

# SC WORKS TRIDENT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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2024 - 2027

Submitted to:  
South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

# Covering Program Years 2024-2027 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028)

SC Works Trident  
South Carolina  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)  
Local Workforce Plan

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### Local Board Policies and Definitions

- A. LWB Adult Priority of Service Policy
- B. Supportive Services policy
- C. On-the-Job Training (OJT) reimbursement policy
- D. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) policy
- E. Youth Incentives policy
- F. Local training cap policy
- G. Local definition for youth who “require additional assistance”
- H. Adult and Dislocated Worker Self-sufficiency definition(s) for training

### Local Workforce Area Documents

- I. Memorandum (s) of Understanding, including signature sheets
- J. Resource Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets
- K. All service provider grants, including statements of work and budgets
- L. Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s)/Request(s) for Proposals
- M. Local Workforce Development Board By-Laws
- N. Local Workforce Development Board and Committee meeting schedules
- O. Local Workforce Development Board budgets; and
- P. Local monitoring schedule and Tools

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
Local Plan  
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028**

**Local Workforce Development Area:**

SC Works Trident

**Counties within the Local Area:**

Berkeley  
Charleston  
Dorchester

**Local Area Administrator and Contact Information:**

Sharon Goss, Workforce Development Director  
Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments  
5790 Casper Padgett Way, N. Charleston, SC 29406  
843-529-2582; sharong@bcdco.com

## Attachment B: Local Plan Requirements

The local plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate local workforce development area (LWDA) service delivery strategies with those that support the state's strategic and operational goals. In partnership with the chief elected officials (CEOs), each local workforce development board (LWDB) must develop and submit a local plan to identify and describe the policies, procedures, and activities that are carried out in the LWDA, consistent with the strategic vision and goals outlined in the WIOA State Plan and the respective regional plan.

In alignment with South Carolina's Unified State Plan (resulting from South Carolina's Act 67 of 2023), the Program Years (PYs) 2024 – 2027 WIOA State Plan vision is to achieve and sustain South Carolina's workforce potential. The plan focuses on the following priorities:

1. Develop and create an effective customer-driven workforce system through the alignment of programs and policies, the use of leading-edge technology, and high-quality staff.
2. Prepare jobseekers for priority occupations through relevant training and skills acquisition, and match jobseekers to open employer positions.
3. Improve the education and workforce infrastructure network to decrease obstacles to work in order to improve recruitment and retention of workers, which is necessary to maintain economic development competitiveness.
4. Create alignment between the workforce development system and the South Carolina agencies and organizations directing implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), and CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 funding.

The following guiding principles must be considered priorities and included in responses throughout the LWDA's PYs 2024 – 2027 Local Plan:

- Partnership and collaboration,
- Increased access to resources and services through the use of technology, and
- Innovation and cost efficiencies.

The local plan must include:

**Section I:** Workforce and Economic Analysis

**Section II:** Strategic Vision and Goals

**Section III:** LWDA Partnerships and Investment Strategies

**Section IV:** Program Design and Evaluation

**Section V:** Operations and Compliance

## SECTION I: WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

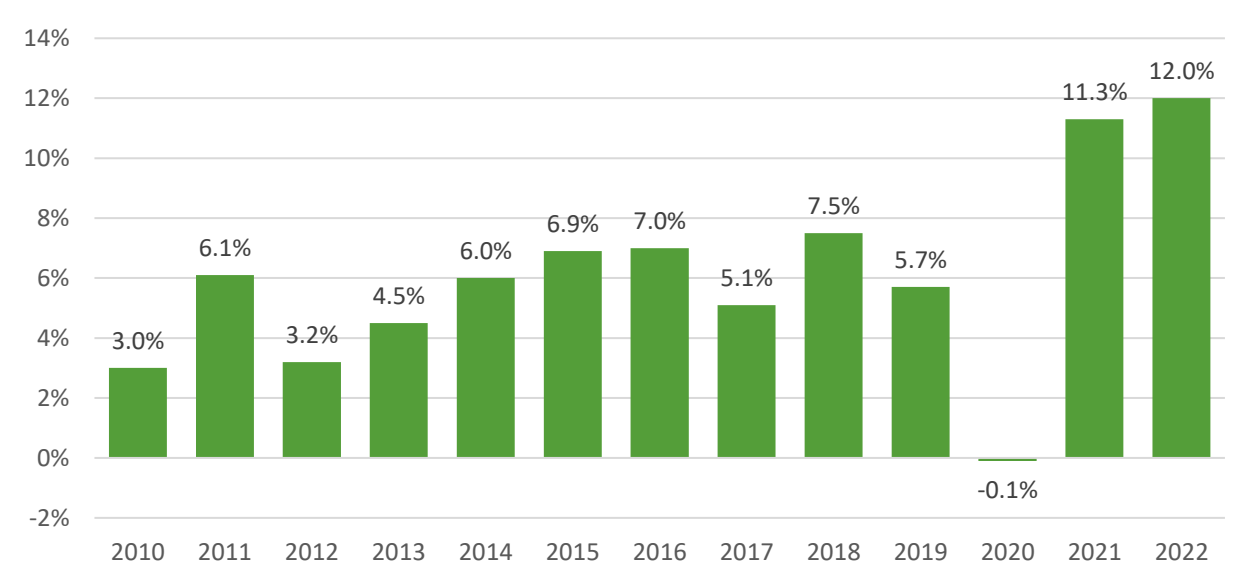
An analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions, to include existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of employers in those existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The analysis must include the following:

- ❖ 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

SC Works Trident Workforce area economy has experienced significant growth over the past several years. Based on data from Labor Market Information Economic Overview of the Trident Workforce Area and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region, the unemployment rate for the Trident area was 2.8% as of March 2024. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 3.9%. One year earlier, In March 2023, the unemployment rate in the Trident area was 2.6%. The Community Profile updated on October 22, 2024, by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce Business Intelligence Department indicates a 3.9% unemployment rate, which is lower than the state’s rate of 4.5% and on target with the national rate. The number of people employed in the Trident area was 406,305 based on a four-quarter moving average. Over the year ending 2023 and quarter 4, employment increased by 3.1% in the area.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2022, nominal GDP in Trident expanded 12.0%. This follows growth of 11.3% in 2021. As of 2022, total GDP in the Trident was \$56,736,854,000.

**Figure 1: 1-Year Percent Change in GDP 2010-2022**



Source: SC Department of Workforce and Development (SCDEW)

Of the sectors in the Trident, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2022, \$10,864,300,000. The next-largest contributions came from Manufacturing (\$5,792,293,000); Health Care and Social Assistance (\$5,536,497,000); and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (\$4,356,473,000).

The low unemployment rate pushed industries to increase the hourly wage to help fill gaps. The Trident area continued to experience stronger than average employment growth as the service industry, particularly leisure and hospitality-related jobs, continued to experience high demand.

Based on the Labor Market Information, Supply versus Demand, 2023's report indicates that the Trident Workforce Area has 25,283 job openings and only 10,987 unemployed individuals in the workforce which is a 4:1 ratio. The Lowcountry has 5,817 job openings and 3,310 unemployed which is a 6:1 unemployed per opening ratio. The labor demand in the Trident Workforce Area was the greatest in the state. SC Works Trident Workforce area economy has experienced significant growth over the past several years.

Per the Labor Supply versus Labor Demand report in SCWOS, "Labor demand in the Trident Workforce Area (Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties) was greatest with 25,283 posted advertisements. The Midlands Workforce Area (Fairfield, Lexington, and Richland counties) followed with 17,638 online ads. Statewide, the labor supply (the unemployed versus demand (online advertisements) ratio remained at 0.8:1.

## **Labor Force Participation**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' current population in South Carolina for 2023 is 2.475 million individuals out of a civilian non-institutional population of 4.275 million, which yields a labor force participation rate (LFPR) of 57.9%. The information is from the 2024 Economic Analysis Report in LMI.

According to the South Carolina 2024 Economic Analysis Report by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Trident Workforce Development Area had an occupational employment of 372,070 with an average wage of \$28.33 across all major occupational groups.

The Trident WDA had an occupational employment of 372,070 in 2023 with an average hourly wage of \$28.33 across all major occupational groups. The highest average wage is the Management Occupation group with an hourly rate of \$58.49, followed by Computer and Mathematical Occupations with an hourly rate of \$49.23. The lowest average hourly rate is in the Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations with a rate of \$14.27, followed by Building and Grounds Cleaning Maintenance Occupations with an hourly rate of \$16.82. Real-time labor demand indicates workforce and educational professionals as to which occupations need to have training in place to meet employer expectations. Based on the 2024 Economic Analysis Report, the top industries by employment in the Trident area were Healthcare and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade, all with substantial employment increases over the last 10 years.

The top industry groups employment for the Trident WDA are Health Care and Social Assistance had the largest amount of employment at 52,659 and average annual wages of \$67,923. Accommodation and Food Services followed with 47,244 employment and average annual wages of \$30,586. Retail Trade rounds out the top three with 44,754 employment and average annual wages of \$40,183.

## In-Demand Industry Sectors in the Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region

The data provided in Table 1 supports the current and updated in-demand careers clusters for SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region.

**Table 1: Priority Occupations in Trident Workforce Area**

Career Cluster	Occupation	Occupational License Requirement	Typical education needed for entry
Architecture and Construction	Architectural and Civil Drafters	License may be required by employer	Associate's degree
Architecture and Construction	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	None	Associate's degree
Architecture and Construction	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	None	Postsecondary nondegree award
Health Science	Registered Nurses	License required by SC	Bachelor's degree
Health Science	Dental Hygienists	License required by SC	Associate's degree
Health Science	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	License may be required by employer	Associate's degree
Health Science	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	License may be required by employer	Associate's degree
Health Science	Surgical Technologists	License may be required by employer	Postsecondary nondegree award
Health Science	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	License required by SC	Postsecondary nondegree award
Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	None	Associate's degree
Manufacturing	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	None	Postsecondary nondegree award
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	None	Postsecondary nondegree award
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	None	Postsecondary nondegree award

Source: SCDEW

Once we defined the clusters, we prioritized the clusters that are within the 4H's identified in the State and WIOA State Plan. The high-wage, high-growth, high-demand, and high mobility/retention career clusters training and overall workforce investment for the Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas). The Career Clusters support Priority Occupations in the Trident area

- Health Care and Social Assistance (to include life sciences)
- Manufacturing (to include Aerospace and automotive from the One Region Plan)
- Transportation and Logistics
- Construction Trade
- Information Technology
- Hospitality and Tourism (hospitality and leisure, food services, retail)
- Office Administrative Support

According to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Region 2023-2028 prepared for the Economic Development Agency by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG), the Information Industry has the largest average salary in the area at \$105,725. Leisure and Hospitality are the fourth largest industry in employment. Employment by Industry in the Trident Workforce Area for 2021 showed Trade, Transportation, and Utilities at 66,044, Governments at 62,106, Professional and Business Services at 51,176, Leisure and Hospitality at 46,045, Health Services and Private Education at 40,082, Manufacturing at 27,738, Construction at 19,896, Financial Activities at 14,876, and other Services at 9,386, Information at 6,009 and last Natural Resources and Mining at 608.

According to the CEDS, since 2011 employment in the Trident Workforce has grown over twice as fast as in the U.S. It was more resilient in 2020 with the initial onset of COVID-19 and recovered faster from both the Great Recession and COVID-19. Employment growth in the U.S. was 11.1% and in the Trident area 24.4%. Based on information from the CEDS the major sectors continue to be Diversified Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism. Based on the information from the Talent Demand Study from the Charleston Metro Chamber and Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) recent update, Jobs growth forecast showed new jobs growth forecast for 2021 – 2026 as Food Preparation and Serving at 5,782, Transportation Occupations at 3,315, Production Occupations 2,118, Management Occupations 2,062 and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations 2,059. The study also showed Employment Separation demand and forecast for 2021 – 2026 as Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations 37,428, Production Occupations 28,853, Construction and Extraction Occupations 27,201, Office and Administrative Support Occupations 22,361 and Healthcare practitioner and Technical Occupations 11,274. New job Growth rate Forecasts for 2021-2026 are Life/Physical and Social Science Occupations 17at 4%, Personal Care and Service Occupational 16.6%, Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations at 15.6%, Information Technology Occupations at 13.0% and Healthcare Support Occupational ns 12.7%. These areas are also consistent with high-wage, high-demand occupations. Potential Talent Shortages included the Construction Industry Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Drivers, first-line supervisors of construction trades, and Extraction workers. Therefore, Construction Trade will remain in the in-demand sectors for the Trident Area.

## Industry and Occupation Analysis

The SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Regional Plan Development identified high-wage, high-growth, high-demand, and high mobility/retention as the primary metrics for determining priority industries and occupations.

### Industry Snapshot

According to the Economic Overview -Trident LMI SCDEW, the largest sector in the Trident is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 51,636 workers. The next largest sectors in the region are Accommodation and Food Services (47,338 workers) and Retail Trade (44,397). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Utilities (LQ = 1.40), Accommodation and Food Services (1.34), and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (1.33).

SC Work Trident and the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region will focus on prioritizing the clusters that will be the focus of our investment of time, funding, and programming in the next four years. For that reason, we have identified the following clusters that will be our priorities going forward. The sectors that SC Works Trident Workforce Development area has chosen are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (to include life sciences)
- Manufacturing (to include Aerospace and automotive from the One Region Plan)
- Information Technology
- Transportation *and* Logistics
- Construction Trade
- Hospitality *and* Tourism (food services, retail)
- Office Administrative Support

Local boards and chief elected officials in each planning region are required to engage in a regional planning process that results in the preparation and submission of a single regional plan. Regional plans must incorporate the local plans for each local area within the planning region. South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) State Instruction number 15-16, change 1, provided an overview of the process used to identify planning regions. In making the determination, the state considered factors such as the extent to which the local areas in a proposed region are consistent with labor market areas in the state, are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state, and have available federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools. SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) also considered population centers, labor force conditions, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, geographic boundaries, income, poverty, educational attainment, and in-demand occupation groups.

The Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Development areas make up the South Coast Region which included core partners, board members, Executive Directors of the Council of Governments, and chief elected officials in the development of the plans. The plans were disseminated to everyone for input,

review, and suggestions before releasing for public comment. The tentative plan is for the Local Boards to approve the local and regional plans in December 2024.

The SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Regional Partners identified in-demand sectors by utilizing the data available at the time through the CEDS, and Talent Demand Study for determining priority industries, followed by job growth projections and the absolute size of employment in the industry from LMI in SCWOS.

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- Health Care and Social Assistance (to include life sciences)
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- Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics
- Construction Trade
- Hospitality and Tourism (food services, retail)
- Office Administrative Support

### **Occupation Snapshot**

As stated above, based on the Labor Market Information in SCWOS Supply versus Demand, September's report indicates that the Trident Workforce Area has 31,425 job openings and only 10,899 unemployed individuals in the workforce which is a 3:1 ratio.

Occupation Snapshot The largest major occupation group in the Trident is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 52,540 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (40,588 workers) and Sales and Related Occupations (38,885). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Architecture and Engineering Occupations (LQ = 1.35), Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1.23), and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations (1.16). Occupation groups in the Trident with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$117,800), Computer and Mathematical Occupations (\$103,700), and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$101,900). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 0.8% among Legal Occupations to 4.2% among Transportation and Material Moving Occupations. Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Trident is expected to be Computer and Mathematical Occupations with a +2.7% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (+635 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (+573). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (8,029 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (6,164) (Source: Economic Overview LMI).

Sectors in the Trident with the highest average wages per worker are Finance and Insurance (\$111,248), Information (\$105,912), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$104,338). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Health Care and Social Assistance (+4,957 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+4,478), and Manufacturing (+4,298).

Over the next 1 year, employment in Trident is projected to expand by 6,006 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Information with a +2.1% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast for the number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+874 jobs), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+653), and Accommodation and Food Services (+634).<sup>1</sup>

## Knowledge and Skills

To meet the employment needs of employers in the Trident Workforce Area, workers should possess a combination of technical, soft, and sector-specific skills. Soft skills are those attributes not defined by technical accomplishments or certifications attained. Key areas of knowledge and expertise include:

- **Industry-Specific Knowledge and Technical Skills**
  - Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering: Understanding of machinery operation, production processes, and automation systems.
  - Health Care: Skills in patient care, medical technology, and administrative tasks, including electronic health records (EHR) management.
  - Logistics and Transportation: Familiarity with supply chain management, shipping and receiving, and operation of vehicles/equipment.
  - Hospitality and Tourism: Customer service, event coordination, and facility management, as well as knowledge of local tourism trends.
  - Information Technology: Proficiency in software development, cybersecurity, network administration, and data management.
  - Construction and Skilled Trades: Competence in carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, HVAC systems, and construction project management.
  - Renewable Energy and Technology: A strong foundation in electrical and mechanical engineering, renewable energy technologies, regulatory knowledge, and project management. Along with these technical skills, proficiency in data analytics, troubleshooting, and understanding sustainability principles are essential.
- **Soft Skills**
  - Communication: Ability to interact effectively with coworkers, supervisors, and customers, both verbally and in writing.
  - Problem Solving and Critical Thinking: Analyzing problems and developing efficient solutions quickly.
  - Teamwork and Collaboration: Ability to work effectively in diverse teams and contribute to group goals.

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<sup>1</sup> JobsEQ® and SCDEW Economic Overview-Trident

- Adaptability and Flexibility: Willingness to learn new skills and adjust to changing technologies and job demands.
  - **Digital Literacy and Technology Skills**
    - Competence with basic software tools (e.g., Microsoft Office Suite), cloud computing, and industry-specific software applications.
    - Familiarity with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and automation in various sectors.
  - **Workplace Readiness**
    - Time Management and Organization: Ability to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines.
    - Work Ethic and Dependability: Reliability, responsibility, and a strong commitment to quality work.
    - Safety and Compliance Awareness: Knowledge of workplace safety standards and industry regulations.
  - **Sector-Specific Certifications and Credentials**
    - Earning certifications that are valued by employers in key industries, such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for healthcare, welding certifications for manufacturing, or project management certifications for construction.
- ❖ **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.**

## Employment and Unemployment Data

An important component of the economy is the labor force. The labor force measures people at their resident location and equals the sum of the employed and the unemployed. The trends in the labor force, the number of people employed, and the number of unemployed from 2005 forward.

The steady increases in employment encouraged more individuals to join the labor force and since early 2014, the region's labor force has experienced solid growth.

### Unemployment

The State is at 4.5% as of September 2024. The Unemployment Rate for the Trident Workforce Area is 3.97%.

## Employer's Needs

Based on the Labor Market Information in SCWOS Supply versus Demand, September's report indicates that the Trident Workforce Area has 31,425 job openings and only 10,899 unemployed individuals in the workforce which is a 3:1 ratio. Soft skills are those attributes not defined by technical accomplishments or certifications attained. Analysis of data over the past three years indicates that many soft skills are

listed as a part of the job postings such as communication skills, integrity, team orientation, detail orientation, problem-solving skills, and self-motivation.

## **Labor Market Trends (Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations)**

Most economic indicators now point to increasing employment and economic activity. The areas bounced back strongly in manufacturing and transportation/logistics industries due to companies such as Boeing and Mercedes-Benz. Volvo Car Corporation selected and launched the Charleston, SC area for the location of the first North American plant. The Trident Workforce Area continues to remove the impact of COVID-19.

Utilizing the data from the SCDEW Community profile, Accommodation, and Food Services has the highest employment by industry followed by Healthcare and Social Assistance and then Retail Trade.

Per the Community Profile report updated October 22, 2024, by SCDEW LMI, the top ten employment by industry are:

1. Management of Companies and Enterprises
2. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
3. Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediate
4. Wholesale Trade
5. Construction
6. Manufacturing
7. Healthcare and Social Assistance
8. Information
9. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
10. Transportation and Warehousing

The top ten labor market projections by occupation are:

1. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
2. Healthcare Support Occupations
3. Computer and Mathematical Occupations
4. Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
5. Education, Training, and Library Occupations
6. Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
7. Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
8. Protective Service Occupations
9. Management Occupations
10. Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations

The SC Works Trident area saw 3,678 new startup firms in from 2023 Q1 to 2024 Q1 and the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) saw 4,704 during this same time frame.

The top five new hires by industry are:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Administrative and Support, Waste Management
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Construction

Per data from the Talent Demand Analysis updated provided by Charleston Metro Chamber and CRDA, In Occupations clusters with the highest forecast to grow:

- Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations 17.4%
- Personal Care and Service Occupations 16.6%
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations 15.6%
- Information Technology Occupations 13%
- Healthcare Support Occupations 12.7%

We can expect a shortage in these areas as well if we do not build the talent pipeline.

In 2018, the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) launched Phase III of Sector Planning, which is Sector Partnerships with the NextGen Consulting team helping to facilitate and guide the regional teams through the next phase. The goals remain the same:

- Develop regional, industry-led sector partnerships that will serve as coordinating bodies for multiple public partners to collaborate effectively with one another and with the industry.
- Develop a collaborative state strategy for jointly supporting sector partnerships across the SC Department of Commerce, SC Commission on Higher Education, SC Technical College System, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, and other key state-level partners. During phase III.
- The agenda is entirely defined and driven by business leaders and not defined by parameters of grants and existing programs.
- Focus on industry competitiveness and growth versus workforce only.
- Business leaders personally champion priorities and have a stake in solutions versus providing input only.
- A long-term way to respond to changing needs of the industry versus a one-time focus group.
- Go-to, shared table to understand and respond to the industry's needs versus one more meeting; it is a way of doing business versus a grant or special initiative.
- Regionally based versus jurisdiction based.

We will use the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model to accomplish this. The South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region launched a Healthcare Industry-led sector partnership in July 2019 and Manufacturing Partnership in 2020. It is being modeled after similar, successful partnerships across the country. For businesses, the launch is a forum to identify shared issues, and to network, troubleshoot together, and define solutions going forward. For public partners in the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region, this is an effective way to jointly understand the needs of the healthcare industries and help implement shared solutions. The Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) area will continue to use the Next Gen and TPM model for

sector strategy partnerships. The South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) is working on relaunching the Manufacturing Sector Strategy Partnership and in discussion on how to expand the healthcare partnership Trident has with the Charleston Metro Chamber into a South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Sector Strategy Partnership.

SC Works Trident is positioned to provide high-quality workforce development programs and prepare our customers for in-demand sectors and career pathways. WIOA staff is located in the Comprehensive Center as well as the two affiliate centers to deliver services related to the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. These centers provide services to residents in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. Staff coordinate referrals and resources with our partners and provide outreach to counties and customers in the community. In addition to having WIOA staff located in the centers, Wagner-Peyser services are delivered in each county and each location. Our center in Dorchester County is located within the Dorchester Adult Education learning center, which makes it easier for customers to receive one-stop services. In Berkeley County, the new location for SC Works Berkeley is within walking distance from Berkeley Adult Education, which will allow for further collaboration. Vocational Rehabilitation and Wagner-Peyser programs are currently co-located in SC Works Berkeley.

Adult Education providers deliver adult education and literacy activities, including High School Diploma, GED preparation and GED Exam testing, English as a Second Language, Career readiness, Workplace Literacy, workforce preparation activities, IET, basic computers to earn the SC Digital Literacy Certificate. Adult Education also provides TABE testing, ACCUPLACER, College and Career Services, WIN preparation and assessment, and reading/math skill refresher. Adult Education teachers are trained educators who are required to hold and maintain valid SC teacher licenses. Additionally, programs are flexible in meeting the demands of individuals seeking services. Through Workplace Literacy, Adult Education seeks to serve employers directly by providing customized academic and workforce preparation instruction as determined by specific employer needs. These services can be delivered on-site at an employer's location or off-site at the Adult Education program site. Approved SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Adult Education (OAE) Workplace Literacy instruction and activities are currently being delivered in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties.

## **Education and Skill Levels (Trident Workforce Area)**

The data in Table 2 presents the educational attainment levels of a population, with 7.6% (32,892 people) having no high school diploma, 22.3% (96,371 people) being high school graduates, and 20.1% (86,865 people) having some college education but no degree. Additionally, 10.0% (43,016 people) hold an associate's degree, 25.9% (112,028 people) have a bachelor's degree, and 14.1% (60,995 people) possess a postgraduate degree. These figures illustrate the varying educational backgrounds within the population.

