the signatures needed.

**8. A description of how the local area SC Works centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by SC Works partners.**

The COVID-19 epidemic forced SC Works Pee Dee Centers to close to the public and the team at SC Works quickly learned that it needed to transition its intake and case management services to a virtual environment as follows:

- **Center/WIOA Orientation** – sessions are scheduled one on one with customers using the WebEx platform.
- **Eligibility Determination and WIOA Enrollment**- Eligibility and enrollment are being offered by appointment through the WebEx virtual platform. Designated Career Coaches can share their screen with the customer and review the WIOA application and input information to determine the customer's eligibility status. The team references the "Provision of Remote WIOA Services Memo" to collect signatures and validate required documentation related to eligibility.
- **Basic Skills and Interest Assessments** - Once eligibility is determined and the customer is deemed eligible, the Career Coach proceeds with assessment and the development of the customer's IEP. The Career Coach uses various career assessments, including Career Scope, to assess the individual's career interests. Once the plan is developed, the customer can send an email to acknowledge the accuracy and completion of their plan. Additional assessment, including basic skills assessment, is coordinated with our adult education partners, as needed. All assessment is driven by the Career Coach's initial in-depth interview with the participant.
- **Basic Skills Remediation** – For customers whose basic skills are assessed as deficient or who are in need of a high school diploma or equivalency, the online Aztec Learning System is used. The Aztec Learning System is industry-recognized as having the most effective programs for organizations providing instruction for GED, HiSET, TASC, TABE, CASAS, College Readiness and Work Readiness Credentials.
- **High School Readiness**- During COVID, TASC was delivered at Poynor Adult Education in place of the GED (pencil paper format) because the Pearson Vue testing environment was initially closed. Poynor Adult Education worked with the Career Coaches to ensure that WIOA referrals received services. High school equivalency exams are available in all Adult Educations in the region.
- **Soft Skills Development:** *Career Smart* modules were being restructured and the curriculum will be delivered online in a classroom style format via Adobe Connect. Success Training Institute's (STI) platform is also available to provide soft skills training.
- **Pre-Employment Training/Other Workshops:** ~~NRF – National Retail Federation training in customer service has transitioned to an online format. This training is available as a reemployment activity in advance of work experience or career placement in the retail field.~~ Career Smart is a workshop offered to youth for soft skills and financial literacy. Also, STI is

available for soft skills. Manufirst is offered by the technical colleges and offers pre-employment skills desired by local employers.

- **Business Outreach:** Many of the local area's business services were already being provided via telephone or using virtual means prior to COVID-19. Business Engagement with existing employer partners remains a top priority for our Business Services Team. Our ~~Business Services Manager and Title I WIOA~~ Workforce Development Specialist and other business services team members ~~have been~~ continue reaching out to employers by email and phone to determine their needs for talent during this time.
- Some employers have held virtual meetings re: their organization's plans related to COVID-19 to which our workforce professionals were invited and attended. Our local area's Integrated Business Services Team Lead has also been a part of discussions involving local employers and has been able to, through her participation, glean information through a number of web-based local chamber webinars and meetings.
- **Active Work Experience and OJT:** We have continued to work with many local companies, such as Ruiz Foods, Perdue, Precision Southeast, McLeod Health, Assurant, McCall Farms, Harbor Freight, and Palmetto Synthetics during COVID-19. A total of nine new OJT Agreements were created during COVID-19. OJT Contracts continue to be written with new employers changing from year to year. As of 12/14, 22 OJT agreements have been written utilizing OJT funding from the CAREER grant and three from the H-1B Level UP Grant.
- **Incumbent Worker Training** – We have continued to support employers who have open Incumbent Worker Training agreements. Some have elected to postpone their trainings until some of their more pressing COVID-19 needs have been addressed and/or they can do so in a safer, more socially-distant manner.
- **Job Fairs/Employer Events:** Virtual Job Fair services are available, however, employers are not currently requesting this service.
- **Occupational Training** – Both of our technical colleges and some of our proprietary schools have moved to offering training completely online, so a number of classroom training options remain open to participants in high-demand occupations.
- **Career Services/Basic Skills:** Our team is transitioning our active service delivery model to include an option for remote learning. In addition to the remediation and basic skills preparation activities available through Adult Education and Aztec Learning System, our largest service provider, Eckerd Connects, is in the process of creating a basic skills remediation learning environment using Khan Academy. A library of career related workshops, including Eckerd's *Career Smart* curriculum, is being transitioned to Adobe Connect.

- **Work-Based Learning:** Currently, traditional Work Experience is on hold, but successful transition was made to allow 25 youth participate in a virtual Work Experience with Success Training Institute's 14 elements.net.