**Table 2: Educational Attainment of Population Age 25-64**

Educational Level	Percent	Value
No High School Diploma	7.6%	32,892
High School Graduate	22.3%	96,371
Some College, No Degree	20.1%	86,865
Associate's Degree	10.0%	43,016
Bachelor's Degree	25.9%	112,028
Postgraduate Degree	14.1%	60,995

Source: JobsEQ®

## Demographics of the Trident Workforce Area

The population of Trident is 803,398, with a slight female majority (50.9%) compared to males (49.1%). The median age is 38 years, and 21.6% of the population is under 18. The racial composition is predominantly White (65.7%), followed by Black or African American (24.5%). The population is growing at an annual rate of 1.8%, with a density of 327.9 people per square mile. The labor force participation rate is 65.0%, with a significant 84.8% participation rate for prime-age workers (25-54). The median household income is \$77,585, and the per capita income is \$44,457. In terms of housing, there are 362,156 units, with a median home value of \$338,004. The poverty rate stands at 11.9%, and 7.0% of households receive food stamps. Social indicators include 34.6% of children living in single-parent families, 9.6% uninsured, and 9.6% of adults aged 18-64 living with a disability. The foreign-born population is 5.6%, with 2.9% speaking English less than very well. Educational attainment shows that 25.9% have a bachelor's degree, and 14.1% have a postgraduate degree.

**Table 3: Demographics of the Trident Workforce Area**

	Percent	Value
<b>Demographics</b>		
Population (ACS)		803,398
Male	49.1%	394,257
Female	50.9%	409,141
Median Age <sup>2</sup>		38.0
Under 18 Years	21.6%	173,151
18 to 24 Years	8.7%	70,062
25 to 34 Years	15.0%	120,904
35 to 44 Years	13.8%	111,036
45 to 54 Years	12.2%	97,718

Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

	Percent	Value
<b>Demographics (continued)</b>		
55 to 64 Years	12.8%	102,509
65 to 74 Years	10.0%	79,946
75 Years and Over	6.0%	48,072
Race: White	65.7%	527,653
Race: Black or African American	24.5%	196,837
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	2,483
Race: Asian	2.0%	15,913
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	868
Race: Some Other Race	2.7%	21,331
Race: Two or More Races	4.8%	38,313
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6.1%	48,924
<b>Population Growth</b>		
Population (Pop Estimates) <sup>4</sup>		849,417
Population Annual Average Growth <sup>4</sup>	1.8%	13,757
People per Square Mile <sup>4</sup>		327.9
<b>Economic</b>		
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian 16 years and over)	65.0%	414,274
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian 25-54)	84.8%	274,366
Armed Forces Labor Force	1.8%	11,721
Veterans, Age 18-64	7.8%	38,405
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	78.7%	30,238
Median Household Income <sup>2</sup>		\$77,585
Per Capita Income		\$44,457
Mean Commute Time (minutes)		27.1
Commute via Public Transportation	0.7%	2,900
<b>Housing</b>		
Total Housing Units		362,156
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) <sup>2,5</sup>		\$338,004
Homeowner Vacancy	1.4%	3,202
Rental Vacancy	9.7%	10,998
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	31.7%	100,827
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units)	4.8%	15,229

	Percent	Value
<b>Social</b>		
Poverty Level (of all people)	11.9%	93,435
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	7.0%	22,351
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.2%	9,901
Disconnected Youth <sup>3</sup>	2.6%	1,010
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	34.6%	56,442
Uninsured	9.6%	75,604
With a Disability, Age 18-64	9.6%	46,708
With Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	46.2%	21,582
Foreign Born	5.6%	45,282
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	2.9%	21,890

Source: JobsEQ®

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey 2018-2022, unless noted otherwise

<sup>2</sup> Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

<sup>3</sup> Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

<sup>4</sup> Census Population Estimate for 2023, annual average growth rate since 2013. Post-2019 data for Connecticut counties are imputed by Chmura.

<sup>5</sup> The Census's method for calculating median house values changed with the 2022 data set, so pre-2022 values are not directly comparable with later data.

## Individuals With Barriers to Employment

The SC Works Trident Workforce Development Area workforce is diverse. Different population groups often face varying challenges and barriers and may need more services to meet their employment and training needs. There are many programs and services described in the Workforce, Education, and Training Analysis that address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment. Additionally, measures are being taken to further improve programmatic and physical accessibility for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals and individuals with disabilities, and to improve the overall education and employment outcomes for all individuals, especially individuals with barriers to employment. The required partners within the SC Works Trident Workforce system are working collaboratively to increase accessibility to workforce programs and services for diverse and minority populations who live in the region.

Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;

farmworkers; eligible individual for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF); single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. The state may identify other groups with barriers to employment such as Veterans, unemployed workers, and other youth.

SC Works Trident serves a very diverse population. Different groups face various challenges to employment and training. SC Works Trident addresses the needs of individuals with barriers to employment through the many programs and services in the Workforce, Education, and Training services offered through the WIOA and partner programs. WIOA adult dislocated worker and youth programs provide career, training, and follow-up services to individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment as well as referrals to partner programs that can provide additional services to help remove barriers to employment.

### **Individuals Living in Rural Areas**

South Carolina is experiencing an economic development boom, as companies pledge to spend billions of dollars in capital investment and create thousands of new jobs. South Carolina is working to ensure that rural counties play a role in the economic development surge. The South Carolina Department of Revenue designates all 46 counties within four tiers, based on their unemployment rates and per capita income. Tier III and IV counties have weaker economies and are typically in more rural areas, while Tier I counties include the state's population hubs in Greenville, Charleston, and Richland counties. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, approximately 24 percent of South Carolinians live in a Tier III or IV county. Companies that relocate to South Carolina can receive tax credits based on how many jobs they create. In Tier I and II counties, they can get \$1,500 and \$2,750 per each new full-time job, respectively. In Tier III and IV counties, they can receive substantially more, \$20,250, and

\$25,000 per job, respectively. Incentive grants from the state can be larger in the rural counties as well. According to the Department of Commerce, the number of jobs in Tier III and IV counties has increased by more than 30% in the last five years. More than \$2.1 billion in capital investment and nearly 6,600 jobs have been announced in these areas in the last two years.<sup>4</sup>

However, individuals living in rural areas still face significant barriers to education and employment resulting from lack of access to transportation, housing, childcare, and digital connectivity, among others, and face longer periods of unemployment than their counterparts in less rural parts of the state. South Carolina has significantly increased outreach to rural areas through the utilization of technology and virtual access to employment and training resources, increased presence in rural areas using mobile units and brick-and-mortar access points, collaboration among service agencies and organizations, and dedicated staffing.

### **Low Incomes Individuals and/or Families**

During 2023, the average number of residents in the state receiving TANF benefits per month was 15,697. Child recipients accounted for 9,095, or 58% percent, of the total. While the number of TANF recipients consistently dropped since pre-pandemic, a late 2024 data analysis has shown a slight increase in the number of TANF recipients in South Carolina. Individuals receiving TANF benefits may have difficulty obtaining a family-sustaining wage, and even when they have jobs, the pay is often low. Training and employment support should be provided as this group may often lack the education and skills needed to secure a higher paying job.

### **Hispanics**

The Hispanic population has grown significantly in the region and state. This population more than doubled from 2000 to 2010 and has continued to grow. Though the growth has slowed, there is still a growing need for programs that serve the Hispanic community.

### **Homeless**

South Carolina's homeless population was estimated at 3,608 people in 2022, down 15.8 percent from 2020, including 359 veterans, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A total homeless rate of 7 per 10,000 people were experiencing sheltered homelessness.

### **Veterans**

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, South Carolina had 350,822 civilian veterans aged 18 or older, making up 8.9 percent of the state's civilian adult population. Compared to the population aged 25 and older, there is a higher percentage of veterans with some college education or an associate's degree (38.6 percent for veterans, 30.1 percent for all aged 25 and older). Veterans had a lower unemployment rate, at 4.2 percent, than the civilian population aged 18 to 64 (5.3 percent). Veterans may have to overcome stereotypes employers may have such as thinking that all post-9/11 veterans have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, veterans have a great deal to contribute to any company. Many veterans have job skills that transfer directly to the civilian world, such as integrity, attention to detail, leadership, problem-solving, and a team-player mentality.

### **Ex-Offenders**

South Carolina had an inmate population of 15,985 during the fiscal year 2022. The SC Department of Corrections (SCDC) had 5,106 total releases from its base population. The average age of an inmate was 40.7 years old for women and men of all races. African Americans made up 58 percent of the total, with whites at 39 percent, and other races with 3 percent. The average sentence length is 5 years and 5 months. Fifty-five percent of inmates do not have a high school diploma or GED upon incarceration.<sup>6</sup>

People who have been imprisoned face several challenges re-entering society, such as overcoming their past criminal history when seeking employment. Lack of education, poor computer skills, poor people skills, low self-esteem, substance abuse problems, and access to transportation are problems that may be faced by an ex-offender during their job search.

People who have been imprisoned face several challenges in re-entering society, such as overcoming their past criminal history when seeking employment. Lack of education, poor computer skills, poor people skills, low self-esteem, substance abuse problems, and access to reliable transportation are problems that may be faced by an ex-offender during the job search.

### **Juvenile Offenders**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, the SC Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) handled 13,481 new cases, an increase from 9,099 in 2020-2021. The top five offenses putting a person into DJJ custody were assault and battery third degree (1,107 cases), simple marijuana possession (610 cases), truancy (517 cases), being a runaway (458 cases), and contempt of court (314 cases).

### **Limited English Proficiency**

The 2012 American Community Survey lists 98,188 people of foreign-born status in SC who were identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Noncitizens were more likely to have LEP than citizens (foreign-born but naturalized). SC Works Trident has developed an LEP plan to provide services to individuals with LEP. The region will work collaboratively with partners in the community and in the centers to implement the plan and ensure appropriate services are available when needed.

### **Migrant/Seasonal Workers**

In the SC Works Centers throughout the state, bilingual staff members work with MSFWs of limited English proficiency to provide career services. When no qualified and trained bilingual employee is available, SCDEW will offer and secure, at no cost to the client, a qualified interpreter or translator service. If there is a need for remedial and/or occupational training, the MSFW is generally referred to a local Adult Education office for English as a Second Language and is then referred to a training provider.

Telamon is no longer a partner of the SC Works Centers. In the coming program year, efforts will be made to establish closer cooperation and service collaboration with partners, such the state’s NFJP grantee, to ensure greater alignment of career and training services to MSFWs.

In Program Year (PY) 2019, the number of H–2A workers is expected to continue to increase. Overall, the projected agricultural workforce need for South Carolina in PY 2019 is approximately 12,750 workers. This is a small increase in the number of workers that was needed in PY 2018. April through September are the peak harvest months in South Carolina with an estimated 6,125 MSFWs, and low season occurs during October through December with an estimated 1,000 MSFWs. It is anticipated that the number of agricultural job openings received by SCDEW will remain steady at about 11,000. This total includes approximately 6,300 migrant and seasonal farm workers and 6,270 H–2A. The number of domestic MSFWs in South Carolina is difficult to estimate and could be understated as some of these workers cannot be located.

**Table 4: Estimated Number of MSFW and H-2A Workers 2019**

Area	MSFWs	H-2As
Beaufort	1,125	1,734
Charleston	1,150	340
Greenwood	1,050	3,147
Spartanburg	1,200	495
Sumter	1,800	555
Total	6,325	6,270

Source: WIOA State Plan

### **Foster Care**

According to the South Carolina Department of Social Services FY 2024, there were 391 children in the Trident area spending 12 - 17 months in foster care on average. However, this can vary by County and the complexity of each child’s case. Youth aging out of foster care often face challenges like lack of education, skills, and support, which hinder their ability to secure stable employment. Additionally, foster parents

may struggle to balance caregiving with work, and there is a demand for social services workers to support the system. To improve workforce outcomes, targeted support for foster children, foster families, and social services professionals is essential, ensuring that children in care have the resources they need in workforce.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

The TANF caseload has had a more recent slight increase in the latter half of 2024 with 3,263 households in the TANF work program statewide. The program has been successful in increasing the average wage for newly employed TANF recipients to \$16.00 per hour.

### **College Graduation Debt and Retention**

A recent 2017 study analyzed the effects of rising post-secondary education costs in comparison to the levels of debt that South Carolinians are taking on and determined the employment outcomes of recent college graduates. Two cohorts of South Carolina college graduates were studied to determine: (1) the percentage of students found working in the state one- and five years post-graduation, (2) their annual earnings, (3) their median earnings one- and five years post-graduation, and (4) their industry of employment one- and five-years post-graduation. Major findings of that report showed:

- 64.9 percent of South Carolina college graduates from FY2009-10 were employed for one-year post-graduation, and 50.0 percent were employed five years post-graduation
- Women, African Americans, in-state students, and those pursuing less than a bachelor's degree were more likely to be found in wage records in SC one- and five years post-graduation. Students majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) fields were the least likely to be found in wage records post-graduation.
- Retention rates were higher for students that are native to South Carolina (78.6 percent) than those from out-of-state (50.2 percent).
- STEM graduates had the fastest median annual wage growth (9.6 percent) one to five years post-graduation; Trades was second (8.2 percent), and third was Business and Communication (8.1 percent).
- The college majors associated with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Initiative showed either above-average wages (\$35,238) one-year post-graduation or higher-than-average wage growth (6.3 percent per year) between the first and fifth years. Many of the fields of the study funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will likely have similar wage outcomes.

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

The diversity of disabilities ranges from those seen as necessitating the use of a wheelchair or cane, to those unseen, invisible disabilities such as mental illness or substance use disorders. Although many innovative programs and collaborative efforts are in place in South Carolina to expand competitively, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, data shows that a continued focus on increasing rates of employment and labor force participation is necessary.

Estimates from the American Community Survey in 2021 show that 14.3 percent of the state's civilian noninstitutionalized population had a disability.<sup>7</sup> Those who both had a disability and were employed

consisted of approximately 132,179 people aged 18 to 64. Nearly 19,000 more people were unemployed, yielding a disability unemployment rate of 12.5 percent. Ambulatory difficulty was the top disability for those employed, while cognitive difficulty was the top disability for those not in the labor force.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, this group will continue to need focused services to overcome substantial barriers to employment. Again, The SC Works Trident area will align with the Regional Plan.

❖ **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.**

The impact of the recession and pandemic also caused the SC Works Trident area to look at new normal ways of doing business and new shifts in jobs.

- SC Works Trident partners are using new ways to interact with customers from virtual online workshops to virtual job fairs, to distant learning, and finding new ways to prepare and take care of testing services.
- SC Works Trident Business representatives and partners are monitoring new employer trends such as new job duties some employers have to comply with suggested Center for Disease Control/CDC safety standards impacting customer flow, sanitary/safety cleaning, moving to more takeout for food service, grocery deliveries, etc.
- SC Works Trident partner staff are learning more about working from home and using new technology to communicate with both their work colleagues and their customers.
- Staff are also working with new changes in post-high school training option registration requirements as universities/colleges must adjust their entry requirements because of SAT/ACT changes.

## Challenges/Threats

Challenges to the SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region include recruiting talent and increasing the number of retirees in the workforce. Challenges to recruiting employers include accessibility to interstates, tax regulations, and infrastructure. Other challenges include:

- Talent Shortages
- Lack of Soft Skills
- Lack of skilled workers
- Transportation
- Commuting
- Lack of Childcare
- Sharing/Marketing of these lists to various entities to create buy-in
- Aligning our Workforce vocabulary across all core programs and partners
- Labor force leaving
- Increase flooding and storm intensity

- Potential economic and natural disruptions such as recessions, global conflict, pandemics, hurricanes, or earthquakes
- Displacement and gentrification driven by economic prosperity
- Persistent inequity among residents

### **Strengths of the Trident Area**

- In the last few years, SC Works Trident has seen tremendous job growth with companies such as Boeing, Volvo, and Mercedes-Benz. These companies have created great opportunities for both our business and individual customers.
- The SC Works Trident system excels due to strong collaboration with core partners and local providers, offering job seekers access to training services, registered apprenticeship programs, and in-demand courses. There is a focus on developing a customer-centered, outcomes-driven workforce system. Partnerships are established both within and outside SC Works centers, with SC Works Charleston housing several co-located partners for easy customer access. Additionally, the Business Services Team has cultivated solid relationships with local employers, increasing On-the-Job Training (OJT) and work-based learning opportunities.
- Industries and employers have the desire to partner with workforce development entities and to work with the workforce system in meeting their employment needs. More employers are seeking the services of the SC Works Trident system to find a skilled workforce.
- Excellent geographic location and quality of life.
- The Centers are Certified SC Works Centers.
- SC Ports and expanding the logistics sector.
- International Airport with increased nonstop service

### **Weaknesses of the Trident Area**

Although there are many strengths and positives, there are weaknesses that have been identified in the SC Works Trident as follows:

- Lack of reliable transportation and broadband width and internet in the rural areas to get to employment opportunities. The BCDCOG received a \$342,000 grant from the federal transit Authority to improve Tri-County Link Rural Transportation by reassessing routes to better connect residents to employment centers, schools, health care facilities and other critical places for rural residents to access. The BCDCOG also has a mobility transportation manager that can assist individuals with transportation needs. Works still need to be done in addressing the lack of internet and broadband in rural and outlying areas.
- Lack of awareness of the available workforce system services/job seekers not interested in the in-demand occupations and industries: Despite the ongoing efforts of WIOA, there are still many customers, both employers and individuals that are not aware of the workforce services and assistance available to them.
- Limited program alignment and coordination: While our education partners are co-located in the comprehensive centers; however, we need to strengthen alignment with those who are not.

Operating on a unified system would further enhance coordination and streamline service delivery across all partners.

- Access to affordable early childcare and education.
- Stress on the Region’s infrastructure from high growth, including traffic congestion and strain on the natural environment.
- Housing choices and affordability.

## **Capacity**

SC Works Trident is positioned to provide high quality workforce development programs and prepare our customers for in-demand sectors and career pathways. WIOA staff is located in the Comprehensive Center as well as the two affiliate sites to deliver services related to the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. These centers provide services to residents in the Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties. Staff coordinate referrals and resources with our partners and provide outreach to counties and customers in the community. In addition to having WIOA staff located in the centers, Wagner-Peyser services are delivered in each county and each location. Our center in Dorchester County is located within the Dorchester Adult Education learning center, which makes it easier for customers to receive one-stop services. In Berkeley County, the new location for SC Works Berkeley will be directly across the street from Berkeley Adult Education, which will allow for further collaboration. Vocational Rehabilitation and Wagner-Peyser programs are currently co-located in SC Works Berkeley and will continue with the move to the new location.

## SECTION II: STRATEGIC VISION AND GOAL

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A description of the LWDB’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;
- ❖ A description of how the LWDB will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above; and
- ❖ A description of how the LWDB will utilize technology to increase access to resources and services for job seekers and employers.

### Purpose

Workforce planning is an organized process for identifying, acquiring, developing, and retaining employees to meet the needs of the workforce. It includes an analysis of the current workforce to compare against future needs to identify gaps and surpluses. It is a proactive strategy to project workforce requirements for the future and plan how organizations will meet both global and unique business needs. It also provides managers with a strategic basis for making human resource decisions and addressing issues that are driving workforce change, resulting in more effectively run organizations.

The TWDB aims to align resources to resolve the workforce skill gaps of local industries thereby enhancing their competitive advantage and producing additional high-skill, high-pay, and high-demand jobs.

### Vision

The Trident Workforce Development Board is an integrative force, bringing together business and industry, education, economic development, and other public entities striving to ensure adequate investment in today’s workforce; and preparing tomorrow’s workforce to ensure they have the skills to meet the demand of the region’s growth sectors. In essence, the vision of the Trident Workforce Development Board and its partners is to achieve and sustain the Trident Workforce potential and align with the State’s vision and goals as outlined in the State Unified State Plan and the WIOA State Plan.

### Mission

Through collaboration, coordination, communication, and cooperation align and enhance the Trident Workforce Area’s education and workforce system so it is readily accessible, highly effective, and easily understandable.

### Goal

The Trident Workforce Development Board will support the WIOA State Plan as it aligns with the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development’s State Plan through the local board’s goals as identified in the following principle goals and priorities:

**Goal: Awareness**

Increase understanding of the top industries in the Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region and services available to assist employers and individuals.

**Goal: Skills**

Increase skills and experiences of Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) residents at all ages, to ensure they can progress through the career path of their choice.

**Goal: Obstacle**

Increase options to overcome barriers Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) residents face when attempting to access education and enter the workforce.

**Objectives**

Objectives to align local resources to achieve the goals, the Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB) will:

- Concentrate efforts on in-demand sectors to increase education and training, which will, in turn, help economic development entities to decide where to focus their efforts for maximum impact on the economy. The mandatory partners will focus on streamlining career pathways services.
- All partners will be educated on partner services that include business services and the needs of individuals and businesses. This will be done through the Integrated Business Service Team.
- Continue to educate and provide outreach to business leaders to get the message out that a critical component of a competitive economy is a well-trained workforce.
- Work with county and regional economic development organizations to support targeted industry strategies.
- Through Sector Strategy Partnerships, the needs of the specific industries are identified. This will allow for support in career pathways in growing sectors as well as meet the needs of the industries and businesses.
- Develop and maintain an effective and efficient workforce system that uses the power and influence of the WDB to attract and build partnerships and coordinate resources.
- Services should include outreach to potential customers to inform the community about available programs and services.
- Explore more outreach opportunities to get the word out about SC Works and its partners as a resource.
- Make sure that programs and services are employer-driven, and that actions are aligned with the changing needs of employers and workers. Also, ensure easy access to services for job seekers.
- Trident Workforce Development Board “brand” ultimately sets up an expectation of the services provided inside the center for the customer. These efforts are to be a priority for continued success and visibility.
- TWDB should continuously improve and make changes that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

## Section II: Strategic Vision And Goal

- The best marketing strategy is to have a successfully operating one-stop career system in place, to ensure comprehensive services are provided seamlessly, meaning that the center has a consolidated, coordinated, and cooperative system of service delivery by its participating partners. Partners are committed to delivering levels of service that strive to exceed customer expectations.
- Information regarding outcomes is shared with all stakeholders for various reasons, e.g., improving services, marketing, and outreach efforts; informing the community of the value of the center to the community; and advocating with decision-makers and the community for continued or increased funding.
- Continue to foster growth in the supply of skilled workforce prepared for jobs in the region's in-demand industries.
- Continue the work of the Sector Strategy Partnership with each in-demand sector.
- Foster growth and increase the supply of skilled workforce prepared for jobs in the targeted sectors using an integrated career pathway process – Diversified Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation and Logistics, Construction Trades, and Hospitality and Tourism.
- Promote the preparation of job seekers and workers for actual growth jobs.
- Emphasize the development of skills for job seekers and incumbent workers to help businesses remain competitive through proper assessment of job-seeker skills and opportunities to upgrade skills to industry standards.
- Prioritize target and competency industry training needs and increase training capacity in these target industries. Job analysis or profiling and the use of Career Readiness Assessments should be strongly considered as a tool to strengthen the curriculum and meet the competency needs of the business.
- Maximize and leverage resources to develop a high-demand, skilled workforce to support the needs of businesses and industries in the region.
- Strengthen the collaboration between the core partners of Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind, Adult Education and Family Literacy, and WIOA programs.
- Strengthen the collaboration between providers of adult education programs and employers.
- Market the resources that are available to adults who need basic skills advancement. Services include WIN, targeted industry pre-readiness pathways, and/or high school credential attainment.
- Expand the use of WIN and connected training with SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region's employers.
- Embed soft skills and employability skills into work readiness training programs.
- Explore additional funding for job profiles and assessments of incumbent workers.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is equipped with a work ethic, foundational academic skills, and specific occupational skills that fit the emerging needs of local employers.
- Business Driven - targeting business and industry to determine services, service delivery, and the most effective allocation of resources.
- Enhancing the skill level of job seekers to meet the skills required for demand occupations using appropriate assessments and targeted training.

## Section II: Strategic Vision And Goal

- Service Integration - organizes staff and services by function in a way that streamlines service delivery and reduces duplication.
- Monitor workforce demand and supply needs of the Trident area and respond with services as dictated by employers and the community.

### **State Goals, Objectives, and Strategies**

#### **Awareness**

Goal: Increase understanding about the top industries in SC, diverse array of occupations within them, and services available to assist employers and individuals prosper.

#### **Strategies**

1. Increase the understanding about top industries in SC and pathways to the diverse array of occupations within them for students at all levels and their guardians, as well as those not in the labor force or underemployed.
2. Increase SC employers' understanding of services available to assist them in hiring/retaining South Carolinians.
3. Decrease the number of contacts a SC employer must make within state government to address issues related to education and workforce.

#### **Skills**

Goal: Increase skills and experiences of South Carolinians at all ages, to ensure they can progress through the career path of their choice.

#### **Strategies**

1. Increase participation in work-based learning experiences for students at all levels and adults reentering the workforce.
2. Increase the percentage of the SC labor force holding a high value credential.
3. Increase the percentage of individuals who, after attaining a credential in SC, are employed in SC, participating in a year of service in SC, or enrolled in additional education.

#### **Obstacles**

Goal: Increase options overcome barriers South Carolinians face when attempting to access education and enter the workforce.

#### **Strategies**

1. Increase the number of available and affordable childcare options for guardians entering the workforce or obtaining education.
2. Increase the number of eligible workers living within a close proximity drive, or bus/bike ride, of the largest employment center in each county.
3. Increase the number of transit options for individuals without vehicles to get to work.

## Local Industry Sectors

The SC Works Trident local area has adopted the following clusters as the local industry sectors, which align with South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region Sectors:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (to include life sciences)
- Manufacturing (to include Aerospace and automotive from the One Region Plan)
- Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics
- Construction Trade
- Hospitality and Tourism (food services, retail)
- Office Administrative Support

The Trident Workforce Development Board is committed to aligning with the State and Regional goals:

**A. The collaboration of core programs under WIOA:** WIOA programs are solidifying partnerships at the state, regional, and local levels to coordinate workforce initiatives and programs. The passing of state workforce legislation will provide an opportunity to further strengthen existing workforce development to meet the growing needs of employers in the state. Providing Multiple Measures of Assessments to provide TWDB Partners with the ability to make data-driven decisions to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement.

- SC High School diploma
- SC High School equivalency diploma
- Post-secondary degree, diploma, and certification
- Obtained employment
- Continued employment of customers
- Measurable skills enhancement

**B. Creation of Education and Career Pathways:** The career pathways approach offers a sequence of education and/or training credentials aligned with work readiness standards. Sector-based education and career pathways require that education and training systems be seamless to meet employers' needs for skilled workers. This will be accomplished by transforming and aligning the disconnected components of educational processes to optimize student/job-seeker success.

Career Pathways also provide a sustainable pipeline of employment. Measurable student and job seeker success is a core value of TWDB partners. Opportunities for dual enrollment and information will be provided beginning in middle school and continuing through high school, Adult Education, Trident Technical College, and additional Trident and Regional public and private providers. The customer will be provided with information and opportunities to earn nationally recognized certification for in-demand entry-level to high-level occupations in the Trident Workforce Development Area.

SCDEW, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Department of Education are working closely together to refine the messages to K-12 students and parents about middle-skills jobs, high-demand and high-growth jobs, and different paths to post-secondary education options. Additionally,

Technical Colleges and businesses are working to align their non-credit programs with nationally recognized credentials and certifications that make their graduates marketable for existing jobs.

- C. Development of a consistently competency-based soft skills curriculum:** Successful placement in the workforce requires both the technical skills for job performance and a broad spectrum of social and interpersonal skills often referred to as “soft skills.” Both trade and soft skills are important in hiring and retention decisions across all industry sectors.

Recognizing the need for a common, consistent soft skills training curriculum that all agencies can use to train prospective job seekers, the State Workforce Development Board, the WIOA Core Programs, and the State Technical Colleges have collaborated to identify and recommend a soft skills curriculum that could be adopted across agencies. This includes the use of universal design principles and consideration of accessibility for all potential customers. The curriculum would be based on core competencies, with the ability for agencies to tailor the classes based on the unique needs of their client populations. WIN has a soft skills curriculum for SC Works Trident customers that is being introduced to partners for usage in the SC Works Centers.

- D. Enhancement of school-to-work transition and youth-focused programs:** A significant focus of WIOA includes strategies to strengthen school-to-work transition programs and youth programs. This includes specific activities conducted within the secondary school system for students to better prepare them for employment, post-secondary education, or post-secondary training. There are also provisions within WIOA to address the needs of out-of-school youth to ensure that they are connected with the services needed to achieve competitive, integrated employment.

Strong partnerships with local education agencies, VR service delivery capacity for school-to-work transition services, workforce development programs for youth, and connection with stakeholders involved in student, youth, and parent engagement are being deployed in South Carolina. The work of these partnerships will help to prepare the next generation of job seekers for emerging employment opportunities before exiting school settings, in keeping with the education and career pathways development. Career Development Facilitation (CDF) will prepare customers to enter and retain employment in middle-level income occupations within the Trident region. Increased focus on youth workforce engagement, school-to-work transition, career pathways development, and youth apprenticeship opportunities.

- E. Utilize new technologies and data sources to help guide and support all workforce development and employer support strategies, and to provide visibility into performance measures:** Investing in the use of new systems will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of WIOA service efforts. This includes the use of labor market data to keep pace with and adjust to, changes in local market conditions; the use of innovative technology tools that support evaluation data collection, service delivery, data sharing, and management across all strategies; the use of client-centered feedback to support the refinement of efforts over time. The WIOA program has been utilizing virtual headsets to introduce Youth participants to career fields in the various occupations for the in-demand Career Sectors. **The SC Works Trident local workforce area will increase access to resources and services for job seekers through digital access. The SC Works Trident utilizes the Brazen system provided by SCDEW for virtual job fairs and hiring events. The local area continue to use and promote the SCWOS platform that allows**

job seekers to create resumes, apply for job postings, and access career services. The local area partners with Trident Technical College and Adult Education to utilize their online training and platforms. The Trident Workforce Area has a strong social media presence. We use Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X) to increase outreach to job seekers and employers.

- F. Develop strategies and provide career services targeted to individuals with significant barriers to employment:** TWDB recognizes the need to implement intensive services to those demonstrating significant barriers to labor force entry. Efforts related to this goal include the provision of more work-based learning opportunities, access to in-demand industry certifications, job readiness training, and relevant skill-building efforts. Also, we will seek to widen access and tailor core services to people with disabilities, veterans, out-of-school youth, young adults with limited work history, those facing language barriers, those with criminal justice involvement, or those who have experienced homelessness.
- G. Develop Sector Partnerships to increase focus on growing market segments and to drive the specification of career pathways:** TWDB will work with companies, education, economic development, and community organizations to understand the needs of these growing sectors, support partnership efforts, and specify the training and education requirements needed to move job seekers toward employment. This will result in the development of relevant career pathways for each sector.
- H. Develop and implement systems and strategies designed to support effective employer engagement to better ensure job placement and long-term retention:** WIOA places increased emphasis on the successful provision of employer engagement activities. TWDB will work to refine its communication, support, and collaboration with employers and industry groups to ensure their industry-based needs are understood and met, and to aid in the efficient placement of job seekers possessing requisite skills.

The TWDB is committed to the strategic development of working relationships with mandated and community partners to better serve job seekers and business customers. The TWDB is committed to working toward ensuring a skilled and qualified workforce that is key to successful economic development. It is planned that the synergy of partnering agencies working together will result in the effective use of resources and the development of new strategies and/or support of effective existing strategies and will result in the preparation of a skilled and trained workforce.

TWDB will align with partner agencies to design a seamless approach in preparing the local/regional workforce beginning in the K-12 school system through post-secondary education and training providers to provide nationally recognized training and certification opportunities valued by job seekers and employers of middle-wage employees. Students in the K-12 system and Adult Education are expected to receive an educational experience that meets the SC Department of Education, Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. All job seekers will be provided the instruction and opportunity to take Career assessments while in high school or enrolled in the local adult education program. Trident Technical College and other Regional private providers will provide certification in middle-wage occupations to include diversified manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, logistics, IT, and construction. Partnerships will be reorganized to

## Section II: Strategic Vision And Goal

provide the customer, job seeker, and employer with a seamless system that is result-oriented and employment-driven.

The TWDB boasts strong ties with the local community college systems within the regional area and the clear majority of the WIOA training dollars are spent with the community college programs. The partnerships that exist between workforce staff and the community college system representatives have proven successful with the recruitment, retention, and job placement of common customers. The colleges have been responsive to sector-based initiatives in several areas.

## SECTION III: LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

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

### Plan Development Process

The Local, Region, and Combined Operations and Business Engagement Plans were disseminated to all partners for input, feedback, and participation in the modification of the plans. The Trident Workforce Development Board staff, and the Core Programs that include the Operator for the SC Works Centers (Ross IES), Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation and SC Commission for the Blind, and Adult Education and Family Literacy came together to formalize the local plan. Each partner will provide input and recommendations to the plan before public comments. Core partner agencies reviewed and provided relevant and essential updates as needed to the local plan. Next, the plans will be distributed to the Local Elected Officials to include County Councils, and the Trident Workforce Development Board members for input and feedback. Lastly, the plans will be out for a public comment period of ten business days or more.

Each of the core programs that included the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW), and Adult Education and Family Literacy programs were allowed to participate in the development of the Plan. Local Board members served on the committee for the regional plan and also worked on the local plan simultaneously through the process and provided input and collaboration in the creation of the plan. After the plan was developed, it was sent to the required partners and Trident Workforce Development for review, input, and suggestions. The plan was sent to the local chief elected officials to include the county councils for feedback, input, and suggestions, and presented at the BCDCOG Board meeting that includes county councils from the three counties represented in the Trident Workforce Area before the release of public comments. The tentative plan is for the Local Boards to approve the local and regional plans in December 2024.

### Timeline

- Core and Required Partner Review: October 16, 2024 – November 4, 2024
- Local elected officials review: November 18, 2024 – December 2, 2024
- Public Comment Period: December 4, 2024 – December 18, 2024
- Approval by TWDB: December 3, 2024
- Send to SCDEW for approval: January 10, 2025

Public comments will be taken into consideration. The plan will be amended as necessary.

No Public Comments were received on the local plan

**2. A description of the workforce development system in the LWDA, including the following:**

**❖ Identification of the programs that are included in the system.**

### **Workforce Development System**

The workforce development system comprises six core programs, mandated, and other essential partners. **The six core programs are WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser, and Adult Education and Family Literacy programs.** The mandated programs in the system are Job Corps, Veterans Employment and Training programs, WP for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs, Palmetto Goodwill for Senior Community Service Employment Programs, Unemployment Compensation, and Department of Social Services for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and Trident Technical College for Post-Secondary Education Programs.

The TWDB will support the strategies outlined in the State Plan to support services alignment among the core programs and other workforce development programs by having co-locations of programs. All core programs are co-located in the SC Works Trident Comprehensive Center, which is the SC Works Charleston Center.

Also, SC Works Dorchester is co-located in Dorchester Adult Education Learning Center which also includes Wagner-Peyser and Vocational Rehabilitation. Co-orientations and information sessions occur between SC Works WIOA programs and Adult Education programs as well. Additional collaborations are in the works with Berkeley Adult Education and SC Works WIOA programs. Berkeley County Adult Education and SC Works WIOA programs are nearby each other, which will allow for further collaboration. The WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Wagner-Peyser programs are currently co-located in Trident United Way Berkeley Community Resource Center. The partners in the SC Works Trident area are working together to benefit the public workforce system by educating each other on programs, services, and resources available. A resource and welcome packet are being developed for use by all partners and to give out to customers in the SC Works Centers. This project is still planned and in the works for development. This will allow the partners to speak on and make referrals to appropriate programs. It will allow customers to know the programs and services available in the centers.

Currently, the partners in the center are participating in each agency's orientations to make customers aware of services. Adult Education, Vocation Rehabilitation (VR), Wagner-Peyser (WP), and WIOA are all working together. Adult Education refers all customers to WIOA for services to address further education and training needs. They also refer customers to Vocation Rehabilitation and WP as needed. VR also makes referrals to adult education, WP, and WIOA for additional services. During this process, there was a recognition that not all partners could knowledgeably speak of each other's programs. WP is referring customers to WIOA and Adult Education to assist with education and training needs.

As we have formed a core partner group, we constantly communicate the process and what we can do to further move the SC Works System through a process of working together to provide seamless services among the partners. There was a delay in developing the Resource and Welcome Packet, but this is back in progress. Information from the SC Works 101 training will be utilized in this packet. As the relationships among the core partners grow, working together and providing seamless services increases for the

customers. The Core group will continue to meet and review the local plan to seek ways to increase all partners working together. One of the missions of the core group is to increase the coordination of services with partners. We will meet and come up with a plan of action to ensure this happens. Partner meetings will be held at a minimum of once per quarter and more as deemed necessary.

### **Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs**

Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, is administered by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) and operated locally in 12 workforce development areas. These areas provide a variety of education and training activities that are tailored to the needs of job seekers and employers in each local area.

### **Title II – Adult and Family Literacy Act Program**

The South Carolina State Board of Education oversees the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). The SCDE is responsible for K-12 public education and is under the supervision of the elected State Superintendent of Education. The Office of Adult Education (OAE) is within the SCDE under the Division of College and Career Readiness and is managed by the position of State Director of Adult Education. Technical support, professional development, and compliance monitoring are provided by Education Associates within the Office of Adult Education.

There are 79 school districts in South Carolina. Fifty-one Adult Education Programs with more than 150 physical locations provide adult education and literacy activities in all 79 school districts. Adult education programs are voluntary and afford opportunities for adult learners 17 and older to obtain a high school diploma, GED, a career readiness certificate, participate in English as a second language classes (ESL), and family literacy (FL). Adults may enroll in Skills Upgrade classes to improve their basic literacy and/or numeracy skills. Integrated Education and Training career pathways can occur concurrently with these options. Additionally, adult learners are provided with instruction to prepare for the WIN academic tests and earn a South Carolina Work Ready Credential, and the WIN Soft Skills Credential. Adult Education also offers basic computers classes and participants may earn a SC Digital Literacy Certificate by completing designated modules through the NorthStar platform. Adult education classes are taught by certified teachers and trained volunteers who are overseen by certified teachers. Each adult education program has a program director, instructors, administrative support, a designated data specialist, a college and career navigator, and key staff to support initiatives offered by the program.

### **Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program**

SCDEW administers the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program, which provides all job seekers with access to job search preparation and placement assistance, including individualized skill assessments, career counseling, job-matching assistance, and skill development workshops aimed at improving employability. Employers may also benefit from recruitment services including, but not limited to, listing a job, screening applicants against job listings, hosting job fairs, and administration of specialized testing or assessments. Services are available through SC Works Centers across the state and online through SC Works Online System (SCWOS).

#### **Title IV – Rehabilitation Act Programs**

SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) and SC Commission for the Blind (SCCB) are the state administrators of the Rehabilitation Act program (Title IV WIOA services).

- **SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD):** The SCVRD offers personalized services statewide through a network of area offices, job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse recovery centers, and staff who serve consumers at various locations, including SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. In the Trident area, there are two VR offices and two job readiness training centers, one in Charleston and the other in Moncks Corner, which serves Berkeley and Dorchester counties. SCVRD uses a team approach to help consumers prepare for employment opportunities in their local labor markets. The staff also build relationships with businesses and industries to match consumers with job opportunities that align with their strengths, abilities, and skills. SCVRD further supports individuals through programs like occupational and physical therapy, rehabilitation engineering, and residential alcohol and drug recovery services, expanding its capacity to meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities who successfully complete the SCVRD program and secure employment improve their quality of life, reduce dependence on government assistance, and contribute to the state's economy by earning wages, paying taxes, and making purchases. This, in turn, strengthens the state's return on its investment in these services.
- **SC Commission for the Blind (SCCB):** The SCCB Board of Commissioners works alongside the Agency Commissioner and Senior Management Team to set policies, establish goals, and ensure the effective delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to blind consumers. Board members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, serving four-year terms. The Commission operates nine local offices, providing services to individuals who wish to enter or maintain competitive integrated employment. Additionally, the SCCB Training Center in Columbia offers comprehensive blindness adjustment services, including personal adjustment, orientation and mobility training, daily living skills, Braille literacy, and pre-vocational training on assistive technology. As the state administrator of the Rehabilitation Act program for the blind and visually impaired, SCCB provides personalized services statewide through district offices. The agency also operates the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia, where eligible individuals receive vocational evaluations, adjustment to blindness services, low-vision services, assistive technology training, and pre-vocational programs. SCCB also assists businesses through its business relations program, helping companies assess their human resource needs and matching qualified, job-ready consumers with suitable employment opportunities. Additionally, SCCB educates employers on the benefits and incentives of hiring individuals with disabilities, including blindness.

#### **Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Employment Services**

SCDEW is the provider of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wagner-Peyser (WP) and is therefore uniquely positioned to help job seekers become re-employed. WP staff provides career services, as defined in WIOA, Sec. 134(c)(2), at all 14 comprehensive SC Works Centers and other affiliate sites. Job seekers can also access labor exchange services remotely through SCWOS. Additionally, the staff helps UI

claimants file and manage their benefits. When appropriate, referrals are made to partner programs based on individual job seekers' needs and individual characteristics.

The Core programs will collaborate to expand access through the use of co-locations that will facilitate ongoing development between partners with joint orientations utilizing a reciprocal referral process. The Core partners are co-located in the comprehensive center at SC Works Charleston and the Dorchester affiliate center is located in the Dorchester Adult Learning Center. The SC Works Berkeley Center works collaboratively in partnership with Berkeley County Adult Education and the other core partners to provide the required services. Each partner has an orientation and assessment as part of the process. In addition to orientation and assessment, each core partner can determine which services the individual customer needs given the availability of appropriate resources. Being co-located and having a relationship with each partner allows for streamlined communication. Each core partner has an understanding of each agency's intake process and services available, allowing for a seamless referral process.

### **Overview of Core Programs**

The SC Workforce Trident Centers are designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, particularly those with barriers to employment. SC Works Trident Centers provide career services that motivate, support, and empower customers, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers, to make informed decisions based on local and regional economic demands and effectively attain their employment and education goals. All customers are given access to high-quality One-Stop centers that connect them with the full range of services available in their communities, whether they are looking to find jobs, build basic educational or occupational skills, earn a postsecondary certificate or degree, or obtain guidance on how to make career choices. Partner agencies provide in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals. Career coaches work with participants with barriers to create an IEP that is a plan of action for how they will together overcome any barriers to employment and secure employment leading to self-sufficiency.

The Workforce Development Board will continue to facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs and other programs, while improving access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable. TWDB will continue to collaborate with the local community colleges and training providers to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials including industry-recognized certificates, certifications, and portable and stackable credentials. The local community colleges will continue to be actively involved at the locations where the workforce investment activities are being provided, to be visible and readily available to the clients.

TWDB will also continue to develop partnerships with employers and training providers to develop specific career pathways and leverage funds by co-enrolling individuals that are appropriate for both youth and adult programs to support training and career pathways. TWDB will continue collaborating with program providers to provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, work uniforms, etc. to eligible individuals with barriers to employment. TWDB has developed long-term relationships with several careers and technical education institutions that are approved to provide training.

- Title I – WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, is administered by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) and operated locally in 12 workforce development areas. These areas provide a variety of education and training activities that are tailored to the needs of job seekers and employers in each local area.
- Title II – Adult and Family Literacy Act Program: The primary function of the SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Adult Education (OAE) is to provide technical assistance and consultative services to local adult education programs to enhance the quality of services and ensure that these programs meet their goals and objectives. The OAE has the responsibility to monitor and assess local programs for compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.
- Title III – Wagner-Peyser Programs: SCDEW administers the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program, which provides all job seekers access to job search preparation and placement assistance, including individualized skill assessments, career counseling, job-matching assistance, and skill development workshops aimed at improving employability.
- Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation and SC Commission for the Blind: SCVRD provides individualized services across the state through a network of area offices, job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse recovery centers, and staff that serve clients at various itinerant sites such as SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. People with disabilities who exit the SCVRD program with a successful employment outcome enhance the quality of their lives and the lives of their families by earning paychecks, lessening their reliance on government assistance, stimulating the state’s economy by paying taxes, making purchases, and ultimately contributing to the state’s return on its investment in their services.
- SCVRD provides individualized services across the state through a network of area offices, job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse recovery centers, and staff that serve clients at various itinerant sites such as SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. The Trident area has two VR area offices and two job readiness training centers with one located in Charleston and the other in Moncks Corner which serves both Berkeley and Dorchester counties. Through a team approach, SCVRD staff work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with businesses and industries to individually match consumers with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skillsets. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, and residential alcohol and drug recovery center further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the individualized needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.
- The SCCB Board of Commissioners works with the Agency Commissioner and Senior Management Team to set policy, establish goals and strategic plans, and ensure the quality provision of vocational rehabilitation services to blind consumers. Board members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, serving four-year terms.
- The Commission operates nine local area offices through which services are provided to all eligible individuals who desire to enter or maintain competitive integrated employment. The SCCB Training Center in Columbia provides comprehensive adjustment to blindness services including personal adjustment to blindness, orientation and mobility skills, daily living skills, Braille literacy

skills, and pre-vocational training on the use of Assistive Technology devices. SCCB counselors, Adjustment to Blindness Instructors, Vocational Evaluators, and Employment. Consultants work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market. Employment Consultants build relationships with businesses in order to provide talent acquisition and talent retention services. In addition, the Commission manages a state-funded Prevention of Blindness Program, the Older-Blind Program, Low Vision Clinics, and the Business Enterprise Program.

### **Youth Services**

SCVRD considers service provision to high school students with disabilities a priority and collaborates with local and state education agencies to serve them. SCVRD serves students with disabilities who have various service employment transition services needs in their efforts to prepare for, find, and maintain competitive, integrated employment. SCVRD provides individualized services to students pursuing a high school diploma, SC High School Credential or Certificate of Attendance to help students successfully enter competitive, integrated employment. This includes making available Pre-Employment Transition Services to all students who are eligible and potentially eligible for VR services.

The provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services is a cornerstone of the agreements with local education agencies/school districts in terms of SCVRD's role. SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or postsecondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide Pre-Employment Transition Services for students before their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive, integrated employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs.

SCVRD utilizes the five required pre-ETS activities as a framework for school-to-work transition services. This includes regular activities that focus on job exploration counseling, work-based learning experience, counseling on opportunities for comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills, and instruction in self-advocacy. Group activities provide opportunities to not only facilitate peer mentoring but also allow transition staff to observe and cultivate students' leadership skills, as well as communication and social skills. VR has expanded the outreach of Pre-ETS through the awarding of a multi-year grant to the three independent living centers and the National Federation of the Blind to provide Pre-ETS activities in Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities, Workplace Readiness Training, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy.

SCVRD maintains a priority on providing work-based learning experiences for students. In keeping with evidence-based practices that support work experience to be one of the most influential factors in successful postsecondary employment outcomes, transition staff actively pursue a variety of paid and unpaid work-based learning opportunities, including job tryouts, job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities for students. This impacts not only the outcome of competitive, integrated employment but is an integral support for school completion and drop-out prevention.

An example of the enhancement of transition services is SCVRD's partnership with the school districts and SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs in the development of Project SEARCH in the Lowcountry. Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led transition program designed to provide education and job

training for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students participate in the program for a full school year. They receive classroom instruction, including training in employability and independent living skills, and master core job skills through three 9 to 10-week internship rotations. This program commenced in Berkeley County in August 2018 at Berkeley County Government. Charleston County began its program in the fall of 2019 at Embassy Suites in North Charleston.

SCCB continues to engage in outreach to youth and students who are blind or visually impaired throughout the state. The agency has increased counseling staff to meet the needs of consumers, and it will continue to partner with LEAs across the state by utilizing MOUs to ensure all parties are effectively collaborating to provide quality, timely, and individualized pre-employment transition services.

The five required pre-employment transition services are available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. SCCB has hired a Transition Services Lead to coordinate the provision of pre-ETS and other services for youth who are blind or visually impaired. Additionally, the Transition Services Lead will work to increase outreach and awareness of services across the state. This includes not only partnering with schools, but also directly with Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVIs) and other organizations that serve youth who are blind or visually impaired.

SCCB will continue to increase staff capacity and contract out the delivery of pre-employment transition services. Contracting with providers allows SCCB to serve more youth who are blind or visually impaired and offer a greater variety of work-based learning experiences. SCCB is in the process of revising its CareerBOOST contract with the goal of attracting additional vendors who can provide services across the state.

SCCB continues to diversify the provision of postsecondary training and self-advocacy opportunities. SCCB is exploring options to increase service delivery throughout the year for youth who are blind or visually impaired. In addition to peer mentoring opportunities through SCCB's summer teen program, SCCB is exploring options to partner with vendors to develop a peer mentoring program. SCCB also provides opportunities for youth to connect with companies and professionals to explore various career paths.

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, provides yet another avenue for enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Through these regulations, federal contractors and subcontractors have a goal to make sure that 7% of their employees across all job groups are qualified people with disabilities. Although SCVRD and other organizations that represent individuals with disabilities are actively conducting outreach and providing support for the achievement of this goal, the opportunity to link recent graduates as part of efforts to enhance employment outcomes for students with disabilities is evident.