~~As of August 2020, three of our centers are operating on an appointment only basis and only partners from Title I and SCDEW's programs are available in the centers. Further discussion will take place with partners about integrated intake and case management when they are able to transition their services to the centers. Conversations with partners that were able to continue to provide services during COVID indicate that they too are using technology more than ever in their intake and case management of their customers. A positive result of the pandemic may be a new willingness by WIOA core partners at the State level to consider an integrated system. Unfortunately, these conversations are not fruitful at the Local Level unless a statewide system is purchased and endorsed from management to the front lines.~~

**9. A description of how the local board ensures compliance with the adult priority of service requirements under WIOA Title I.**

WIOA requires that priority for receiving individualized career or training services must be given to individuals who are low-income, receiving public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

The State and Local area define "basic skills deficient" as:

- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalent; or
- Scores 8.9 or below on the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) or <4 on the Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, or Locating Information WIN® assessments; or
- Is enrolled in Title II Adult Education for English as a second language.

The Priority of Services policy for the Pee Dee Local Area is that priority of service is given, in the following order to:

- First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are low-income, to include recipients of public assistance, or who are basic skills deficient;
- Second Priority: Individuals who are low-income, to include recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient;
- Third Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are not low-income, or are not recipients of public assistance, and are not basic skills deficient; and
- Last: Individuals outside of the groups given priority.

~~Effective July 1, 2016, the State required that seventy percent (70%)~~ Effective July 1, 2021, via State Instruction 15-17, Change 1, the State required that seventy-five percent (75%) of newly enrolled adult participants must be in one or more of these

priority groups. Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. is the entity that determines eligibility for WIOA Adult workforce services in the Pee Dee Local Area. All individuals seeking Adult Services must first meet with an Eckerd Job Coach who reviews an individual's documentation and completes the applications in SCWOS. Therefore, it is Eckerd staff that receives the first indication of an individual's level of priority.

The Board's instructions to Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc. are set forth in official numbered Instructions/Policies when necessary, a signed contract, monitoring visits, and in the provision of technical assistance on a daily basis. Also, the LWDA's WIOA Reporting and Performance Specialist performs **100% a monthly** review of WIOA eligibility applications and will monitor for compliance with the policy. Each month the LWDA will utilize SCWOS Reports to determine the percentage of newly enrolled Adult participants that meet the priority of services policy. If the LWDA is at or above the **30% 25%** enrollment limit of Adult participants who are NOT priority, the contractor will be advised to take serious precautions in enrollment decisions until such time the monthly inquiry indicates that the **30% 25%** limit is not exceeded. The Contractor is required to demonstrate a targeted recruitment effort of priority populations and recruitment efforts will be evaluated as a part of the regular contractor monitoring.

***10. A description of how the local board is serving priority populations, including those with barriers to employment, as required by WIOA.***

The State Workforce Board through its Priority Population Committee has utilized Labor Market Information (LMI) to narrow down the target for Priority populations in South Carolina to include:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Youth with Barriers
- Long-term Unemployed
- Ex-Offenders
- Homeless

The Local Board utilizes the Youth Committee and Disabilities Committee to ensure that special attention is given to these priority populations. The Committees' membership includes partner agencies and community organizations that represent these populations in the community and can share their strategies and opportunities for partnering. Both the Youth Committee and the Disabilities Committee have coordinated Job Fairs for the populations that they serve. **Also, the Local Board has determined that priority consideration be given to out-of-school at 100% unless a special project for in school youth is adopted by the Board.**

At the Local Board's first meeting in PY'20, it received a timely presentation by North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESA) that included data regarding the extent to which these populations exist and are employed in the Pee Dee. The Board recognized that there is much work to be done to ensure that its programs are reaching individuals that most need the services of the system to become employed and self-sufficient. The NESA representative on the board continues to provide periodic data updates to the Youth and Business and Industry Committees. In March 2022, Mr. Dan Ellzey, SCDEW Executive Director, presented similar data to the Board.

A special emphasis is put on utilizing the referral process in SCWOS to communicate about shared participants. SCDEW provides services to Veterans and the Long-term-Unemployed in the SC Works Centers on a daily basis. There are many community-based organizations that serve homeless and offenders. SC Works Center managers connect with these organizations, sometimes offering workshops or more personalized services at the Center. SC Legal Services is a strong partner in the centers and is available when called upon to assist ex-offenders with issues most relevant to them.

Every center, except the comprehensive center in Florence, closes to the public at 4:00 pm. The hour from 4:00-5:00 pm is often used to invite SC Works partners to share the details about their programs and services. SC Works staff need to be aware of services available to individuals that may be seeking services in the centers. The State Board's SC Works 101 certification program is fully supported by the Local Area and will result in a greater understanding of the resources available in the SC Works system to serve priority populations and hopefully, more co-enrollments between partners.