- SCVRD Job Driven Vocational Training Programs: SCVRD continues to develop job-driven skills training based on specific business needs in local communities. Skills training will be delivered through the department's local area offices in partnership with community entities including technical colleges and will help grow skilled talent pools from which local business partners can recruit and hire. Used in conjunction with other workforce development efforts, this individualized training assists individuals with disabilities to access training that is customized to meet their needs. This initiative is coordinated through SCVRD's Business Services Team, whose

members also collaborate at the local level with interagency business services teams including all WIOA core partners.

- SCVRD Job Readiness Training Centers: Local SCVRD job readiness training centers are working within their communities to identify demand-driven training opportunities and needs. The SCVRD training centers utilize customized job readiness training contracts to build foundational skills and refer qualified consumers to business partners for employment opportunities.

Accessibility is a center for independent living (CIL) that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living and transition services. There are three components to transition services:

1. Facilitating the transition of eligible youth with significant disabilities to post-secondary life.
2. Assisting individuals with significant disabilities who are at risk of entering institutions, called diversion assistance.
3. Facilitating the transition of individuals with significant disabilities from nursing homes and other institutions.

Accessibility SC is approved by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) to serve ticket beneficiaries as an Employment Network (EN) under SSA's Ticket to Work program (discussed in more detail below) and serves as the host and facilitator for SC Disability Employment Coalition, an organization that addresses employment barriers for individuals with disabilities. Accessibility is one of 403 Centers for Independent Living in the country. We are a federally funded, non-residential, not-for-profit, organization in South Carolina. Accessibility is a 501(c) (3) organization. The organization has been serving the counties of Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg since 2001. Accessibility promotes the full integration of people with disabilities in their communities. We strive to empower people with disabilities to realize their full potential. Accessibility provides consumer-controlled services. That means YOU are leading the way! Your determination is key to your independence. The board of directors and staff consists of 51% of people with disabilities. Another unique feature of Accessibility is that we provide services on a cross-disability basis. Our mission is to offer individual and group life skills coaching programs for people with disabilities.

SCCB has an Assistive Technology (AT) Department that works directly with businesses, community partners, and consumers to provide assessment and technical assistance through the provision of workplace modifications and/or assistive technology solutions considered reasonable accommodations to consumers who are blind or visually impaired. These recommendations may include:

- Software and/or other AT equipment to enable the consumer to be successful in employment.
- Customized software solutions, necessary to allow the consumer to access computer systems effectively.
- The delivery and installation of this equipment on the work site and provide consumer training on any specialized applications.

## Local Initiatives that Demonstrate Partnership and Collaboration

SCVRD Outreach and Referral Development: SCVRD has multiple partnerships in place with agencies, organizations, and business partners for referral development, coordination of services, training opportunities, and employment. These outreach efforts are designed to inform individuals with barriers to employment of the availability of vocational rehabilitation services to assist with achieving and maintaining competitive employment.

- **Business Services Teams:** Our area has a business services team with representatives from multiple partner agencies that work together to deliver coordinated and efficient services to employers. These teams meet regularly to organize employer contacts, job fairs, and hiring events. Business services staff focus on building relationships with employers, trade associations, community, civic and non-profit organizations, and use these relationships to better understand the needs of employers and to provide awareness of the available employer services and resources.
- **SCVRD Business Partnership Networks (BPN):** SCVRD has a Business Partnership Network (BPN) in each local office to gain input from local businesses regarding employment trends and needs. These networks are led by local business development specialists, who work closely with local businesses to identify needs, improve service delivery, identify training options, identify skilled candidates with disabilities for employment, and coordinate VR rehabilitation engineering consultation for worksite accommodations for employees with disabilities. Business partners guide SCVRD resources and activities.
- **Career Pathway, Co-Enrollment, and Credential Attainment:** Adult Education offers a range of program accessibility, certified instructors, current curriculum materials, especially computer-based materials, instructional resources, and career transition services/resources. Local programs provide individual learning plans supported by individual instruction. Instruction is delivered in small groups, whole groups, and in contextualized classroom learning. Instructional and assessment delivery platforms include in-person, blended instruction (combines in-person and virtual), and virtual/remote learning. Program staff consistently monitor attendance and readiness for assessment to move students toward a high school diploma (HSD), high school equivalency degree (HSED), and/or National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). This includes academic preparation for successful entry or completion of industry-recognized certificates or certifications that are portable and stackable, as well as transitioning adults to post-secondary education and/or employment as expediently as possible.

SC Works Trident utilizes the state-eligible training provider list to promote occupational skills training that will lead to industry-recognized certifications. Customers are presented with this information from orientation through the intake and enrollment process. It is also a part of the assessment and creation of the individual employment plan with adults and dislocated workers as well as the individual service strategy for youth. SC Works Trident has a strong relationship with the local providers especially with Trident Technical College to help build upon existing programs to meet employers' needs.

All core programs are co-located in each SC Works Trident Center and staff works collaboratively to ensure seamless services are provided and make appropriate referrals to services.

The TWDB stresses that all customers are given access to high-quality One-Stop services and affiliate sites that connect them with the full range of services available in their communities. Career coaches work with clients to overcome any barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. Additionally, bridge programs for participants who have basic skills deficient ensure access to career pathways.

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

The WIOA State Plan for Program Years 2024-2027 identified many strategies and entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs. The Trident Workforce Area will promote the following programs in alignment with the State's plan as follows:

- Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Project aims to align strategies, resources, and services delivery on a regional economic basis across workforce development, economic development, education, and other partners to maximize value for employers and improve career opportunities for students, job seekers, and workers. SC Works Trident has several partner stakeholders that are actively involved in the Sector Strategies initiative that was spearheaded via Maher and Maher in 2016 and now NextGen Partnership in the Southcoast Region. Industry-led Sector Strategy groups will allow partners to understand the ever-growing needs of today's employers. Career clusters of Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, Healthcare, Technical, and Hospitality are Sectors identified by the board that supports career pathways that will lead to sustainable employment and mid-level entry wages.

In 2018, the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) launched Phase III of Sector Strategies, which is Sector Partnerships with the NextGen Consulting team helping to facilitate and guide the regional teams through Phase III. The goals of Phase III are as follows:

- Develop regional, industry-led sector partnerships that will serve as coordinating Bodies for multiple public partners to collaborate effectively with one another and with the industry.
- Develop a collaborative state strategy for jointly supporting sector partnerships across the SC Department of Commerce, SC Commission on Higher Education, SC Technical College System, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, and other key state-level stakeholders.
- The agenda is entirely driven by business leaders and not defined by the parameters of grants and existing programs.
- Focus on industry competitiveness and growth versus the workforce only.
- Business leaders personally champion priorities and have a stake in solutions versus providing input only.
- A long-term way to respond to the changing needs of industry versus a one-time focus group
- Go-to shared table to understand and respond to industry's needs versus one more meeting; it is a way of doing business versus a grant or special initiative.
- Regionally based versus jurisdiction based.

We utilized the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model to accomplish this. The South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region launched a Healthcare industry-led sector partnership in the summer of 2019. It is being modeled after similar, successful partnerships across the country. For businesses, the launch is a forum to identify shared issues, network together, and define solutions going forward. For public partners in the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region, they

become an effective way for the many different economic developments, education, and training programs in our region to jointly understand the needs of the healthcare industry, and also help implement shared solutions. Manufacturing Sector Partnership was launched in September 2020 fashioned after the same model will for the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region to implement the priorities that come out of the Partnership might be related to specific training needs, talent attraction, or retention strategies, it could be related to regulatory challenges, technology needs, or care coordination. We will learn more after the launch meeting. Three priorities emerged:

- Opportunities for Recovery, Rebuilding, and Growth
- Promote Manufacturing Careers
- Connect manufacturers with Local Support Services and Suppliers

Both the healthcare and Manufacturing Sector Partnerships were placed on hold due to industries focusing on recovery during and after the pandemic. The Southcoast Region is preparing to relaunch these sectors during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of PY2024 and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of PY2025.

SC Works Trident is committed to working with mandated and community partners to better serve job seekers and business customers. The Trident area is committed to working toward ensuring a skilled and qualified workforce that is key to successful economic development. It is planned that the synergy of partnering agencies working together will result in the effective use of resources and the development of new sector strategies and/or support of effective existing strategies and will result in the preparation of a skilled and trained workforce. SC Works Trident will align with the State's Plan and regional goals of agency partner collaboration and integration of services to better serve priority populations and all other job seekers.

### **3. A description of how 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.**

SC Works Trident strongly believes that all customers are given access to high-quality services that connect them with the full range of services available in the Trident communities. Career coaches work with clients to overcome barriers to employment to make self-sufficient wages. Additionally, bridge programs for participants who have basic skills deficient ensure access to career pathways.

SC Works Trident Centers are designed to increase access to opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market.

SC Works Trident established a rural initiative in partnership with Trident Technical College to provide job fairs in Berkeley and Dorchester counties. This includes offering training specifically in welding and CDL at Trident Technical College's Berkeley Campus. Also, training in HEO and Manufacturing is being offered at Trident Technical College St. George location. We are offering virtual workshops, job fairs, and work experiences. Trident recently went back to offering transportation and childcare assistance to eligible customers.

In the Trident Workforce Development area, we have expanded our connection points to include thirteen libraries in the rural and outlying areas as well as other connection points in the communities. We have

a strong partnership A Second Chance Resource Center Network United Inc. which services ex-offenders and justice involvement.

Partner agencies provide in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals. Career coaches work with clients with barriers to create an IEP that is a plan of action for how they will together overcome any barriers to employment and secure employment leading to self-sufficiency. Supportive services are made available for all clients and are encouraged as a means to eliminate any barrier that hinders opportunities for sustainable long-term career employment.

Virtual Services have been developed and deployed as a means to reach and provide services to individuals not able to physically come into a center. More and more online education and training services are being provided.

❖ **Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable.**

SC Works Trident will continue to develop career pathways, while improving access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable. The Trident area continues to partner with the Trident Technical College and other local training to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials including industry-recognized certificates, certifications, and portable stackable credentials. Trident is seeking more online services and ways to make these online services accessible to individuals in rural and outlying areas with limited or no internet access.

SC Works Trident has a strong partnership with both secondary and Post-Secondary stakeholders that provide career pathway guidance beginning in K-12 for current in-demand career occupations and future growth occupations. Occupational skills training that will lead to an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is both portable and stackable will be emphasized in current and future career clusters. The South Carolina Department of Education's implementation of mandatory WIN testing for all high school juniors statewide will be instrumental in directing future and current job seekers toward career pathways that will recognize both portable and stackable credentials.

The SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) region will also continue to develop partnerships with employers and training providers to develop specific career pathways.

❖ **Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

SC Works Trident partners with the Economic Development and the Chambers to coordinate a unified message and marketing to area employers both large and small. Job Fairs and Hiring Events are organized to offer optimal employer exposure and cooperation and to also maximize applicant response. Employer Round Tables have been organized to better inform employers and gain employer insight on the need for employer involvement in "mock interviews" that will enhance applicant knowledge of expectations as well as create a venue for pre-screening potential employees. Virtual job fairs and hiring events will be implemented once local technology is updated and internet access has become more readily available in rural communities.

Sector Strategies Phase II focused on an employer-centered design approach that allowed both local areas and the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region to host employer Convenings locally and regionally. These convenings allowed employers an opportunity to share their concerns on what issues kept them up at night as they related to the workforce. The information that was shared by the employers at the local convening was then analyzed, ideated by Southcoast team members collectively with pain point solutions discussed, and presented to employers at the main convening in January 2019. Phase III of Sector Strategies is centered around an employer-led partnership that drives the discussion of pain points within their industries, which is shared with regional partners to assist in finding solutions to various stated issues. **The Trident area partnered with the Charleston Metro Chamber to launch the Healthcare Sector Partnership. Although this did not initially include the Lowcountry to make it a South Coast Sector Partnership due to the EDA grant limitations, it is now being developed as a South Coast Sector Partnership since the EDA grant is coming to an end. We are currently working to devise a plan for expanding the Healthcare Sector Partnership to be a South Coast Partnership. We are also in the beginning stages of the Manufacturing Sector Partnership. The Integrated Business Services Team, to include the Charleston Metro Chamber and Lowcountry, has been meeting and planning the steps of the launch.**

❖ **Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of the business in the local area.**

SC Works Trident has established an Integrated Business Service Team (IBST) that includes core required and other community partners that are actively engaged in new business engagement as well as following up with existing businesses. Trident is also working with the Chambers and Economic Development agencies to address employers' needs and is involved with recruiting new businesses to the local area. Business Service staff will continue to support and participate in workforce activities via outreach human resource services for employers to reduce the time they have to spend outside of their facilities, recruiting and interviewing frontline entry-level positions.

Trident is in the process of revising the marketing and outreach materials and strategies. Methodologies being implemented thus far are increasing usage of social media, and press releases, especially for stories considered “human interest” such as testimonials. Business Service staff will be ingrained in local chambers, economic development, educational, community interest boards, and committees throughout the local area.

❖ **Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development.**

The Trident workforce staff specializing in training and workforce development will develop work-based learning opportunities along a continuum including work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and OJT opportunities, coupled with occupationally specific training that results in industry-recognized credentials. We will also focus on short-term career and technical classroom training. Our objective is to create talent pipelines into demand occupations, satisfying the needs of employers to have access to a skilled workforce and job seekers to have access to upwardly mobile career options.

The Trident Area utilizes a variety of strategies to engage and connect with local businesses, primarily through the Integrated Business Services Team (IBST). These strategies include Individual company

contacts with the IBST staff and maintaining and continuing to develop strong individual working relationships with companies in a variety of industry sectors. These contacts come in the form of the provision of services such as individual company account management; recruiting, screening, and hiring services, assessments, and training (incumbent workers, occupational skills, and on-the-job training); consulting services (labor market information, human resources augmentation, and IBST staff delivered workshops).

Services to multiple companies such as job fairs, hiring events, employer roundtables, and similar events are conducted regularly for both individual companies and groups of employers. IBST staff is involved in local partnerships such as industry-specific groups, business retention, and expansion program, Chambers activities, and other partnerships with Workforce and economic development organizations such as Ready SC, and the SC Department of Commerce. Local IBST will continue to partner with Economic Development on new prospects per their request.

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

In all of the SC Works Trident Centers, individuals that require assistance with unemployment applications are assisted through the use of computers and staff assistance. The customer is provided with information on how to apply for assistance on their own. Phones and computers are also available during the Workforce Centers' business hours, Monday through Friday, for job seekers to use to call unemployment. Links to reemployment and future use of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment programs (RESEA) have allowed staff to interact promptly with individuals receiving unemployment and connect them with other Workforce Center services. Ongoing training and educating of unemployment representatives will be conducted to help those representatives, working with individuals applying for unemployment, be able to better explain how working with the local Workforce Centers adds value to the individual in their job search efforts.

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

❖ **Developing and implementing cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to job seekers and business.**

The SC Department of Workforce and Development has established a Learning Management System that will allow the LWDA to train cross-partner staff. In addition, the quarterly partner meetings include a presentation from a partner. This allows each partner to ask questions and get familiar with each partner. All partners receive information on events going on in the LWDA, and the SC Works Trident enjoys a great relationship with the partners. We always have partners participating in the events. As part of an integrated system, Trident will work with partner agencies, serving many of the same customer bases, with training that will provide job seekers and workers with high-quality career, training, and supportive services they need to obtain and maintain good jobs. SC Works Trident will ensure that all partners and staff are aware of the resources available, the referral process, and the services available. This cross-training will increase understanding among partner agencies which will help businesses find skilled workers and access other human resource assistance, including education and training, to meet their current workforce needs.

Learning Management System by SCDEW Training will be the driving force for staff and partners who make an impact on customers daily. Your Next Step Training gives more insight into the SC Works system and the opportunities for working together to achieve a common goal. SC Works 101 training key points have been: How to meet customers where they are, serve customers with barriers to employment, make effective referrals, represent the system and finally provide high-quality SC Works Customer service.

Conducting annual cross-training with staff, partners, local agencies, and CBOs on the process and procedures needed to sustain the increasing number of qualified candidates coming through our Center looking for employment and training which intel, all partners who are listed on the MOU will come together to give training on general information regarding their agency procedure so that any customers who need general information concerning any of the local agencies help can do so with the adequate information that has been given by each expert in the area. This makes for a better cohesive unit all around and encourages the customer to spread the positive work from the One-Stop Centers.

Trident Workforce Development Area submitted a waiver to fund the Charleston Electrician Contractors Association (CECA) with Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds, aligning with the local plan's strategic goal of increasing participation in work-based learning activities.

The Charleston Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) is a non-profit organization of local electrical contractors collaborating to offer training in the Electrical Industry. They established the Charleston Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) Registered Apprenticeship Program through the Department of Labor to train individuals in the workforce using the National Center of Construction Education and Research (NCCER).

According to State Instruction Number 20-08, training entities are not eligible for IWT funding. CECA is a training entity Registered Apprenticeship Program that includes over 40 Employers. CECA have trainers employed both inside and outside the CECA group, providing Registered Apprenticeship Electrician training. SC Works Trident will continue to pursue avenues that will increase work-based learning and high-valued credential opportunities.

#### ❖ **Increasing the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials;**

Trident Technical Colleges offer over 150 programs of study. This includes degrees, diplomas, and certificate programs. Trident Technical College and other Technical college programs are included on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). SC Works Trident promotes and refers participants to education and training programs offered on the ETPL. In addition, many of the programs offered at the Technical College are free or can be covered by Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA), SC WIN Scholarships, Pell Grants, and discretionary grants like the apprenticeship expansion funding awarded to South Carolina, to pursue their academic goals. Programs leverage these resources to increase access to education, training, and supportive services and in turn, support credential attainment.

The ETPL provides WIOA participants with a full array of training programs that are designed to meet their needs for employment or a career pathway. The ETPL is located on the Palmetto Academic and Training hub (PATH) website. ETPL is a comprehensive list of approved training providers and programs of training. Each training provider and program of training must be approved by at least one local workforce development area. Only approved training providers and programs listed on the ETPL are eligible to receive WIOA training funds. WIOA emphasizes informed customer choice, job-driven training, provider

performance, and continuous improvement. The ETPL is utilized by WIOA participants, training providers, SC Works staff, and program partners when researching career and training options. Other programs are not required to use the ETPL; however, they utilize contracted or otherwise approved training providers to provide relevant training to their participants or clients.

Adult Education Programs provide the opportunity for out of school youth 17 to 21 years old and adult learners 22 and older to earn the South Carolina High School Diploma or the High School Equivalency Diploma. Most post-secondary education or training programs require the secondary diploma as a prerequisite to start industry recognized occupational training, or work towards an associate or bachelor's degree.

Adult Education Programs continue to develop and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) Career Pathways that are developed with the SC Technical College System and other workforce training providers to meet local and regional workforce area needs. Concurrently with IET classes, adult education programs offer flexible and tailored instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of adult learners, including those seeking to earn high school diplomas or GEDs, improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, learn English as a second language, or acquire job-specific skills required for occupational credentials. Pathways that are aligned to high-value credentials, yielding both a high school credential and an occupational credential. There is opportunity to align these IET programs to occupations that are changing or emerging because of recent federal investments.

SC Works Trident continues to recruit and diversify its training providers to include a mix of public and private training providers. Aligning approved programs to the training needs for jobs in our in-demand sectors will ensure that participants can earn high-value credentials that are relevant in today's marketplace.

❖ **Increasing access to education and training necessary for individuals to use Broadband to advance their personal goals and increase South Carolina's technology workforce competitiveness.**

South Carolina's Digital Opportunity Office is leading development and implementation of the state Digital Equity Plan. A major part of the WIOA State Plan is ensuring that South Carolinians have access to education and training to ensure that they can use Broadband to improve their lives. While education and training providers along the spectrum will play a role in providing digital literacy instruction, there is a great opportunity for non-profit and faith-based organizations to participate in the delivery of instruction to individuals in their communities. Connection Points serve as an ideal location for individuals to access the Internet and be connected to unemployment and employment resources, including digital literacy instruction. SC Works Trident is looking to increase the Connection points in rural areas and areas where internet access is difficult or lacking. Additionally, State Plan partners will provide digital literacy instruction and assessments to certify that individuals have core digital literacy competencies for life and the workplace. Existing instructional tools include, but are not limited to, Northstar Digital Literacy provided by Adult Education and WIN Learning Digital Literacy Courseware and Assessment.

SC Works Trident Partners always seek opportunities to remove duplication of services and leverage the funding and resources available through other programs as appropriate. Participants enrolled in a program that has scholarships available, or where the cost can be covered by another program, allow the

LWDA to utilize funds in other areas such as supportive services that are needed to remove obstacles to employment.

❖ **Improving strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match job seekers with employers.**

The SCDEW formed a collaboration in 2023 through the Coordinating Council to foster collaboration with economic development agencies. The Collaborative currently includes SCDEW, Commerce, and the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP). It was created after the passage of Act 67, which transferred workforce development responsibilities from the Department of Commerce to SCDEW. The primary focus is on ensuring the continuation of workforce development services to existing industries. In addition, the collaboration has deepened the cooperation and engagement of the partners involved and resulted in the development of common tools and procedures to improve the coordination of service delivery to employers. While the current makeup of the collaborative lends itself to a manufacturing focus, there is an opportunity to expand the collaborative or model the collaborative in other sectors like healthcare, which has ongoing needs for workforce recruitment.

Industry-driven sector partnerships as well as Integrated Business Services Teams will continue to support coordination and collaboration with economic development and other partners. In the SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) will follow SCDEW's lead in working with the collaboration on a local and regional level. LWDA, we have a strong partnership with the economic development agencies, as well as the Lead Senior Business Services Consultant with SCDEW. The Trident area has formed a Business Suite that allows the WIOA and local SCDEW Business Services to be housed in the same area which allows for more collaboration to ensure service delivery to employers effectively and better match job seekers with employers.

❖ **Increasing awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment.**

SC Works Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) have a strong network of partners that provide resources and services to mitigate or remove obstacles to employment. Through efforts from our partners, we will inform and educate our communities about the availability of resources. The LWDA will leverage staff and partners to remove obstacles, primarily related to transportation, childcare, and housing, SC Works Trident will enlist all partners to provide information about resources and services to mitigate obstacles to employment. All partners will also participate in staff training and encourage center staff to participate.

❖ **Implementing a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural and underserved communities to ensure that individuals living in these rural areas of South Carolina have access to employment and training resources.**

SCDEW hired and deployed a Rural Outreach Team will work in Tier III and IV communities, helping to expand access to employment and training resources for job seekers and employers. The team is also working with Tier I and II communities to utilize a regional approach to foster collaboration with rural stakeholders through the implementation of regional collaboration meetings, events, small business outreach, and the promotion of virtual services. The Rural Outreach Team will engage state and local partners to collect information on existing communication channels in rural areas, research and identify churches that have a significant presence and influence in each rural community, and to research and

identify community organizations that are involved in rural development. This team will work closely with business services staff and staff dedicated to identifying strategies for removing barriers to work and improving labor force participation overall. In addition, The Berkeley Chamber has partnered with SC Works Trident to establish a rural outreach initiative. This initiative includes five Hubs in the most rural areas of Berkeley County. SC Works Trident is seeking to establish each hub as a Connection Point. These hubs will provide telehealth care through MUSC, and occupational training through Trident Technical College, and Job Training and preparation through SC Works Trident. The goal is to get these established as pilots and then expand to other rural communities in the Trident and South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region.

❖ **Identifying resources and funding opportunities to provide services to jobseekers.**

SC Works Trident has partnered with the Charleston Metro Chamber which received an EDA grant to fund healthcare training. All participants are being co-enrolled in the WIOA program. SCDOT is providing funds to cover two programs to assist with the mitigation of the I-526 Improvement project in specific communities in the North Charleston Area. The Transit Grant will assist with Electrical Vehicle Maintenance Training through Trident Technical College. The LWDA will continue to seek out partnerships and funding opportunities to provide services to jobseekers.

SCDEW have existing relationships with the State Energy Office and the Department of Transportation, and the Digital Opportunity Office, through which workforce partners are being invited to participate in working groups, review, and comment on draft plans, and provide letters of support on discretionary funding applications. To support this strategy, workforce partners will seek opportunities to be involved in decisions about how these federal investments are being used to support job development, education and training, and supportive services. As an example, SCDEW will continue its participation on the EV Interagency Working Group, which was formed by Executive Order in 2022 to develop and implement the states National Electric Vehicle Initiative (NEVI) plan. The focus of the working group will shift to mapping the placement of public EV chargers along the Alternative Fuel Corridors in the state. We will also remain involved in the State Energy Office working groups related to energy workforce development.

❖ **Communicating opportunities to the workforce system.**

Communicating opportunities to the SC Works Trident partners is crucial as the focus shifts to ensuring job seekers receive information on the services available. It is necessary to educate the workforce system on the opportunities to ensure they reach the job seekers. SCDEW is in the process of developing training opportunities for SC Works partners that will include content on the energy sector, including energy occupations, skills, projected growth, and wages, and action the local workforce system can take to facilitate collaboration with energy-sector partners and employers. Additionally, as part of Governor McMaster's PowerSC initiative, SCDEW will complete an analysis of the energy sector and distribute recommended workforce strategies that can be implemented at the state or local level and by the education and workforce system or employers. All partners will receive the analysis and recommended strategies.

SC Works Trident's target sector strategy will prepare and place all customers in high-demand growth employment sectors. The Business Services Team has been aggressive in outreach to all partners in the

workforce to make them aware of events, and employment opportunities. They do this through social media platforms, news media, text messages, and emails.

❖ **Identifying and strategically targeting training providers in the state that are offering programs in the infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing sectors.**

To ensure that job seekers have access to high-value credentials, the State needs to identify the providers that offer programs and credentials of value to South Carolina employers. The federal investments flowing into South Carolina are projected to create 200,000 new jobs in the areas of infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing. As these jobs are created, employers will begin to articulate the types of jobs in demand, the skill requirements, and related credentials. In response, we anticipate and have already seen providers creating new programs or retooling existing programs to meet projected employer demand. Program partners are engaging in these providers. Using tools like Apprenticeship.gov and the State Energy Office training portal, the State will continue to identify and outreach to new providers.

State Plan partners meet on a quarterly rotation to keep one another abreast of developments within our agencies or programs and to continue implementation of the State Plan. This open line of communication facilitates information sharing, coordination, and alignment. We actively look for opportunities to work together, leverage resources, and improve system processes to better serve individuals and employers.

**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.**

SC Works Trident service delivery systems will provide an integrated continuum of customer service which will result in:

- Strong collaboration and streamlining of services between partner and community service agencies, the SC Works Centers, and employers to develop an understanding of the needs of the job seeker and employer community while concurrently identifying and addressing major skill gaps among the business community.
- As a One-Stop Center, the Trident area will provide a model of integrated management of the One-Stop System through a partnership of coordination and collaboration.
- Working with employers to bridge the skills gap through the development of training, work-experiences, and working with outside training providers to develop curriculums for specialized job functions; and
- Engaging in partner development to provide additional options to customers obtaining positions in highly skilled fields.
- A career development system that will prepare workers to meet employer expectations through the provision of intensive services and training services supported by quality assessment, job readiness, job development, and job placement services.
- The local board committees consist of Economic Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission for the Blind, Adult Education, and Family Literacy, and Local SCDEW members.

- The Trident Workforce Full Board includes members from the Private Business Sector, SCDEW, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Economic Development. Most of the work occurs at the committee level, which includes a host of partners from K-12 to Economic Development. The committees take the strategies identified and develop specific goals and strategies on how to implement them. The Disability Committee which consists of Economic Development, Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind, SCDEW, Adult Education, WIOA, and other partners, implemented two Disability Expos to address enhancing services to individuals with disabilities. The Youth Committee which consists of Economic Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission for the Blind, SCDEW, Adult Education, WIOA, Private Businesses, and other partners, implemented a Youth Symposium to address youth strategies and goals. The committee's members participate in implementing Workshops in the local area for specific groups during the expos and Symposiums. Also, the committee members are both Public Partners and Core partners on the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Health and Manufacturing Sector Strategies Partnerships.

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

SC Works Trident will move towards utilizing the essential soft skills courses in WIN. SC Works Trident Staff and partners complete the following steps in determining the needs of customers and establishing the Individual Employment Plans or Individual Service Strategies for Youth that include the need for soft-skills training:

- Staff Completes the Objective Assessment Summary as outlined in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS).
- Staff also complete an oral interview and observations of arrival conditions, any noticeable behaviors of concern, affect, and demeanor of customers.
- Staff review employment history.
- Youth staff complete the Career Readiness Assessment tool
- After the initial assessments, staff establishes a baseline IEP/ISS; however, these documents are ongoing until the completion of the program.
- The Assessments help identify barriers to employment, including the need for soft-skills training.
- The Trident Workforce Area Youth participate in a short-term course called "Career Smart" that addresses soft skills. Currently, this tool is being examined to determine how it can be revised for the Adult and Dislocated Worker participants.
- Adults and Dislocated Workers are referred to the appropriate workshops that are being offered in the centers to address soft skills needs.
- Staff are encouraged to have participants complete the soft skills training in WIN.

Some of the workshop activities may include working with your customers to develop a list of two to four soft skills they want to improve or develop, helping them prioritize the list based on how important they are to their future success in the world of work, searching (Google) the goals and download information that will help them with those soft skills, helping them to identify any people in their lives who can serve as role models for soft skills they want to develop, and encouraging them about soft skills and getting their input about how to improve or develop them. In addition to soft skills training, customers may go

online to identify personal skills that are associated with career goals by checking out the following websites.

<https://www.onetonline.org/skills/>

<http://www.nationalsoftskills.org/>

- 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.**

## **Integrated Business Services Team (IBST)**

The IBST is a critical component of WIOA service delivery, providing direct value to employers, business associations, or other such organizations. Customized business services may include the following services and activities:

- **Customized Recruiting and Screening Services**
  - Advertise Job Openings: Provide employers with the opportunity to post employment opportunities throughout the Workforce system. One-Stop staff must post job orders through the SC Works job order portal.
  - Provide Access to Space: Provide or secure space for businesses to interview candidates, hold recruiting events, conduct informational meetings, etc.
  - Customized Recruitments: Provide employers with an in-person opportunity to inform job seekers (screened and/or unscreened) about available job openings within their organization.
  - Customized Screening of Applicants: Thoroughly screen job seekers (based on employer skill requirements) and prepare them for interviews, saving businesses time and increasing the likelihood that businesses will return for more candidates in the future.
  - Conduct Job Fairs: Offer multiple employers the opportunity to meet WIOA enrolled and non-enrolled job seekers.
- **Information and Technical Assistance**
  - Provide Workforce Education: Educate businesses about services available through SC Works Workforce Regional Partnership agencies, and how to access these services. In particular, this includes providing businesses in relevant industries with information from and linkages to services at the Sector Centers.
  - Advice on Workforce Issues: Providing information services to businesses on a variety of workforce topics, including workforce-related and economic development tax incentives; unemployment insurance; labor market statistics; and other workforce-related information identified as providing value to businesses.
  - Provide Layoff Aversion, Downsizing Services, and Outplacement: Work with employers having layoffs, and with the employees that are being laid off, to create re-employment plans. Dislocated Worker delegate agencies will provide these services directly. Rapid response

services are coordinated and conducted by the partnership, which may engage any Dislocated Worker agency to participate in employer onsite layoff workshops.

- Provide Human Resource Consultation: Assistance with writing and/or reviewing job descriptions, and orientations for new workers, analyzing employee turnover, and customized labor market data.
- **Employer Development Services**
  - Educate businesses on various training offerings available throughout the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region.
  - Develop and deliver incumbent worker training programs to up-skill existing employees.
  - Provide retention services.
  - Work with employers to design strategies and provide support that helps employees stay on the job or advance after placement.

One of the top priorities for the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) region is to ensure all facets of customers such as youth, adults and dislocated workers have accurate, up-to-date knowledge/information concerning Work-Based Learning Programs. For youth, programs such as career assessments, work experience, and On-the-Job training are designed to lead to career pathway choices. Our region/area will be adding additional worksites for work experience and summer employment opportunities by partnering with other agencies and new/ prior partner employers. This will require networking/partnering priorities to be established to address the ever-changing workplace and its requirements. Real-world knowledge is required for the youth to have adequate preparation to be competitive in the workplace. For adults/dislocated workers, our region/ area will be working on increasing the numbers of hard-to-serve populations in the career pathway through various programs. Job seekers will be provided with career assessments for job placement and establish an increase in ongoing workshops to provide additional real-world skills so adults can reenter the workplace with skills to compete. Our Business Service staff has a priority to search for opportunities to match employer's job requirements to increasing skills training such as On-the-Job Training plus assisting job seekers to develop a priority to seek employment in high-demand sectors. Individual and group soft skills training will be mandatory in ensuring employers are getting job seekers who are truly prepared to succeed in the workplace. The Trident area has offered both State and local IWT to employers in the area. IWT has proven beneficial in assisting with job retention and skills increase.

**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.**

Economic development is vital in the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region and the local area. Economic officials serve as members of our Workforce Boards and the IBST. This close relationship simplifies the process of combining the two programs. Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB) is well-ingrained in economic development activities throughout the area. Labor market information, accessed through programs such as SC Workforce Info.com is customized to a targeted area/county and has fostered stronger inclusion of the workforce into the economic development planning functions. Entrepreneurial resources will be promoted in the local area as part of the local plan.

The South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region is committed to collaborating with economic development with a focus on business as a primary customer of the workforce system. Business creates jobs but cannot be successful without a skilled and trained workforce. Economic entities realize that for businesses to expand or to start up a new enterprise the partnership with the workforce needs to be effective. The workforce system is committed to using its resources to assist businesses with their expansion or recruitment of new businesses. Strategic conversation between the entities has led to results and commitment to work together in support of additional efforts to assist business. SC Workforce Center staff provides labor market data and meets with “prospect companies” interested in relocating to the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region. Additionally, the Small Business Association assists customers with business plan development and strategies to be successful entrepreneurs. Their assistance will be utilized for appropriate customers.

To further enhance the coordination of services between the workforce and regional economic development, the agencies must continue to collaborate, especially when it comes to developing new economic development strategies and feeding that down to the workforce to create pipelines for future employees. Another important area of coordination will be to bridge the gaps in expectations between employers and employees. The economic development partners in the region receive great value from the data provided by the workforce centers as it pertains to regional wage analysis, job trends, unemployment data, and other sources of information that impact businesses and economic development. Also, the regional planning group felt that there is a natural three-way partnership between regional economic development, workforce centers, and local human services departments, and strengthening the coordination and relationships between these agencies will be a key strategy for the South Coast (Lowcountry and Trident Workforce Areas) Region.

## SECTION IV: PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

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### 1. A description of the SC Works delivery system in the LWDA, including the following:

- ❖ How the LWDB 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 job seekers.
- ❖ How the LWDB will target rural communities, including how the LWDB will use technology and other means to facilitate increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system.
- ❖ How entities within the SC Works delivery system, including center operators and partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA and applicable provisions of the South Carolina Nondiscrimination Plan, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) in regards to 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.
- ❖ Identification of the roles and resource contributions of the SC Works partners.

The BCDCOG staff prepares and releases the Request for Proposals (RFP) for WIOA services. The BCDCOG staff reviews and scores the proposals based on a well-established and objective rating criterion approved by the TWDB One-Stop Committee. The TWDB One-Stop Committee then makes a recommendation to the full board for selection. A contract is then developed with the selected provider that includes a statement of work outlining the expectations and performance requirements. Any performance issues are brought before the full board for review. The staff of the workforce provides technical assistance as needed. Programmatic and Financial monitoring are conducted both annually and monthly. Reports of the monitoring are generated and sent to the providers outlining any issues. Currently, Ross IES is the provider of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth service programs and the Operator of the SC Works Centers as of Program year 2022. The board ensures that the provider of services meets the needs of both individual and employers through the monitoring process. Again, deficiencies and/or issues are addressed, and technical assistance is provided to assist the provider in meeting the needs of the customers.

SC Works Trident has a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan and an established Interpreter Service Policy in place. Trident is committed to being compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities and program services. Accessibility, a partner on the Disability Committee, assisted with conducting accessible monitoring of the new location for the SC Works Berkeley Center. We are looking into the organization conducting accessible monitoring of the other locations. Details of the roles and responsibilities are outlined in the memorandum of understanding and resource sharing agreements included as attachments to this plan. Most required partners are co-located in the Comprehensive Center, which is SC Works Charleston. The Department of Social Services has TANF Family Success Coaches, TANF Workforce Consultants, and SNAP Employment and Training Coordinators co-located to provide employment readiness, employment preparation, and

support services, among other specialized, targeted services to SNAP and TANF recipients. Through our procedures in the COBE and local policies, all recipients to include the Operator, SC Works Staff, and SC Works Partners, receive the required equal opportunity material, information, resources, training, and support. EO training has been added as a standard agenda topic on the Partner Meeting agenda to discuss policies and procedures to ensure all entities within the SC Works delivery system will be aware of and comply with the provisions of the South Carolina Nondiscrimination Plan.

The comprehensive center currently has the following partners co-located in the center and providing services:

- Charleston Adult Education conducts the TABE assessment for OSY and Adult/DW programs, offers WIN Preparation, WIN assessments, Accuplacer testing, Secondary Diploma completion program to include GED Preparation and High School Diploma, Workforce Preparation Skills Lab, and administers the State GED Test at the Comprehensive Center. Additional programs and services include IET, College and Career services, ESL, and basic computer modules to earn a SC Digital Literacy Certificate.
- The Workplace Literacy program offers services to improve the productivity of the workforce by raising the skills level of specific employer needs. Employers work directly with adult education programs to develop and customize the program. This allows activities to be offered concurrently and contextually to the employees for specific occupations or clusters.
- The Workforce Preparation activities are designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.
- Integrated Education and Training Program (IET) The IET program concurrently and contextually combines student academic preparation, workforce preparation, and occupational training. All SDE OAE approved IET programs are in alignment with the high-growth sectors as identified by the State Leadership team, the LWDB plans, and local employer needs.
- In addition, Charleston Adult Education providing services at the SC Works Comprehensive Center, Berkeley Adult Education, Dorchester Adult Education, and Trident Literacy also provide the above services at their locations.
- Job Corps offers development and job placement services, career counseling, assessments, and skills development. Customers that are not eligible are referred to the WIOA youth program and when it benefits the customer, they are co-enrolled into the WIOA youth program. Both partners share information in the orientations about the programs. SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind are co-located in all SC Works Trident Centers providing full access to services. SCDEW is also co-located in all SC Works Trident Centers. As a member of the Business Service team, the Department of Social Services is actively involved in the referral process and co-enrollment of services. Trident Technical College (TTC) and the National Guard are also co-located in the comprehensive center. TTC assists with applying for Pell Grant, FASFA, and other resources that assist with training costs. Additional partners include the Step-Up Program which provides an intensive soft skills training program free to those that are eligible for the program.

All partners are identified along with their roles and included in the WIOA information/Orientation Sessions. Also, a hand-out of the partners and resources is available in the lobby areas of each SC Works Trident Center. The TWDB has established a monitoring policy that is attached to this document to consistently monitor the Operator and Service Provider, which is Ross IES. This monitoring covers reviews of information and orientation sessions, hard file reviews, and interviews with staff as well as weekly reviews of the ad hoc reports.

The Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB) will support the efforts of the SC Works Center staff and partner staff of Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF/SNAP programs to ensure that all residents, particularly those with barriers such as low educational attainment, disabilities, and barriers associated with low-income status (housing, childcare, mental health concerns) will have ready access to the career services offered at the Workforce Centers (WFC's). Every effort will be made to not only assist these individuals in attaining stop-gap employment but to provide them with the information, advisement, and supportive services needed to enter career pathways in Sector partnerships and other industries with in-demand occupations, whether through work-based training or occupational certifications. Particularly in areas such as Healthcare, these certifications/licensures meet the criteria of portability and being stackable.

Also, SC Works Trident is coordinating services with the Department of Social Services (DSS) SC Vocational Rehab (SCVR) to have staff at the Comprehensive Center for onsite customer service and also provide referrals and technology services. Similar plans are being made with other organizations participating in the SC Works Trident Memorandum of Understanding.

The sectors and occupations of Manufacturing, Health Care, Information Technology, Transportation and Logistics, Construction Trades, Office Administrative Service, and Hospitality and Tourism were carefully researched and supported by extensive examination of labor market information by the Trident Workforce Board (TWDB). It was determined both regionally and locally that these sectors provided the highest future growth and wage potential for employers, workers, and job seekers. The local Eligible Training Provider list is reviewed on at least a quarterly basis by TWDB. During the review, existing programs whose continued eligibility is subject to renewal are reviewed as well as new programs.

The TWDB will continue to support continuous improvement through active feedback and performance monitoring of the local area's training providers as specified. The TWDB will be tasked with being more involved in identifying the needs of local employers and job seekers. Utilizing the employer and job seeker recommendations, the staff and board will coordinate with the local training providers to ensure the needs of the employers and job seekers are being met. In partnership with SC Works staff, the TWDB will periodically review training results to determine the effectiveness of programs and make recommendations as to their long-term sustainability based on established standards. Those providers who do not meet performance expectations may lose their eligibility standing to provide future training funded by the SC Works Trident Center programs.

Trident Workforce Board (TWDB) will ensure that SC Works staff uses all forms of social media and communication to deliver our message regarding our services and other special events to employers and job seekers in remote areas.

TWDB promotes the use of Virtual job fairs, and virtual workforce centers in local area libraries, Goodwill Industries, and private sector-operated Career centers to strengthen outreach efforts in a lean and cost-effective manner.

The Workforce Centers in the SC Works Trident area have and will continue to facilitate access to services including, but not limited to, the following:

- Virtual Job Fairs held in every Center serving specific businesses and job seeker needs
- Job Shadowing Capability through virtual means, phone, email, or in-person coaching
- Establishing Video Conferencing (or Web Conferencing) for board members
- Establishing Interactive Voice Recordings (IVR) emails sent out to partners, businesses, and clients to inform them of events
- Constant Contact email announcements of events
- Referrals to multiple partner agencies tailored to each specific event
- Internet communication with all partners and system users
- Utilizing local libraries as Virtual Workforce Centers
- Offering services in conjunction with schools and other partner agencies
- Offer workshops and instruction on basic computers to job seekers to improve their digital literacy skills
- Responding to layoffs through a Rapid Response procedure
- Collaborating with partner agencies to offer programs
- Working closely with partner agencies to serve job seekers effectively

The TWDB is planning to utilize technology for distance delivery strategies to include workshops and other training opportunities for both job seekers and business customers. Immediate plans are to utilize the “virtual job shadowing” technology to assist job seekers in career exploration and decision-making. No plans for downsizing the brick-and-mortar centers.

The customer can use the computer to complete applications, write resumes, and communicate with workforce personnel. Employers and job seekers can access virtual job fairs and virtually contact the SC Workforce centers for services.

The TWDB will facilitate and increase access to workforce center services through the use of technology and cross-training of staff. Cross training of the workforce center and partnering agency staff will start as soon as the technology is in place.

All Trident Area SC Works Centers are geographically located throughout the local area and are most accessible to public transit routes. The SC Works Trident Centers are supplemented by partner agencies that provide workforce services in additional locations. All the SC Works and affiliate locations are accessible to people with disabilities. Systematic communication, collaboration, and cooperation between partners are paramount to being ADA-compliant. Through our established procedures and processes, our recipients (SC Works Trident operator, SC Works Staff, SC Works partners,) receive the required equal opportunity material, information, resources, training, and support (e. g. Complaint policy letter, grievance procedures for discrimination complaints and program complaints, complaint forms, incident reporting procedures and forms, request for reasonable accommodation procedures and form, Notice of

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Rights form, assistive technology resources, language services, local EO poster, State EO poster, Federal EEO poster, and general guidance).

Guidance and instruments are provided via Equal Opportunity Monitoring and Compliance. The instruments address and answer the questions of whether the agency's facilities are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals with disabilities. It is used to determine if the agencies WIOA programs and services are accessible and whether there are policies and procedures in place that address areas such as accessible parking, doors, and doorways, signage, request for reasonable accommodation and auxiliary aids, wheelchair accessibility, TTY services, EO Posters, sign language interpreter services, staff acknowledgment of EO/Non-discriminatory policies and procedures.

The instruments are used to address the availability of assistive technology and other resources for individuals with disabilities such as large screen monitors, trackball mouse, scanning/reading software, enlarged keyboards, web page reading software, adjustable keyboard trays, alternative formatted materials (Large print, Braille, Audiotape). The SC Works Trident Centers Operator conducts an inventory review to assess and review the availability of the required assistive technology and alternative sources. EO conducts Site Review and Training (Local Office Staff Assessment) to ensure workforce staff familiarity and knowledge of the services that are available for individuals with disabilities, how staff assist individuals with disabilities, and understanding of the EO program policies and procedures and non-discrimination policy. The Partnership also assesses the facility to ensure it is accessible regarding race, color, ethnicity, sex or gender, disability, and religion.

The SC Works Trident facilities are customer service focused on open resource rooms that ensure public accessibility. The staff promotes services throughout the local communities and ensures accessibility through a variety of means, including the following:

- Operate Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Operations may occur beyond the traditional hours when possible.
- Collaborate with community-based and faith-based organizations, libraries, other government services, and other entities throughout the area surrounding their site to recruit individuals and businesses that can benefit from WIOA services.
- Encourage job seekers to attend orientation sessions that provide knowledge about the entire WIOA service delivery system. SC Works Trident conducts orientations weekly that are open to the public.
- Conduct regular outreach activities and develop recruitment strategies to inform the community of services available and ensure a steady pipeline of participants coming to the center.
- All SC Works Centers are required to provide interpreter services for those with Limited English Proficiency.
- Respond to special outreach and recruitment events as assigned. These may include job fairs, service fairs, large-scale hiring events, customized training projects for employers, hosting tables at conferences or other public events, and participating in other City/County-sponsored projects and activities.

The SC Works Trident Centers consist of various organizations. Coordinated service delivery strategies include co-location of Wagner-Peyser staff in the One-Stops and coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Social Services, and Adult Education staff. Also, the SC Works Centers have

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monthly center-level meetings with all partners and quarterly meetings with outreach partners. Additionally, the SC Works Trident area coordinates service delivery by co-locating other core partner operations at affiliate locations and by co-locating SC Works at other partners by offering onsite career services and WIOA orientation sessions as a affiliate of the SC Works Center.

The SC Works Trident area will be working with Core Partners and required partners that choose to participate, which will develop a new plan for customer services at the comprehensive One-Stop centers. The plan will develop a new onsite customer flow process as well as establish a referral process for all the agencies involved in the Comprehensive SC Works Center. The Center Operator will develop a streamlined efficient referral process as follows:

- Provide a list of roles and responsibilities
- Provide an assets map that documents all resources
- Facilitate meetings to fully integrate core and required partners
- Letter and spirit of WIOA
- Provide a complete process and procedures manual
- Provide a full SWOT analysis of the combined partners in the WIOA One-Stop delivery system.
- Develop a holistic and customer-centered service delivery system map for providers and users alike

The local board will utilize the process established by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) to ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services. Also, the TWDB developed an approval process for initial providers and programs as well as a scorecard to continue monitoring the progress of providers to ensure they meet the needs of employers and job seekers. The initial process is the board established a rating criterion that consists of critical items such as Credential or Certification received, Program within the in-demand sectors locally or online availability, accredited/Instructor certification, and cost per participant. The scorecard allows for ongoing monitoring and review of outcomes of funded WIOA programs that WIOA participants have attended. The scorecard evaluates based on completers, those that receive credentials, placement in employment in the field of training or related field, and an hourly wage. It consists of the number of participants that complete, receive credentials/certification, job placement, and placement in the field of training or related field and hourly wage. The scorecard also keeps track of the cost spent on training. The Board will use this data to make decisions on programs that the SC Works Trident region area will continue to support individual customers attending. Additionally, the board will seek the input of employers as well through surveys and assessments provided by the Business Service team.

Access to services through the SC Works system will be made available through affiliate centers and the promotion of the SC Works Online System. Recruitment and Outreach efforts through staff and the Business Services team to make individuals and employers aware of services in the SC Works system.

The Center Operator and partners will comply with nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act 1190 regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of the facilities, by making available the State Instruction Letters and policies to the Operators and partner, holding periodic training on the provisions for the Operator and partners, conducting self-assessments and conducting annual accessibility monitoring. The staff will also seek the involvement of the Disabilities Committee Members to help with training to educate staff, partners, and the Operator. Languages other

than English are identified through Census language identification cards (Flash Cards) that are disbursed to staff, and partners, and kept at the entry point of each center. Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided services through a qualified interpreter service. SC Works Trident has an LEP and an established Interpreter Service Policy in place.

All partners are identified along with their roles and included in the WIOA information/Orientation Sessions. Also, a hand-out of the partners and resources is available in the lobby areas of each SC Works Trident Center.