In regards to youth with barriers, the Pee Dee Local Area has a strong Youth Committee that includes representatives that have expertise with youth, ages 14-24, with barriers:

- Low-income
- Basic Skills Deficient or English Language Learner
- Secondary School Drop-outs
- Offenders
- Homeless
- In foster care or aged out
- Pregnant or parenting
- Having a disability

The Pee Dee Youth Committee ~~recently reviewed~~ periodically reviews statistics provided from North Eastern Strategic Alliance displaying the extent to which these populations exist in the Pee Dee Area. In October, 2020, the committee will meet again and explore strategically how the Committee and the Board can ensure that these populations are targeted to improve the likelihood that they succeed and live

independently. Pee Dee Youth providers do a tremendous job serving low-income, basic skills deficient, and youth dropouts. The Local Area does not utilize the 5% exception to allow individuals that are NOT low-income in the program. Traditionally, over 90% of the youth participants served are assessed as basic skills deficient, and that trend doesn't appear to be changing. ~~In regards to dropouts, since 2010, nearly 800 dropouts have achieved their GEDs.~~ Adult Education provides the TABE and basic skills upgrading assistance to WIOA youth participants. Youth may also utilize Aztec software and all receive encouragement from contractor personnel. They receive financial incentives for accomplishing gains on the TABE, for passing sections of the GED and for earning a GED. ~~The Dannon Project provides targeted services to youth who have had exposure to the juvenile justice system and referrals/services are shared.~~ The Youth Committee provides a platform for DSS to provide information about the educational and life skills benefits available to youth in foster care in SC through the Chafee Independent Living Services so that co-enrollments across programs can take place. Also, the Youth Advocate Program serves youth in foster care and partners with WIOA youth program providers. A Choice2M8K Crisis Family Care Center, DSS and Nurse Family Partnership serve pregnant and parenting young adults in the Region and provides workshops and access to maternal and baby supplies to young mothers. SC Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) serves individuals with disabilities and provides its expertise to Local WIOA workforce programs by eagerly partnering in the centers and on the Integrated Business Services Team.

#### ***11. A description of the local area's fiscal and programmatic monitoring process.***

- Fiscal: The fiscal monitoring process includes ongoing monitoring through review of monthly financial status reports and requests for payments against back up documentation such as general ledger. Annually, a complete financial monitoring is conducted onsite/remotely. The monitor reviews the subrecipient's adherence to all communications and policies from the LWDA. The communications to be reviewed prior to monitoring includes, but is not limited to: the WIOA and regulations, Contract, all Pee Dee LWDA instructions, State instructions/correspondence, previous monitoring reports, audit reports, indirect cost plan, cost allocation plan, copy of inventory, bonding policy and any correspondences between the contractor and LWDA. A desktop review is conducted verifying the contractors, contract/budget, payroll, time sheets, bank statements, accounting policies/procedures/method, general ledger, records retention policy, oversight and review policy (separation of duties/persons responsible) and internal controls. All time keeping, activity logs and financial documentation is reviewed and verified against supporting documentation (time sheets, activity logs, invoices, ect...) to ensure all proper approvals are obtained and the item is appropriately posted in



correct cost categories and paid in a timely manner. All costs are compared against approved budget to ensure that funds are being spent in accordance with budget. If any findings are discovered, the LWDA notifies the contractor in writing of the findings with supporting policy/regulations and the recommended resolution to the findings. The contractor must respond to those findings within 15 days as to the resolution the contractor will take to correct any findings and controls the contractor will put in place to prevent future occurrences.

- Programmatic: Programmatic monitoring begins as soon as the contract is fully executed and is on-going. The monitoring review covers all aspects of each contractor's operation and is conducted through desktop evaluation, on-site evaluation, or through a combination of these two processes. Unless otherwise specified, all programmatic monitoring activities, including the participant file review, is conducted through a combination of on-site as well as off-site review.
- ❖ During COVID-19, all programmatic monitoring activities were conducted off-site via desktop review only. Staff interviews, as well as, participant interviews and exit conferences were conducted via conference call.

*The following highlighted documents have been submitted separately:*

**12. Copies of current local board policies and definitions, including:**

- Supportive Services policy
- OJT reimbursement policy;
- IWT policy, when using local funds;
- Youth incentives policy;
- Local training cap policy;
- Youth BSD policy (if applicable);
- Local definition for youth who “require additional assistance”; and
- Adult and dislocated worker self-sufficiency definition(s) for training.

*The following have been submitted separately:*

**13. Copies of current local workforce area documents, including:**

- Memorandum(s) of Understanding, including signature sheets;
- Resources Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets;
- All service provider grants, including statements of work and budgets;
- Statements of work for in-house operational staff (where applicable);
- Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s)/Request(s) for Proposals;

- LWDB By-Laws
- LWDB and Committee meeting schedules;
- LWDB budgets; and
- Local monitoring schedules.