The role of the TWDB is to provide oversight and establish policies for the SC Works Trident Workforce area, and the role of the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is the administrative entity of the WIOA grant and provides programmatic and financial oversight of the grant. The operator was chosen through a competitive bid process.

The role and contribution of the Operator are to coordinate the service delivery among partner agencies in the SC Works Centers. The Operator is in charge of managing the daily operations of the facilities, utilities, lease, and other activities to support the center. The Operator also provides oversight of the partner responsibilities defined in the MOU and ensures services are available and accessible for individual and business customers. The Operator will carry out the local board policies, federal guidance, and state instruction letters.

Ross IES as the WIOA service program for the adult, dislocated worker, and youth program's role and contribution will be the following but not limited:

- Eligibility Determination
- Outreach and Orientations
- Skills Assessments
- Partner referral
- Provision of labor Market Information
- Supportive Services
- Performance Information
- Individual Career Services
- Access to Training Services

Core partner roles at the center include:

- Adult Education/Family Literacy role and contribution are outreach and orientation, academic and workforce skills assessments, partner referrals, provision of performance information, and access to training services.
- SCDEW's role and contribution also are to conduct outreach and orientation, skills assessments, labor exchange, provision of performance information, supportive services, assisting with unemployment filing, labor exchange, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans Employment and training services, individual career services, and business services. SCDEW generally takes the lead in setting up job fairs and hiring events; however, partners in the centers participate in various ways by assisting with set-up, check-in, and attendee count. All partners generally set up tables to provide information on services available. They participated in creating the local plan

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and the Local SCDEW staff are members of all board committees and the local business service team.

- Vocational Rehabilitation/Commission for the Blind provides rehabilitation programs for individuals with disabilities, outreach and orientation, and partner referral. They participate in hiring events and job fairs. Vocational Rehabilitation/Commission for the Blind staff as members of board committees and the local business service team. They participated in creating the local plan.
- Trident Technical College provides post-secondary career and technical college assistance, and financial aid assistance. They participate in hiring events and job fairs as applicable. The staff are members of board committees and the local business service team. They participated in creating the local plan.
- Job Corps provides outreach and orientation, individual career services, access to training services, and partner referral. They participate in hiring events and job fairs, and the staff are members of board committees and the local business service team.
- SCDEW will provide migrant and seasonal farm workers with outreach and orientation, partner referral, and individual career services. They participate in hiring events and job fairs as applicable.
- PCAP's role and contribution to the system will be to provide community services block grants to eligible participants in the SC Works System, partner referral, supportive service, and education and employment training services. They are a member of the local business service team.
- Goodwill's role and contribution to the system are to provide the senior community service employment program. This program provides orientation and outreach, labor exchange, partner referral, and individual career services. They help promote services offered within the centers and we work together collaboratively on job fairs and hiring events. They are a part of the local business service team.
- The Department of Social Services' role and contribution to the system will be to provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) assistance to participants, supportive services, and provide performance information. They are involved with the TWDB and participate in hiring events and job fairs with the centers.
- Additional Partners in the SC Works Center such as Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) provide bus passes and discount bus passes to those who are eligible. They also participate in community events, hiring events, and job fairs.
- National Guard provides employment services for military and veteran customers. They participate in hiring events, job fairs, and community events. They are also members of the local business service team.

SC Works Trident is participating in several partner projects to include:

- A Partnership with the Charleston Metro Chamber with the EDA Good Jobs Challenge Grant named Lowcountry Careers Collaborative in a Healthcare Sector Strategy partnership. SC Works Trident assists with recruitment, supportive service assistance, and job placement.
- SC Works is partnering with SCDOT on an I-526 improvement project. SC Works Trident is providing assistance to mitigate the impact on the impacted communities in North Charleston. SC Works Trident will assist in developing the programs, recruitment, and placement in internship or employment.

- SC Works Trident is assisting the Berkeley Chamber in the Rural Initiative and establishing Hubs in the rural areas. SC Works will work with the hubs to become Connection Points and provide outreach, recruitment, occupational training resources, and other services as needed.

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

### Individualized Career Services

The SC Works Trident area provides individualized career services that determine if it is appropriate and necessary for an individual to obtain, retain, or advance in employment. These include the following services, which are provided by the Workforce Developers and the business relations team:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information regarding eligible training providers
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term prevocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment and/or training
- Internships and work experience that is linked to careers
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services as described in WIOA §129(b)(2)(D)
- Enrollment in an English language acquisition program or integrated basic education and occupational training program.

### Training Services

SC Works Trident is focused on increasing participant access to training and education, particularly courses and programs of study leading to high-value credentials based on labor market needs. Training services are provided to equip individuals to enter jobs, retain employment, and advance in skills in wages. Training is provided by the SC Works Trident Center and its partners in the following ways, either as an independent program element or in combination with other elements, all within the context of the career pathway defined in the participant's career plan:

- Occupational skills training, including training in non-traditional employment opportunities, provided via Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or other means

- On-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeships, cooperative education, and other work-and-learn opportunities sponsored by employers
- Incumbent worker training, providing low-wage workers an opportunity to advance to higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, and providing opportunities for new entrants to backfill jobs
- Employer-sponsored training such as tuition reimbursement programs and up-front training for new hires
- Entrepreneurship training
- Job readiness training emphasizing foundational workforce skills (soft skills) in combination with other training
- Adult education, literacy, and English language acquisition programs, in combination with occupational skill training whenever feasible; and
- Customized training is sponsored by an employer or group of related employers where a commitment to hiring is made for successful training completion.

## Follow-up Services

Follow-up services are provided by the Workforce Developers to assist newly hired workers and their employers in addressing any issues that could interrupt employment. These services include counseling on workplace standards of behavior and attachment to any support services that may be appropriate to address personal issues. Services will be available during the first 12 months following the first day of unsubsidized employment.

### **3. A description of how the LWDB will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the LWDA with statewide rapid response activities.**

The SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) takes the lead in Rapid Response efforts across the state. SCDEW staff will send out notifications of a Rapid Response event and activate the local team that consists of SCDEW at the state level, Wagner-Peyser, Trade staff, and SC Works Trident staff on the local level. If permitted, the team will meet and conduct on-site presentations at the business location. The goal is to provide information sessions and possible enrollment into programs before the lay-off and/or closure takes place. An overview of benefits and services is provided by each partner agency to ensure that customers are offered individualized and comprehensive re-employment benefits and services.

The Trident Workforce Board (TWDB) communicates with and supports the State's Business Service Regional Coordinator collaboration of rapid response activities with the Local Integrated Business Service Team (IBST). The Regional Coordinator is charged with assisting local rapid response teams, local government officials, employers, and workers by providing resources such as funding, technical assistance, and labor market information. Generally, the State RRU is the first point of contact for employers for major dislocation events, including WARN and TAA petition notification. Then, the State RRU contacts the local IBST unit to respond to dislocation events by establishing communication with the Local Board and other rapid response partners including the SC Department of Adult Education, Community Colleges, Department of Social Services, SC Works Staff, and UI initially by telephone or e-mail. From the initial information available, the State RRU works with the IBST and other designated partners to determine the immediate needs of workers and employers to establish appropriate "first

steps” in responding as a workforce system and then formulate strategies for planning and carrying out rapid response. The IBST then invites a local workforce center and/or labor organization as appropriate. To ensure the effective delivery of rapid response services, IBST also provides rapid response workshops, preferably on-site.

The rapid response assistance unit includes the following activities (coordinated with the State RRU):

- Consults with the State RRU, state, and local economic development organizations, and other entities to avert potential layoffs.
- Determines proposed layoff schedule and what employer plans are to assist the dislocated workers, including the status of any collective bargaining negotiations affecting layoff benefits.
- Coordinates the delivery of rapid response layoff orientations for affected workers in conjunction with the State RRU.
- Arranges for participation by local service providers in these sessions.
- Assesses the needs of the impacted workers as quickly as possible through the use of surveys. A survey is an important tool to determine an affected worker’s skills and education and to identify potential assistance needs.
- Maintains an inventory of available workforce resources for onsite meetings to address the short and long-term assistance needs of the impacted workers.
- Consults and coordinates with appropriate labor representatives when planning rapid response activities for those impacted workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement.
- Ensures procedures are in place for timely access and referral to workforce centers, services, and information offered by WIOA, UI, TAA, Wagner-Peyser, and other programs.

Also, when the IBST or local partner becomes aware of a WARN-level layoff or closure event, the IBST unit contacts the State RRU coordinator to discuss the event to formulate strategies for carrying out rapid response activities. When IBST or a local partner becomes aware of a layoff or closure event that does not meet the WARN threshold or is not TAA related, it will initiate rapid responses according per our local operational plan. We will inform the State RRU coordinator of the rapid response event and the number of attendees. When rapid response activities are near completion, the local rapid response team notifies and coordinates with the appropriate One-Stop operator(s).

#### **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 SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or post-secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students before their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs.

In collaboration with SCDEW and the Department of Education, SCVRD’s school-based transition counselors will work together with local education agencies, community partners, and business partners to advise students with disabilities, and their families, regarding available career pathways and

educational/training opportunities. The administration of WIN testing for high school juniors provides another assessment of the skills needed for competitive employment. This can assist in identifying career opportunities whether the individual receives a diploma or completes an occupational course of study or a certificate of completion. Currently, in South Carolina, the diploma and the SC High School Credential are recognized as documentation of high school graduation.

SCVRD considers service provision to high school students with disabilities a significant priority and collaborates with local and state education agencies to serve them. SCVRD serves students with disabilities who have various service needs in their efforts to prepare for, find, and maintain competitive employment. From students who pursue high school diplomas and occupational credentials to those who will receive certificates of attendance, SCVRD provides individualized services that will help students successfully enter competitive, integrated employment.

SCVRD and the SCDE are signatories and partners in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This agreement expresses a basic commitment on behalf of both agencies to provide comprehensive vocational and educational services to individuals with disabilities. The agreement details each entity's roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, in identifying and serving students with disabilities. Items covered in the agreement include student identification and exchange of information, procedures for outreach to students with disabilities who need transition services, methods for dispute resolution, consultation, and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for school-to-work transition activities, and the requirements for regular monitoring of the agreement. The timing of student referrals is individualized based on need but should generally occur no later than the second semester of the year before the student's exit from school.

Using the SCVRD-SCDE MOA as a model, SCVRD has developed agreements with all local education agencies in the state. These MOAs clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level. There is an SCVRD counselor assigned to each of the high schools in the state whose purpose is to be a resource for career development, participate in school-based meetings as appropriate, and seek referrals of students who can benefit from SCVRD services. SCVRD also maintains an agreement with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind. The provision of Pre-ETS is a cornerstone of the agreements with local education agencies/school districts in terms of SCVRD's role. SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or post-secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide Pre-ETS for students before their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs.

The availability of youth activities includes 14 youth elements. The Contractor for the Trident Workforce Development Area is intimately familiar with the service area and executes a strategic recruitment plan to target the neediest youth. They work closely with partner agencies and local businesses that are invested in the success of the targeted population and support efforts to educate, train, and employ out-of-school youth in the Trident Workforce Development Area.

The staff is equipped with mobile technology that allows them the flexibility to serve youth in outlying areas of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties. Our Career Coaches team has designated access points in the community that serve as meeting places for participants who live in rural areas. Career Coaches maintain a consistent schedule in these areas and provide a comprehensive list of services to

youth where they reside. A lack of transportation creates a barrier in the more rural areas; it is exactly for that reason this strategy has been adopted. The goal is to take our services to those most in need no matter where they are located.

The Youth provider is invested in serving the neediest youth in our communities, including high school dropouts; foster care youth and offenders face significant barriers that most frequently appear as a result of growing up in poverty and falling behind. The youth provider is committed to serving dropouts in conjunction with Adult Education. Participants engage in individualized instruction designed to address individual academic weaknesses. Foster care youth is a targeted population that is largely underserved in workforce programming across South Carolina. The youth provider has developed a strong partnership with the Carolina Youth Development Center (CYDC) to provide workforce skills and academic training for youth in foster care. CYDC and the youth provider are also working together to create an innovative entrepreneurship program that would teach youth how to turn a business plan into a fully operational business. Youth participants with offenses on their records face a difficult employment outlook and often require the support and guidance of a program like the youth provider to help them gain employment. The youth provider partners with community agencies that specifically work with the offender population and leverage their support to serve this population well. The youth provider partners with Alston Wilkes, Yes-Carolina Entrepreneurship Program, and Pre-Trial Intervention to assess, support, and empower youthful offenders with the resources and information necessary to become gainfully employed.

The Trident Workforce area MOU describes the type and availability of activities, including youth workforce investment activities in the Trident area, including activities for you who are individuals with disabilities.

Entering the Program Year 2015, South Carolina took steps to strengthen its Title I Youth Programs across the state, utilizing the transition to WIOA as an opportunity to transform and reinvigorate youth workforce development activities. South Carolina has placed higher emphasis on providing quality education, training, and employment opportunities for disconnected youth. State instruction 14-03 requires local boards to have a standing committee that provides information and assists with planning, operational and other issues related to the provision of services to youth. The SC Works Trident area has established a Youth Committee, and the Committee has met several times and has played a critical role in the selection and evaluation of youth service providers.

The Trident Workforce area will follow the State Unified Plan and the WIOA State Plan that outlines the basic programmatic standards that must be met by Youth Service Providers:

- Providers must demonstrate experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or educational needs of eligible youth, specifically out-of-school or disconnected youth.
- Providers must demonstrate experience and/or strategies in connecting youth to education, training, and employment opportunities with an emphasis on career readiness activities and promoting career pathways for participants.
- Providers must exhibit strong community and business linkages to ensure the ability to develop work-based learning opportunities and meet the skill and training needs of the state's talent pipeline.
- Providers must demonstrate the ability to meet performance accountability measures through program design and strategies

## Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

- Providers must have direct experience in serving priority populations and be able to illustrate strategies that motivate and engage youth with barriers.
- Youth providers are expected to offer an intensive soft skills curriculum to ensure individuals are prepared for the behavioral aspects of entering the workforce. Providers that incorporate career academy models in conjunction with work-based learning to expose participants to the expectations of employers and workforce needs will increase placements and job retention in the area.
- Performance measures are an indicator of consistent, effective, and sustainable program models. Prospective providers must be able to present data to support their service delivery. Additionally, providers must speak about their ability and strategies to meet the new performance measures for WIOA.

Lastly, the SC Works Trident area is focusing on a holistic, customer-centered approach that seamlessly approaches and expands the delivery of services to out-of-school youth populations. This model will also increase the annual number of youths to be served throughout the SC Works Trident area.

SC Works Trident Area will structure and align services and resources across the community into one comprehensive SC Works Trident System. This redesign will create an opportunity to provide an integrated effective operation and delivery of youth programs and services through the following:

- Providing objective assessments that focus on academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs and career pathways
- Partnering with K-12 and other stakeholders to reduce dropout rates for In-School youth
- Prioritizing services to older and out-of-school youth, specifically disconnected youth
- Re-engaging disconnected youth through strategic partnerships with highest-needed secondary schools and post-secondary institutions
- Increasing the number of youths that attain postsecondary degrees/credentials with a priority on high-growth industry sectors as defined by South Carolina labor market information.
- Partnering with employers, education, and other partners to connect youth to work-based learning opportunities
- Co-locating youth programs in SC Works Trident Centers to strategically align and target youth services and resources to populations of the highest need
- Utilizing technology to increase access and services
- Partnering with local disability-serving agencies and providers as well as health and mental health providers
- SC Works Trident will also partner with other organizations that will foster the participation of eligible youth and may include connections to:
  - Local public housing authorities
  - Local education agencies
  - Local human service agencies
  - WIOA Title II adult education providers
  - Job Corps
  - Homeless youth programs
  - Youth Build

- Other area youth initiatives

Participants referred to the program through any outreach efforts are invited to attend an Information Session. After listening to a brief overview of the program, participants who are interested in enrolling in the program are then given a basic skills assessment to help determine program eligibility. The Trident WIOA Youth program model is unique in its ability to serve customers quickly. Our experience has taught us that you must engage young adults when their desire to make a change has peaked and they've reached out for support. Therefore, every effort is made to assess participants and provide initial workforce services quickly. The local Career Coach team can meet students one on one in our offices or through a virtual platform, such as Zoom, or Microsoft Teams. Working alongside the participant to create their Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) while they're motivated to make a change led to higher productivity and success rates for our young adult participants.

During the initial recruitment phase of the program, the Career Coach team utilizes several objective intake assessment instruments to measure academic skills, employment skills, and supportive service needs. Evaluation of skills upon intake allows staff to guide participants through their desired Career Pathway. Our WIOA Career Coach Team also partners with our SC Works Partner agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, DSS, and Adult Education, to identify the individual needs and barriers of each youth participant. Although the approach to service delivery may change based on a participant's basic skills, interests, aptitudes, and barriers to employment, all 14 WIOA youth services are available to customers. We work very closely with our partners who support special populations to ensure our service delivery model is working alongside an existing plan and not duplicating services or steps for the individual.

Basic Skills are assessed through our partnership with Adult Education. The WIOA Team refers customers to Adult Education to take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11 and 12 upon intake. Participants are first administered at the TABE Locator followed by the appropriate level of the TABE assessment (Easy, Medium, Difficult, Advanced). Results of the TABE are reviewed with participants on an individual basis.

Employability skills (soft skills) are also assessed upon intake through a Work Readiness Pre-Assessment. This assessment tool is used to identify gaps in employability skills and is administered during the enrollment process. The results of the assessment are reviewed with the participants individually. Beyond the Work Readiness Assessment, staff employs several formative assessments throughout the participants' tour in the program. Soft skill training is interwoven into every aspect of the WIOA Youth program allowing for continuous individual participant assessment and improvement. Our local team is currently working collaboratively to retool our Career Smart Soft Skills workshop to make it an interactive and engaging virtual learning program for our participants who can't make it to a face-to-face workshop. This is a great example of our team's capacity to quickly respond to the needs of our local participants.

Recruitment concludes with a formal introduction to Career Pathways. Career Pathways are determined using information from SCOIS and/or Get My Future Career Interest Inventories. Career Coaches provide feedback from interest inventory results and provide intensive counseling to help participants decide on an appropriate Career Pathway. During Career Pathway selection, participants are encouraged to do labor market research using the Occupational Information Network (O\*Net) to learn more about exact job qualifications, requirements, and average salaries.

Once a participant has established a clear Career Pathway and career goals, the participant and the Career Coach go through the enrolment process in the SC Works online system. Upon enrollment determination, through the SC Works system, the participant is ready to get started with their career plan.

As a part of the enrollment process, the participants will work alongside their Career Coach to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan which will serve as their road map to employment throughout their time in the WIOA Program. If the participant is making slow progress, goals are extended to provide a more realistic timeframe for success. Customers who identify as special needs or who require special accommodations may need additional time or resources to complete a service or goal identified in their ISS. These goals can be established in partnership with our SC Works partners who specialize in serving individuals from special populations. If a participant diverts from their original plan or career pathway, goals are closed, and new goals are opened. Requiring youth to be active participants in the development, monitoring, and completion of their ISS plan helps them to become invested in their plan and the outcome. The collaborative nature of ISS development and the review process decreases the number of participants who become disinterested in the program and ultimately drop out.

The Trident WIOA Team continuously evaluates the intermediate progress of youth throughout the duration of the program. We understand that youth are motivated by tangible personal successes. Incentives for achievement are used for positive outcomes. This strategy is important because we invest a considerable number of resources towards the small milestones that youth achieve throughout the program year. We believe that these successes will ultimately lead to the achievement of the overarching WIOA performance measures. Incentives are earned for the following milestones:

- Successfully completing a Work Experience (to include an OJT)
- Successfully obtaining a GED or Credential from Training

Participants are encouraged to engage in Work Experiences, job shadowing, and other work-based learning opportunities in conjunction with preparing for the GED exam, and Career Readiness Assessments, participating in occupational skills training, and other WIOA program elements. WIOA youth participants can focus on one specific service or goal, or they can actively engage in multiple program elements at one time. For example, WIOA Youth participants can complete Work Experience and job shadowing opportunities while preparing for the GED exam or participating in occupational skills training. Customers with disabilities have been placed at sites that have experience working with special populations, such as Goodwill, Palmetto Moon, the Berkeley County Library System, and Doc Williams SPCA. Customers who represent a wide range of abilities can also take advantage of the new Virtual Work Experience program that Trident has launched in partnership with the Success Training Institute. This self-paced, virtual work experience opportunity is customized to the interests and abilities of the participant and orients young adults to the expectations of the workforce.

Participants with limited or little employment history are encouraged to engage in a Work Experience aligned with their Career Pathway. Because the WIOA youth program places a strong emphasis on Work-Based Learning, the WIOA Career Coach team has developed a robust Work Experience program that allows participants to concurrently participate in a Work Experience while engaging in other WIOA program elements. Participants are coached on time management skills including how to use a personal planner, smartphone, and google calendars to stay organized while engaged in multiple program elements.

Upon completion of the goals established in the participant's ISS plan, the Career Coach team utilizes a variety of techniques to provide ongoing support to our youth during the follow-up phase of the WIOA program. Career Coaches provide ongoing contact phone calls, random and regularly scheduled meetings, mailings, and even visits to employers. Career Coaches also organize monthly and/or quarterly meetings for those youth who are employed to discuss concerns and solutions to overcome barriers to continued employment. The Career Coach team tracks each youth for at least a year after the program and documents the updates for each youth in the SC Works online reporting system as well as in their program hard file. The Trident WIOA team completes the follow-up phase of the program with performance in mind and initiates frequent, quality communication with participants.

**5. A description of how the fourteen youth program elements are integrated into program design, including a description of partnerships which identifies the entities involved and the function (s) they are providing, and a description of formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program.**

### **Youth Program Elements**

Youth must be made aware of all 14 youth program elements required under WIOA section 129(c)(2) and 20 CFR 664.410 although not all 14 youth program elements must be provided to every youth participant. The service provider must determine what program elements will be provided based on the participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. However, each youth will participate in more than one of the 14 program elements required as part of any local youth program, and all youth must receive follow-up services. The Fourteen program elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school offerings
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences (summer employment, on-the-job training, etc.)
4. Occupational skill training
5. Leadership development opportunities
6. Supportive services
7. Adult mentoring
8. Follow-up services
9. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or cluster
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral as appropriate
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Labor Market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations such as career awareness, career counseling, career exploration
14. Preparation for and transition to postsecondary education and training

A brief overview of the 14 elements will be provided at orientation sessions. At intake, Career Coaches will review any prior assessments conducted such as basic skills and complete the Assessment Summary

in SCWOS. Once all assessments have been completed, the ISS will be completed with the participant to determine which elements are best suited for the individual.

The Operator, Ross IES, delivers comprehensive services designed to collectively support participants' successful transition into the workforce. Ross IES believes in developing and participating in fully integrated partnerships that provide participants with the best possible avenue to achieve their goals. Participants are provided access to the following 14 services to alleviate barriers to employment. Currently, no partnerships or formalized agreements are in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program.

- All Youth are introduced to the 14 elements during the orientation sessions.
- At Enrollment, youth are assessed using observation, the Objective Assessment Summary, TABE, and the Career Readiness Assessment to determine which of the 14 elements the individual needs.
- The elements are added to the ISS based on what is identified through the assessments,
- The Youth Career Coach works with the individual Youth to implement the Elements that have been identified.
- This is an ongoing process, so elements may be added and/or updated as needed.

#### **Tutoring, study skills, basic skills remediation**

Participants who do not possess the basic reading and math skills necessary to obtain employment or those who do not possess a high school credential are allowed to participate in basic skills remediation and tutoring sessions delivered by Adult Education. Participants will learn study skills from their peers, will learn what to expect during their training programs, and will hear from participants who have completed the training.

#### **Alternative secondary school**

ROSS IES values its strong relationship with all three School Districts, specifically with Adult Education and the Alternative Schools that serve In-School and Out-of-School youth in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties. Through these partnerships, ROSS IES will promote the achievement of a high school diploma or its equivalent or increase basic skills to become qualified for job training, work experience, or employment.

#### **Paid and Unpaid Work Experience**

Work Experiences are short-term structured learning experiences for young professionals with limited or no employment history. Work Experiences are short-term structured learning experiences for young professionals with limited or no employment history. The WIOA youth program places a strong emphasis on Work-Based Learning through paid work experience and on-the-job training (OJT) activities. During PY23, Work-Based Learning opportunities have resulted in over 8,000 man-hours of experience for our participants who are engaged in Work Experience or OJT activities across the Trident Region. These worksite partnerships with local businesses and agencies provide invaluable opportunities for participants to gain hands-on experience in a supportive and engaging work environment.

These worksite partnerships with local businesses and agencies provide invaluable opportunities for participants to gain hands-on experience in a supportive and engaging work environment. Summer employment is now part of paid and unpaid work experience.

### **Occupational Skills Training**

Occupational skills training is available to youth who need to acquire advanced skills to qualify for entry-level employment in their chosen career pathway. Occupational skills training provides participants with vocational training for careers that are in demand. Training providers include Trident Technical College, Arc Labs, Miller-Motte, and other providers listed on the local areas' Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list.

### **Leadership Development Opportunities**

Leadership development consists of activities that expose a participant to opportunities that provide them with a sense of purpose and increase their maturity skills. ROSS IES currently promotes responsibility, civic engagement, and employability skills.

### **Supportive Services**

One of the most important resources we provide to each youth is an introduction to the SC Works Center, where many community resources are co-located. These services are provided on a case-by-case basis and are only provided after all other resources available to the participants have been exhausted.

### **Adult Mentoring**

Adult Mentoring is a supportive relationship developed between an adult and a youth over 12 months. ROSS IES believes that strong mentoring relationships will support youth in their employment goals and their ability to retain employment long-term. Mentors are recruited from local agencies and businesses across the region.

### **Follow-Up Services for at least 12 months after program completion**

ROSS IES will utilize a variety of techniques to provide ongoing support to our youth during the follow-up phase of the WIOA youth program. Career Coaches provide ongoing contact phone calls, random and regularly scheduled meetings, mailings, and even visits to employers. The follow-up period for this contract will be 12 months which will be sectioned into four quarters.

### **Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster**

Participants are encouraged to participate in study skills training aligned to the career training they plan to enter. Participants learn study skills, form study groups with their peers, learn what to expect during their training programs, and hear from participants who have completed the training. ROSS IES staff will work closely with the training providers to ensure the effective delivery of instruction for each training program.

### **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling**

Our Career Coaches understand youth who have significant barriers can be easily distracted and need a "Coach" who will help them stay focused on their plan. This service is offered "in-house" by our team of

Career Coaches who are all Global Career Development Facilitators (GCDF) who are equipped with the tools and resources to guide and effectively counsel youth.

### **Financial Literacy Education**

ROSS IES with local banks to offer their expertise and insight on financial literacy topics, including budgeting, buying a vehicle, managing a checking and savings account, responsibly using credit and debit cards, and investing.

### **Entrepreneurial Skills Training**

Our staff is using the national best practice curriculum of the ***Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship*** to provide a training program that inspires our youth to recognize business opportunities and to plan for a successful future as an entrepreneur.

### **Services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations**

ROSS IES will help youth establish a defined Career Pathway at the onset of the program. Individual Career Pathways will help facilitate the purposeful integration of education and training for each student. During career pathway selection, participants are encouraged to do labor market research using the Occupational Information Network (O\*Net) to learn more about exact job qualifications, requirements, and average salaries.

### **Post-secondary preparation and transition activities**

ROSS IES exposes out-of-school youth with a high school credential to resources that prepare them for post-secondary education through their partnership with the Education Opportunity Center. Services include college application and financial aid workshops, college tours, and speakers.

Drug and alcohol abuse counseling and mental health counseling services are provided or referred to within the provision of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling youth program element as follows:

Youth that has self-identified or have been identified through other measures as needing drug and/or alcohol or mental health counseling will be referred to the appropriate agency as listed below.

- The Kennedy Center in Berkeley County
- The Charleston Center (DAODAS)
- Dorchester Drug and Alcohol Commission
- South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) Berkeley County
- SCDMH Charleston-Dorchester County

**6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), what is the LWDAs 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 society. If your area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency, local policy is not required.**

The SC Works Trident Workforce Area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency as defined by State instruction 19-05. The Trident Local Board has an established Youth Committee that brings together various educational programs serving the local area including K-12 educational programs. Collaboration with the K-12 system allows for a seamless transition to the WIOA youth programs. The Board will be actively involved in the Youth Strategic Plan updates and implementation. The Youth Committee keeps the local board informed about existing workforce activities in secondary and post-secondary education programs. The Youth Committee also has representations from Trident Technical College, Adult Education, and all core partners. A representative from Job Corps, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other local partners in the Comprehensive Center also serve on the Youth Committee. The key to avoiding duplication of services is communication, coordination, and information. Each representative reporting on activities and committee members being actively involved helps to avoid duplication. The youth committee meets once a month and this allows active involvement and information sharing to occur regularly, which also helps with avoiding duplication of services.

### **Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities**

Developing a skilled talent pipeline that meets the needs of business and industry in the Trident Region will require an increase in the number of individuals with high school diplomas, high school equivalency diplomas, and access to post-secondary education and training.

Local Adult Education programs serve adults who need HSD, HSED, NCRC™, basic literacy skills, digital literacy skills, English language acquisition, family literacy, and post-secondary education and training. Candidates for Adult Education services are referred by multiple agencies including workforce providers, community and civic organizations.

Adult Education students with identified physical and learning disabilities are provided services based on their individual needs. SCVRD, SCCB, and other organizations provide supportive services that help individuals with disabilities meet their academic or employment goals.

Adult Education also assists adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; assists adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children, and that will lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family; and assists immigrants and other individuals who are English-language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English, improving their mathematics skills and acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The WIOA legislation places a greater focus on serving out-of-school or disconnected youth and preparing youth for employment through education and training. It also emphasizes and increases the requirement that the workforce system meets the needs of individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, by increasing work opportunities to improve workplace skills. High-quality services are needed for all youth beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating

with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education/training, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

## **Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities/Services**

Adult Education plays a vital role in the Trident Local Plan's goal to strengthen the workforce pipeline.

To align the adult education curriculum with the state and region's vision and goals for the workforce, local providers will incorporate workforce preparation activities in all adult education classes, and provide appropriate career and labor market information services to their students. These activities will be defined by local sector strategies with a focus on preparing students to earn their high school credentials and have a successful transition into employment and/or post-secondary education.

Additionally, all adult education and family literacy programs will be modified to include occupational skills training to increase the educational and career advancement of participants.

Adult Education Programs continue to develop and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) Career Pathways that are developed with college systems and other workforce training providers to meet local and regional workforce area needs. Concurrently with IET classes, adult education programs offer flexible and tailored instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of adult learners, including those seeking to earn high school diplomas through dual enrollment or GEDs, improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, learn English as a second language, or acquire job-specific skills required for occupational credentials. Pathways are aligned to high-value credentials, yielding both a high school diploma credential and an occupational skills credential. There is opportunity to align these IET programs to occupations that are changing or emerging due to recent federal investments.

Adult Education will continue to administer and prepare individuals for WIN testing and advance its partnership with the SNAP Employment and Training program, which helps SNAP recipients gain skills, training, and work experience that increase self-sufficiency. Emphasis has been placed on diploma/high school equivalency diploma and NCRC attainment.

SC Technical College System provides 95% of the state's dual enrollment. The System has three main components – the technical colleges, readySC™, and Apprenticeship Carolina™.

Trident Technical College (TTC) also provides education and training for WIOA participants and SCVRD/SCCB consumers. Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Adult Education have a Memorandum of Agreement with Trident Technical College, and where appropriate, adult education classes are held on TTC campuses.

Local providers eligible for adult education funds use a state-standardized registration/intake form to collect student information upon entry into the local program. All data entry occurs at the local provider level. Instructional hours are added monthly to document student attendance. Goals and Cohorts are entered and marked "met" as required by federal guidelines. OAE has access to all local program information through LACES, and each local program can run the federally required reports on its program.

## **Co-Enrollment**

**Aligning Programs and Services:** Aligning programs and services through co-enrollment and referral processes has increased the number of individuals served and improved outcomes. South Carolina will continue to achieve the now 50 percent OSY expenditure requirement due to alignment strategies such as co-location and co-enrollment practices. Title I OSY programs serve a high number of youths who have dropped out of secondary school. TWDB and the Local plan recognized that co-locating with Adult Education Providers to promote communication between provider staff and effectively recruit OSY and serve co-enrolled participants has a positive impact on the youth. Co-locating with Adult Education allows those individuals who engage in the adult education programs access to the extra support and services that WIOA provides. Additionally, the comprehensive SC Works centers are equipped to serve the OSY population and connect them to the many services, programs, and partners represented.

To increase referrals to partner programs and co-enrollment, the SCDE Office of Adult Education (OAE) has placed a college and career navigator at every SC Works Comprehensive Site. Additionally, state plan partners, including the six core programs and TANF, SNAP EandT, TAA, and JVSG combined plan partner programs, have expressed support for utilizing SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) as a consistent method of offering system referrals, while also encouraging front-line staff attendance to training on the use of the system.

## **Adult Education and Family Literacy Program**

The South Carolina Department of Education – Office of Adult Education has aligned its content standards for adult education by developing the Curriculum Framework for local programs. The Curriculum Framework was developed to assist local programs with aligning curriculum to the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCR) and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for adult education. The Curriculum Framework aligns the SCCCR Standards and the CCR Standards for English-Language Arts (Reading, Language, and Writing) and Mathematics with the current adult skills and literacy assessments used in South Carolina and the standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions.

The Curriculum Framework is organized by Educational Functioning Level (EFL) and identifies the skills and standards in which students need to demonstrate proficiency in order to complete each level. Local adult education programs follow the standards-based classroom model of instruction to provide a personalized learning environment to empower students and help them achieve their academic and personal goals.

Instructors use diagnostic tools and assessments to determine Educational Functional Levels (EFL) to identify the needs of their individual learners and use these diagnostics to develop individual learning plans for each student that includes the knowledge and skills needed to achieve a Measurable Skill Gain and prepare for entry into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce.

Ongoing professional development and training opportunities in designing and implementing standards- and research-based Page 192 instruction for reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics are provided at the state, regional, and local program levels throughout the year.

## **Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)**

South Carolina requires all sub-grantees for the Adult Education Grant to provide the following activities: adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, workforce preparation activities, family literacy, English language acquisition, Integrated English literacy and Civics education and Integrated Education and Training for the purpose of educational and career advancement. These same sub-grantees must also develop integrated education and training processes that are based on employment needs for the state, region, or specific employers.

Activities include Adult Education, Literacy, Workplace Adult Education and Literacy, Workforce Preparation Activities, Family Literacy, English Language Acquisition, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education and Integrated Education and Training that:

- Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- Offers educational and career advancement.

Services are provided for eligible individuals who are in one of the following:

- have attained 16 years of age.
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under SC Compulsory School law
- are basic skills deficient.
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education.
- are English language learners.

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

The local adult education program will operate one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories: (See WIOA State Plan for program description)

- Adult education (basic and secondary)
- Literacy
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities,
- Family literacy activities
- English language acquisition activities
- Integrated English literacy and civics education
- Workforce preparation activities
- Integrated education and training

## **Special Rule**

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities to support or provide programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title before using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

WIOA activities will be implemented along with incorporating employability skills but not limited to the following: integrated education and training, contextualized education, workforce preparation, career pathways, family literacy, digital literacy and integrated English literacy and civics education.

## **Integrated Education and Training (IET)**

The term ‘integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for educational and career advancement.

Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties currently have approved SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Adult Education (OAE) Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. IET is a process that, concurrently and contextually, combines student academic preparation, workforce preparation, and occupational training.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program will engage students in the purposeful use of the language. The skills to be obtained will assist students in obtaining citizenship; achieving basic life skills needed, enhancing employment, functioning in English at a higher cognitive level, and transitioning into a vocational or academic program.

Local eligible adult education programs are accountable to the Office of Adult Education (OAE) to meet the standards of quality for administration and instruction as outlined by OAE. The effectiveness of programs, services, and activities of local recipients of funds will be assessed through a systematic evaluation of local programs.

Also, the performance outcomes of each local program will meet or exceed the established performance level for each core measure each fiscal year to ensure the highest quality service to adult learners who participate in programs. Program monitoring could include the following: self-assessments, formal on-site program reviews, and desktop monitoring.

## **Performance Accountability**

The WIOA core programs provide data for federal reporting on the common indicators of performance required by section 116(b) of WIOA:

- Employment in the 2nd quarter after program exit

- Education or training, or employment 2nd quarter after program exit (youth)
- Employment in the 4th quarter after program exit
- Education or training, or employment 4th quarter after program exit (youth)
- Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after program exit
- Postsecondary credential attainment during program participation or within 1 year after program exit or secondary school diploma or equivalent
- Measurable skill gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers

## Setting of Targets

Each fiscal year, OAE negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local eligible program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets. Each program shall analyze progress toward meeting the targets on an ongoing basis. Each program must utilize the approved standardized assessments which provide the framework needed to measure program effectiveness.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The SCDE Office of Adult Education utilizes the Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES) to collect and analyze program data from local adult education programs throughout the state. Local providers input data into LACES regularly. The data collected from this system is used for annual state and federal reporting, which includes the following:

- Student demographic information
- Student performance and outcomes
- Employment
- Post-secondary education and/or training
- Credential attainment

Local programs are required to collect data on the program's performance and are required to analyze it to determine progress towards meeting the targets and areas of improvement. Analysis should include a review of academic, employment, secondary credential, and post-secondary measures. Local programs must assure that the National Reporting System of Adult Education data quality standards is met.

## Desktop Monitoring Report

Overall program performance, as well as program performance through each initiative, is measured by the Desktop Monitoring Tool (DMT). Desktop monitoring allows both the state agency and local programs to understand how local programs are performed throughout the school year. Programs are required to submit this report quarterly. Programs that perform at aggregate averages of less than 65 percent for ABE and/or ESL students enter an ITAP (Intensive Technical Assistance Program) process and will remain in the process until program performance improves to levels equal to or above 65 percent for both ABE and ESL students.

## **Self-Assessment**

Each year local program administrators complete a self-assessment of program functions and performance. They rate their program against standards of performance in a variety of categories. Self-assessment data is analyzed for commonalities across regions and the state. Deficiency is remedied through technical assistance and/or staff development. The Self-Assessment corresponds to the areas that are reviewed by the On-Site Program Review.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation of Adult Education Activities**

To formally monitor providers, the Office of Adult Education assigns a Compliance Monitoring Review (CMR) team to review all school district programs and community-based organizations (CBO) receiving federal funds and/or state aid to support approved adult learning services. The CMR process is a systemic approach designed to assess the educational opportunities and the effectiveness of adult education programs and services in the school districts and CBO's. One-fourth of the programs are reviewed each year by a team of OAE staff. The other three fourths of the programs are informally reviewed by desktop monitoring tools, virtual and onsite visits. The CMR Team reviews the written documentation submitted by each program director that is being formally reviewed while comparing the information to a data analysis spreadsheet. To be successful, the CMR effort requires continuous follow-up and support activities including professional development and on-site technical assistance

The OAE staff will conduct formal monitoring visits of funded programs on a prescribed schedule each year. Visits will focus on program administration, instructional quality, program records, or financial checks. Upon completion of the review, findings are shared with the program administrator, who is responsible for correcting any issues. The local program is required to respond to a formal written report. Local programs that fail to meet or exceed negotiated performance targets are subject to Intensive Technical Assistance Programs (ITAP) with clearly defined goals and collective actions.

The Trident Workforce Board (TWDB) will convene educational workforce stakeholders to further develop career pathways to include basic skills, technical training, practicums, or experiential learning opportunities. While classroom instruction provides solid foundational support, the practical application of skills, especially those skills identified by employers, will improve outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment. Incorporating and utilizing work-based training options allowable under WIOA like internships, job shadowing, and transitional jobs will provide a workplace experience that can advance overall learning.

The TWDB intends to coordinate sector strategies by convening with industry, educational providers, and other stakeholders. This assures that in-demand; industry-recognized credentials are available to meet the needs of the industry while promoting career pathways for job seekers in growing/emerging industries in the Trident Area.

The TWDB intends to support career pathways as a method through which workers can move up the career ladder by completing short-term certificate training programs that lead to greater credentials and upward mobility in their career of choice. This laddering effect, over time, produces a better-trained and qualified workforce for local employers, as well as higher wages for employees, which, in turn, creates a positive economic impact on local communities.

Employers frequently state that access to talent is their most important site-selection factor. Having a skilled workforce can be an essential element in determining whether industries will thrive in a region or if they will migrate to other locations. Rapid changes in technology, scientific discovery, global economics, business strategy, and human demographics require areas to have an educational ecosystem in place that ensures worker availability and skillsets keep pace with business needs.

While the workforce system's core functions remain focused on employment, WIOA's legislative intent was to impact state policies significantly and ultimately Provide more access to postsecondary credentials than occurs with Workforce and Postsecondary systems working independently. SC Works has an extensive history of effective alignment between workforce programs and public secondary and post-secondary institutions and agencies particularly those within community colleges and technical training institutions. The TWDB continues to work collaboratively with the local secondary and post-secondary education programs in the community to fully implement the strategic intent of WIOA.

- The Workforce staff review customers' financial analysis, and financial aid, and can supplement Pell grants with WIOA funds for training that lead to certifications or credentialing.
- The Workforce staff coordinate onsite recruitment events to speak directly to new or active students to discuss available services and promote the benefits of participating in WIOA.
- The Workforce staff discuss career pathway options with customers and encourages the utilization of online assessments to help determine this process. Also, onsite assessment, eligibility determination, case management, ITA, and supportive services are provided to the customer throughout the duration of training.
- The Workforce staff conduct onsite employability skills workshops that teach customers how to register and effectively utilize SC Works and how to do an effective job search. Our role is to educate and equip the customers with the tools, resources, and linkages that they need to be successful in their job search.

The TWDB's focus is to improve the coordination of strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services as well as the coordination of relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs to avoid duplication of services.

In summation, the TWDB will continue to coordinate education and workforce activities with secondary/post-secondary education programs through coordinated efforts in career pathway development that includes the SC Department of Education, SC Technical College System, South Carolina four-year colleges, and employer input; as well as collaborative efforts with partners such as faith-based organizations to increase English learning acquisition skills for English language learners.

#### **7. A description of how the LWDB 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.**

SC Works Trident promotes and supports the collaborative efforts between The Trident Technical College (TTC) and its partnership with local area Adult Education entities to offer services that help students prepare to take the GED or college placement test by building math, reading, and writing skills. Adult Education's instructor is housed at the SC Works Trident Comprehensive Center which is SC Works Charleston as well as the State certified GED Testing Center. We enjoy a strong relationship with all Adult

Education and Family Literacy programs in the area. SC Works Dorchester is also housed in the Dorchester Adult Education facility. Individuals are referred to Adult Education programs and Adult Education participates in the in-person SC Works orientations.

SC Works Trident will convene educational workforce stakeholders to further develop career pathways to include basic skills, technical training, practicums, or experiential learning opportunities. While classroom instruction provides solid foundational support, the practical application of skills, especially those skills identified by employers, will improve outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment. Incorporating and utilizing work-based training options allowable under WIOA like internships, job shadowing, and transitional jobs will provide a workplace experience that can advance overall learning.

The Trident Workforce Development Board intends to coordinate sector strategies by convening with industry, educational providers, and other stakeholders. This assures that in-demand; industry-recognized credentials are available to meet the needs of the industry while promoting career pathways for job seekers in growing/emerging industries in the Trident Area.

The Trident area intends to support career pathways as a method through which workers can move up the career ladder by completing short-term certificate training programs that lead to greater credentials and upward mobility in their career of choice. This laddering effect, over time, produces a better-trained and qualified workforce for local employers, as well as higher wages for employees, which, in turn, creates a positive economic impact on local communities.

Employers frequently state that access to talent is their most important site-selection factor. Having a skilled workforce can be an essential element in determining whether industries will thrive in a region or if they will migrate to other locations. Rapid changes in technology, scientific discovery, global economics, business strategy, and human demographics require areas to have an educational ecosystem in place that ensures worker availability and skillsets keep pace with business needs.

While the workforce system's core functions remain focused on employment, WIOA's legislative intent was to impact state policies significantly and ultimately provide more access to postsecondary credentials than occurs with Workforce and Postsecondary systems working independently. SC Works has an extensive history of effective alignment between workforce programs and public secondary and post-secondary institutions and agencies particularly those within community colleges and technical training institutions. The Trident area continues to work collaboratively with the local secondary and post-secondary education programs in the community to fully implement the strategic intent of WIOA.

The Trident area has established a referral process with secondary and post-secondary education providers that allow us to leverage our WIOA funds for students that are just entering training or those who are already actively enrolled. Through our coordination of services, we can evaluate and assess the customers' need for financial assistance through ITA and often provide wrap-around supportive services and employment assistance to candidates who have already covered their training expenses, thus reducing the chances of duplicated services.

- The Workforce staff review customers' financial analysis, and financial aid, and can supplement Pell grants with WIOA funds for training that lead to certifications or credentials.
- The Workforce staff coordinate onsite recruitment events to speak directly to new or active students to discuss available services and promote the benefits of participating in WIOA.

- The Workforce staff discuss career pathway options with customers and encourages the utilization of online assessments to help determine this process. Also, onsite assessment, eligibility determination, case management, ITA's, and supportive services are provided to the customer throughout the duration of training.
- The Workforce staff conduct onsite employability skills workshops that teach customers how to register and effectively utilize SC Works and how to do an effective job search. Our role is to educate and equip the customers with the tools, resources, and linkages that they need to be successful in their job search.

SC Works Trident's focus is to improve the coordination of strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services as well as the coordination of relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs to avoid duplication of services.

In summation, Trident will continue to coordinate education and workforce activities with secondary/post-secondary education programs through coordinated efforts in career pathway development that includes the SC Department of Education, SC Technical College System, South Carolina four-year colleges, and employer input; as well as collaborative efforts with partners such as faith-based organizations to increase English learning acquisition skills for English language learners.

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

Transportation is a significant challenge. Supportive services are provided based on state and local policies that are not available from other community resources. They include interview/work clothing, tools, and study materials for training, select car repairs, childcare, and testing and certification fees. Clients needing rental payment for those facing eviction during training, eyeglasses, and limited health care expenses, driver's license document cost, assistance for food, housing are referred to other community resources. Workforce Center staff will work with workforce partners to coordinate and provide support services for individuals that co-enrolled in individual program services to avoid duplication of services. All supportive services are reviewed for applicability with the Individual Employment Plan, and other resources are to be considered exhausted before the allocation of WIOA funds.

Per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, the Trident Workforce Development Board will provide supportive services to WIOA-eligible participants on an as-needed basis to enable their entry and retention in training and the workforce. Supportive services may only be provided to WIOA participants who are 1) Participating in youth services or Adult/Dislocated Worker individualized career or Training Services and 2) are Unable to obtain supportive service through other programs providing such services.

Eligible youth may receive supportive services in an amount not to exceed \$3,000 per enrollment. Eligible Adult and Dislocated Workers may receive supportive services in an amount not to exceed \$3,000 per enrollment. Funds from other resources will apply to the WIOA supportive services maximum amount per enrollment for the youth.

Supportive services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA sec. 134(c) (2) and (3). These services may include but are not limited to the following:

- Linkages to community services
- Assistance with transportation
- Assistance with childcare and dependent care
- Assistance with housing
- Needs-related payments (currently not being offered in the SC Works Trident area)
- Assistance with educational testing
- Reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities
- Legal aid services
- Referrals to health care
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

Supportive services may only be provided to individuals who are:

- Participating in career or training services as defined in WIOA secs. 134 (c) (2) and (3)
- Unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services
- Supportive services only may be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in career services and training activities.
- Youth supportive services may be provided during participation in WIOA activities as well as during the required 12-month follow-up period after exit.
- Documentation in SCWOS case notes must be maintained on what steps were taken to secure services from other sources and how this service is allowing the participant to participate in WIOA. The full policy is an attachment to this document.

### **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.**

Wagner-Peyser Act creates a public labor exchange system comprised of services to job seekers and employers with a preference for Veterans. Job seekers have easy access to employer listings. Employers have easy access to listing their openings. One-stop partners would have access by referring to their participants. In addition to job listings, job seekers would have access to basic computer classes to improve their digital literacy skills focusing on job search techniques and the use of e-mail. Professional quality services will include job search navigation, job-ready assessment, vocational counseling, labor market information, and workforce development opportunities. Job retention skills and resume-building skills would be included. Workshops and assessments are available to customers to assist with their pre-employment ability. From the Business Services staff, current information based on employers' wants regarding resume formats and interview questions would be available.

In addition to job listings, employers would have access to additional business services provided by Business Services staff through workshops and presentations regarding the Wage and Hour Law, tax incentives, and similar current information. To support the labor exchange, current and accessible Labor Market Information would be available to assist in career pathway choices. The information available would be jobs in demand, future projections, wage scales, and training requirements. SC Works Trident Center Partner meetings, as well as team meetings, are held frequently to promote services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff to avoid duplication of services. Professional development would be available to Wagner-Peyser staff to provide the best services. The goals are for staff to be fully trained in state-of-the-art computer skills, specific computer program skills (Word, Excel), current resume techniques based on employers' requirements, interviewing skills, vocational guidance skills, and current referral information for other agencies both within and outside of the one-stop partners.

Wagner Peyser programs are currently coordinated with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training programs. Staff from the Workforce Centers is engaged in planning with other mandated partners to develop strategies for the coordination of services and identify ways to reduce duplicative efforts. Staff from the Wagner Peyser programs are also engaged with the mandated partners in planning how to provide business services and as possible create a single point of contact as well as a process or system for tracking and coordinating services and outreach to businesses.

**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 review local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements.**

South Carolina Department of Education serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, the Department solicits service providers to provide services to eligible individuals who: (a) have attained 16 years of age; (b) are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under the SC Compulsory School law; and (c) are basic skills deficient; (d) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or (e) are English language learners.

All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved, and overseen by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) – Office of Adult Education (OAE). The following organizations are eligible to apply to the SCDE – OAE for federal funds provided they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

1. a local educational agency (LEA, i.e., school district)
2. a community-based organization or faith-based organization
3. a volunteer literacy organization
4. an institution of higher education
5. a public or private nonprofit agency
6. a library
7. a public housing authority
8. a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of items 1 – 7 and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals

## Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

9. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of items 1 – 8
10. a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of items 1 – 9

An eligible provider must show demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities by submitting:

- Performance Record—a minimum of two consecutive years of performance data (within the previous five years) on improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and English language acquisition.
- Participant Outcomes— a minimum of two consecutive years of data and/or information (within the previous five years) on outcomes for participants related to Employment, Attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and Transition to postsecondary education and training.

By federal law, providers are prohibited from using federal funds to supplant state or local dollars. All federal funding will be used to enhance learner services, as outlined under WIOA, this Plan, and through a SCDE – OAE AEFLA grant competition using guidance from the US Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

Awards to eligible providers will be made through the Request for Proposal (RFP) application process. The next RFP is set to be distributed in the fall of 2024. As described in 34 CFR 463.20(d), applicants will be required to respond to each of the 13 considerations and describe in detail how their proposed activities will align with these considerations. To help ensure direct and equitable access to funds for adult literacy and basic skills activities, RFPs will be announced directly to providers and through multiple media outlets.

In addition, all providers will be considered for grants based on the same criteria. These criteria are aligned with the directions contained in this Plan and the thirteen considerations required by federal legislation. Once all applications are received, the SCDE – OAE will review each application to ensure that it is complete. Each completed application that is submitted on time and meets demonstrated effectiveness eligibility requirements will be reviewed by independent reviewers.

Simultaneously, the applications will be packaged and sent to South Carolina's local workforce development board administrators. Workforce Administrators will use rubric created by OAE to review applications for alignment with local area plans, and to submit recommendations. The OAE will work to resolve any alignment issues with the applicant, prior to allocating grant funds. All grants will be awarded on a five-year basis. Future efforts will be made to assess what support eligible providers might need in order to implement this Plan and broaden the discussion of how these needs can be met.

### **Considerations for Funding**

Applicants must demonstrate effectiveness and experience in providing the adult education and literacy services proposed in the application. Applicants must comply with all state laws regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure on public funds. Also, the funding agency shall consider:

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- The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to regional needs and serving individuals in the community who were identified in the plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills or who are English language learners.
- The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
- The past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance, especially for eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan, as well as the activities and services of the One-Stop partners.
- Whether the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains and whether the program uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities, including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high-quality professional development, including through electronic means.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, One-Stop Centers, job training programs, social service agencies, businesses, industries, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as childcare, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
- Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that can report measurable participant outcomes and monitor program performance.

## Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

- Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)'s Office of Adult Education (OAE) ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants and contracts under AEFLA. The entire RFP process, from beginning to end, is managed by the SCDE, and eligible providers submit proposals through the SCDE's grants submission system. Eligible applicants are not required to apply nor submit proposals through any other agency.

The OAE also ensures direct and equitable access in its processes and procedures related to the RFP announcement/distribution, the grant application, and technical assistance.

RFP Announcement/Distribution: Announcements of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA – Title II, are circulated to the widest extent possible. Various sources and mediums are used to make the public and eligible providers aware of the RFP. SCDE's Public Information Office notifies the public, school districts, and other stakeholders. Grant opportunities are posted on the SC Department of Education's website and distributed via SCDE's Grant News listserv. Announcements are forwarded to current adult education providers and organizations such as the SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO); the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA); the South Carolina Technical Education Association (SCTEA); South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA); and others.

The OAE will hold a full and open competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. All eligible agencies will be granted direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. The OAE will be in compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the award of contracts and the expenditure of public funds as well as requirements outlined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

The following steps will be taken to ensure direct and equitable access:

- The same grant and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state.
- Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals will be used for all eligible providers.
- Technical assistance workshops will be held to review the entire process and provide information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Dates, times, and places of these workshops will be included in the announcements and the Request for Proposal.

The announcement will contain information such as:

- Type of grants available
- Contact the person to obtain RFP guidelines
- Timeline with grant application due date
- Other pertinent items
- Any information required by state law regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure on public funds
- In South Carolina, the SCDE-OAE delegates require One Stop responsibilities to one local Adult Education provider in each local Workforce area; these local program directors are voting members on the respective local Workforce Development Boards. The delegated Adult Education programs provide the services of a College and Career Navigator at each Comprehensive Center

to coordinate services between One Stop partners, Adult Education, and the general public. Local programs, for which the SCDE OAE has delegated responsibility to support the local One Stop Comprehensive sites, have a 5% administrative cap that can be used to support the infrastructure costs of the local One Stop centers.

- In the Trident Region, Charleston County School District, Office of Adult Education (Charleston Adult Education) serves as the state delegated Adult Education provider and the Director of Charleston Adult Education is a voting member of the TWDB.
- The local board will coordinate WIOA title I activities with adult education and family literacy activities under Title II by the following process:
- WIOA and Adult Education and Family Literacy have representation on the Trident Workforce Development Board.
- Monthly meetings are held to discuss the process of referrals and communication between the two programs.
- Co-location of the programs makes communication and partnership easy regarding the coordination of activities. Both partner staff are aware of each other's services and regularly communicate making referrals back and forth to programs as needed. Further, each program participates in each other's orientation. Charleston Adult Education is located in the Trident Comprehensive Center.
- SC Works Dorchester is located inside the Dorchester Adult Education Center and SC Works Berkeley attends orientation at Berkeley Adult Education once per week. Charleston Adult Education facilitates the WIN and/or WorkKeys if needed inside the SC Works Charleston Center. Adult Education provides monthly reports on WIN and/or WorkKeys assessment outcomes.

**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 local board coordinates with partner programs to conduct affirmative outreach in the following manner:

- Collaborations are made with community-based organizations to recruit individuals who can benefit from WIOA services.
- Core partners mandated partners and other partners such as WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Workers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, DSS, Job Corps, Goodwill's SCSEP Program provides services for participants identified with high barriers to employment and with disabilities.
- Adult and Family Literacy Act focuses on moving students toward a high school diploma, high school equivalency degree, and/or a National Career Readiness Certificate as well as transitioning them to post-secondary education and/or employment as expeditiously as possible.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program provides all job seekers access to job preparation and placement assistance, including individual skilled assessments, career counseling, job matching assistance, and skill development workshops aimed at improving employability.

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- SCDEW administers Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs and provides services in the Comprehensive Center.
- SC Department of Social Services is the state agency responsible for administering and supervising activities for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The SNAP program has its own unique employment and training services through the SNAP Employment and Training Program, also known as SNAP EandT. SNAP EandT Coordinators are also located in the Comprehensive Center.
- Job Corps, also located in the Comprehensive Center, provides a holistic career development training approach for at-risk Youth.
- The board coordinates affirmative outreach activities and develops recruitment strategies with the partners above to inform the community, 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, of services available and to ensure access to services.
- Means of outreach include social media, flyers, brochures, and WIOA Orientation in-person and virtual, available in Spanish for ESL clients and job seekers in Spanish. This information is shared among partners to promote affirmative outreach in the Trident Workforce area. Flyers and brochures are disseminated throughout the community and various events as well as posted in partner agency facilities and connection points.

## SECTION V: OPERATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

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- 1. Copies of executed cooperative agreements that 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 concerning 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.**

See Attached MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)

- 2. A description of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the CEO(s).**

The chief elected officials of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties entered into an agreement that determined the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds is the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG).

BCDCOG is one of South Carolina's 10 regional councils, serving as a vital link between local governments and state and federal programs. Its mission is to support local governments in coordinating regional development, enhancing services, and fostering collaboration for the mutual benefit of all citizens across the region. BCDCOG serves three counties of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester.

As a regional agency, BCDCOG offers a broad range of services in workforce development, planning, economic development, and social services to support the area's growth and development. The agency is governed by a board of 57 members, all appointed by the local governments in the three-county region.

BCDCOG's primary goal is to assist local governments in creating both local and regional plans, while also providing technical support to improve the quality of life throughout the tri-county area. As one of South Carolina's 10 Regional Planning Councils, BCDCOG works to identify regional opportunities, eliminate duplication, and help local governments make informed decisions together.

BCDCOG is an organization that fosters cooperation among local governments, helping them plan for shared needs, coordinate development efforts, and strengthen their collective power. The agency has 30 member governments, and its board of directors provides a platform for local leaders to collaborate on common goals and regional strategies. Additionally, BCDCOG oversees workforce development efforts, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA), as designated by the local elected officials in partnership with the Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB).

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

The BCDCOG announced the request for proposal (RFP) in December 2020 for the Operator of the SC Works Centers and Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth WIOA programs. The announcement was out for the public for 30 days. After the RFP closed, all bids were reviewed and based on a rating criterion that was previously established, the Operator of Services was selected. All bidders were contacted regarding the results. All procurement followed the South Carolina Procurement Act and Regulations; Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200 and 2900). BCDCOG conducts all procurement transactions in a manner providing full and open competition. When a Request for a Proposal is issued it is made publicly available and distributed as required. All RFPs identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Awards are made to the responsive and responsible Offeror(s) and all responses received are honored to the maximum extent practical. The RFP for the Operator and WIOA Service Provider will be announced in December 2024 for PY25.

### 4. A description of agreed upon local performance goals.

**Table 5: Trident Program Year 2024 and 2025 WIOA Finalized Negotiated Performance Goals**

WIOA Title I – Adult	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	79.5%	79.5%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	78.4%	78.4%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$8,003	\$8,003
Credential Attainment Rate	73.8%	73.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	66.3%	66.3%
WIOA Title I – Dislocated Worker	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	84.8%	84.8%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	81.9%	81.9%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$8,745	\$8,745
Credential Attainment Rate	74.1%	74.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	74.1%	74.1%
WIOA Title I – Youth	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	81.6%	81.6%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	81.4%	81.4%
Median Earnings in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$5,574	\$5,574
Credential Attainment Rate	61.0%	61.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	61.5%	62.5%

**5. A description of actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce area, including the following:**

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

The Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB) is designated as a Certified Workforce Development Board. The TWDB certified the SC Works Trident Centers at the June 25, 2019, Workforce Board meeting in the following areas:

- System Standards for Employer Services
- System Standards for Job Seeker services
- One-Stop Management Standards

The SC Works Certification is due June 30, 2025. The One-Stop Committee and the center Operator is currently working on the certification standards to ensure the centers are certified.

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is the administrative entity of the WIOA grant. The operator was chosen through a competitive bid process. Funding of the local SC Works System consists of funding for the Operator and WIOA program service provider. These funds are allocated to the operator and service provider by an approved budget from the Administrative Entity that was approved by the local board. The operating costs are based on the cost to operate the centers and do not include the programmatic cost. Other funding of the local SC Works System comes through resource-sharing agreements from partners. The role and contribution of the Operator are charged with coordinating the service delivery among partner agencies in the SC Works Centers. Duties include but are not limited to:

- Managing the daily operations for the lease, utilities, and other activities to support the center
- Managing partner responsibilities that are defined in the MOU
- Managing hours of operation
- Managing services for businesses and individual customers
- Ensuring basic services are available and accessible
- Implementing local board policies
- Adhering to all federal and state guidance and instruction letters
- Reporting to the local board on operations and performance
- Continuous improvement recommendations

Ross IES as the WIOA service program for the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs' role and contribution will be:

- Eligibility Determination
- Outreach and Orientations
- Skills Assessments
- Partner referral
- Provision of labor Market Information
- Supportive Services
- Performance Information

## Section V: Operations and Compliance

- Individual Career Services
- Access to Training Services

Adult Education/Family Literacy role and contribution to the system will be outreach and orientation, skills assessments, partner referrals, provision of performance information, and access to training services.

SCDEW's role and contribution to the system will be outreach and orientation, skills assessments, labor exchange, provision of performance information, supportive services, assisting with unemployment filing, labor exchange, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans Employment and training services, individual career services, and business services.

Vocational Rehabilitation/Commission for the Blind role and contribution to the system will be to provide rehabilitation programs for individuals with disabilities, outreach and orientation, and partner referral.

Trident Technical College's role and contribution to the system will be to provide post-secondary career and technical college assistance, and financial aid assistance.

Job Corps' role and contribution to the system will be to provide outreach and orientation, individual career services, access to training services, and partner referral.

SCDEW will provide migrant and seasonal farm workers with outreach and orientation, partner referral, and individual career services.

PCAP's role and contribution to the system will be to provide community services block grants to eligible participants in the SC Works System, partner referral, supportive service, and education and employment training services.

Goodwill's role and contribution to the system will be to provide the senior community service employment program. This program provides orientation and outreach, labor exchange, partner referral, and individual career services.

The Department of Social Services' role and contribution to the system will be to provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) assistance to participants, supportive services, and provide performance information.

Additional Partners in the SC Works Center such as Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) provide bus passes and discount bus passes to those who are eligible.

National Guard provides employment services for military and veteran customers.

Native American Programs, Youth build, and Second Chance Act are not available in this area.

Currently, the Workforce Development Director and the Performance Coordinator are in constant communication with the operator of the center to discuss opportunities for improvements and provide technical assistance as needed. The board standards identified:

- Strategic Planning: The TWDB strategic plan will be reviewed and updated quarterly
- Resource Alignment: The TWDB coordinates services with partner agencies and leverages resources from local technical colleges and educational institutions as well as other partners.

## Section V: Operations and Compliance

- Support of a Quality One-Stop System: Again, once the One-Stop Standards are finalized, the TWDB staff will ensure these standards are carried out in each center, The Operator of the Centers is fully informed of the priority of services.
- Support for Youth: The Youth has a strategic plan that aligns with the TWDB strategic plan. The Youth Committee meets monthly and will begin reviewing the strategic plan as a part of the meeting to update goals and ensure we are meeting the standards.
- Funding Oversight: The BCDCOG maintains sound fiscal and performance practices. TWDB provides oversight and makes approval of all allocations and directs the funds to appropriated training clusters that are in demand in our local area.
- Fiscal and Performance Accountability: The Workforce staff ensures that the operator is meeting the performance measures and goals by constant review of reports when available. Staff utilizes the ad hoc reports and live reports that are available in SC Works Online System (SCWOS). Monthly and annual monitoring is conducted to ensure the Operator and Service provider of the WIOA programs are following guidelines of the statement of work and state instruction letters.

An assessment was made that includes a checklist of all of the standards and requirements as outlined in State Instruction Number 18-11.

- The Operator, Business Service Lead (Manager), and Workforce Development Director went through each item to determine what is in place to meet the standard.
- The documentation used to verify meeting the standards is kept virtually and in a hard binder.
- The assessment and verifying documentation were presented to the TWDB for certification.
- The Operator, Business Service Manager, Workforce Development Director, and Performance Outcomes Coordinator meet monthly to discuss progress and identify issues and/or changes needed. led to determine if we are meeting the requirements. All documents are also uploaded and can be provided virtually.

### ❖ A description of fiscal and program performance goals beyond the federal measures and how progress will be tracked and made publicly available.

The TWDB has not established performance goals beyond the federal and /or state goals; however, the progress on these goals is tracked and made publicly available as follows:

- The Federal goals for Adult/Dislocated Workers/Youth Programs:
  - Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
  - Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
  - Median Earnings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit
  - Credential Attainment Rate
  - Measurable Skills Gain
- 20% Work Base Learning federal goal for Youth Program
- 80% Obligation Rate State Goal
- 70% Expenditure rate State Goal
- 75% Priority of Service Adult and DLW Programs-State goal
- 30% participant Cost rate Adult and DLW Programs -State Goal

All goals are monitored through various methods that include tracking information that would lead to meeting the goals.

- Quarterly reports from finance department
- All data regarding Performance Goals are tracked:
- Monthly dashboard for WIOA
- Center Report for the SC Works System
- OJT report
- Scorecards for Training Providers on outcomes for those placed in training
- These reports are sent to the TWDB and COG board members monthly
- The reports are reviewed by the TWDB at the bi-monthly meetings
- The reports are made available on the BCDCOG and SC Works Trident Website in the Board Meeting Minutes

❖ **A description of the methodology used by the local board to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds.**

The Operator will be responsible for spearheading the SC Works Center certification. The administrative allocates cost to the SC Works center infrastructure funds based on the WIOA law and regulations. The local board approves the budget allocations and any amendments to the budget. A description of the roles and contributions of the partners including cost allocation is outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA). Infrastructure costs are allocated using the:

- Planned partner staffing levels and contributions
- Cost based on cost per square footage
- Historical costs

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its related regulations and guidance establish, as a starting point, the expectation that one-stop partners will share proportionately in the cost of the one-stop system. Therefore, to the extent applicable, costs will be shared based on the proportionate share model. The total annual cost of the center consists of the rent, utilities maintenance and repairs, equipment rentals and maintenance, Shred-it services, copier and printer in the common areas, alarm services, and security. Each partner is given a cost per square footage and the square footage of the area they occupy in the center. This should equal the amount on the infrastructure agreement. Partners receive an invoice for their share. Some partners choose to pay annually, and some partners choose to pay quarterly. Each partner signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) once the term has been negotiated and agreed upon. The SC Works Dorchester Center is located within the Dorchester Adult Education facility. The resources sharing for that facility is based on the Dorchester Adult Education facility usage policy. There is no cost associated with the SC Works Dorchester Center.

The SC Works Berkeley Center's cost allocation is based on the agreement and policy of the host agency, Trident United Way Berkeley Resource Community Center.

The Trident Workforce region has a long-established workforce development system consisting of multiple public and private partners, the goal of which is to facilitate financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals, and communities. We will evaluate the overall effectiveness and continuous improvement of our local system in the same manner as the State, by using the following tools:

- WIOA has common performance measures that assess employment, earnings, credential attainment, skills gain, and employer engagement.
- The SC Works Centers Certification Standards assess management, job seeker services, and Business Services. These standards will also help to ensure consistent service delivery across the area, region, and state. The SC Works Trident area will adhere to the state WIOA plan, which indicates LWDBs will evaluate comprehensive and affiliate centers.
- Any business engagement metrics adopted by the State Workforce Development Board.
- The SC Works Trident area will continue to adhere to State Instruction 14-03, State Criteria for WIOA Local Workforce Development Boards.

MOUs are used at the state and local levels to align resources and outline service delivery strategies. While the SC Works Trident area has moved forward and has a local MOU, perhaps the most important is the South Carolina Statewide MOU. The State has undertaken this in 2 phases, Phase I was executed in 2015 and focused largely on the responsibilities of each partner. It also memorialized each partner's agreement to partner and collaborate in the delivery of services to job seekers and businesses. Phase II of the MOU will concentrate on resource sharing and infrastructure funding. The state-level completion of these MOUs will then give the local partners the ability to fully participate in local resource sharing and infrastructure funding.

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

Roles and Contributions of each SC Works Trident partner:

- The partners located inside the SC Works Comprehensive Center will contribute to the infrastructure cost by the square footage of the space they occupy.
- All partners will participate in partner meetings.
- Partners are part of the Integrated Business Service Team.
- All Partners located inside the Centers are required to participate in the SC Works 101 Training. The new requirement will be for the Learning Management System. The Operator will serve as a point of contact to ensure all partner staff receive the training. The Workforce Development Director will serve as the backup.
- All partner information is on the SC Works Trident website.
- Each partner submits monthly data on customers such as number seen, services provided, employment, etc. This information is added to the Center reports that go to the TWDB.
- Quarterly surveys are conducted for all partner services in the SC Works centers regarding customer satisfaction.

**6. A description of how Adult and Dislocated Worker training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including the following:**

- ❖ **If contracts for training services will be used.**
- ❖ **How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs; and**
- ❖ **How the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.**

As of July 1, 2022, Ross IES is the provider of the WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. The BCDCOG is the provider of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) contracts. The BCDCOG continues to provide contracts for state and rapid response IWT accounts. The service provider utilizes ITAs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth programs for training and supportive services. Contracts are used for Work Experience, OJT, and local IWT when applicable. The Trident local area will continue to rely on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs. Once training has been identified by the customer, the Career Coach then verifies that it is approved for training on the ETPL and reviews all training providers and programs that are on the ETPL with the customers to allow the customer to choose the best program and provider that meets their needs. The Training Service Policy will be updated to include this information. The customer turns in a Training packet and that packet is signed-off on by the supervisor showing the training is approved.

### **Training Policy Attached**

The local board has established an individual Training Account (ITA) Policy to ensure that training services are provided through an ITA account. Contracts are written for on-the-job (OJT) training and other work-based learning experiences. These are incorporated into the ITA. The local board has established a maximum training amount and what should be included in this account for adults and dislocated workers. Also, the local board has established a training services policy and procedures to ensure informed customer choice selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided. ITA Policy is included in the attachments.

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

The Local and Regional plans, and COBE were released for input from partners, businesses, labor organizations, and institutions of education from November 18, 2024, through December 2, 2024 for 10 business days. The plans were then release to the public from December 4<sup>th</sup> through December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for input and comments. The plans were released on both Lowcountry and Trident’s websites and both Council of Governments' websites.

The comments will be forwarded to the Regional Committee and core program partners to review and discuss. As a result, appropriate revisions will be made to the plans.

The local boards will fully approve the plans at the December 3, 2024, meeting. Public Comments will be shared with the local board members and partners, and the plans adjusted accordingly.

The Trident Workforce Development Board is comprised of representatives from Private Businesses, Labor Organizations, Education (Adult Education and Trident Technical College), Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Development, Wagner-Peyser (local SCDEW), Community-based- Organizations, Apprenticeships, and other representatives. The local and regional plans were developed with board members. These plans are working documents and will continue to be reviewed and updated regularly.

**8. A description of how the LWDA 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.**

A collaborative workgroup consisting of representation from the Department of Employment and Workforce, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the SC Works Trident area WIOA has been formed through the One-Stop Committee to examine issues related to data alignment, performance accountability, and assessment. This group will further examine how South Carolina and the SC Works Trident area currently assess system effectiveness and will develop recommendations for a more comprehensive assessment that aligns with the Governor’s strategic vision and goals. South Carolina state agencies and local partners are working to align databases to streamline the availability of information while protecting vital personal information at the same time. Agencies are partnering to share data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the state workforce system and to obtain performance measures across multiple programs.

While initiatives to examine the integration of technology are underway, this is not a local area decision and must occur at the state level. SC Works Trident area has always offered partners access to SCWOS and the SC Works Trident system utilizes many of the features in SCWOS such as the Referral as outlined in the MOU.

SC partners will also be working closely to re-design the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to go above and beyond the requirements of WIOA to provide meaningful information to job seekers, businesses, and industries, and to provide relevant performance metrics on all educational and training providers to the public and partners through PATH (Palmetto Academic and Training Hub). The VOS Greeter module is implemented in all of the SC Works Trident centers and is used by all partners.

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

The local board has established a priority of services policy to ensure compliance with the Training and Employment Guidance Letters and State instruction letters (Included in attachments).

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. These are:

- First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are low-income, including recipients of public assistance, or who have basic skills deficient.
- Second Priority: Low-income Individuals, including recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

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

Eligible individuals who do not meet the above priorities may still be enrolled as participants in the WIOA adult program. Seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled adult participants must be low-income, including public assistance recipients, or basic skills deficient. This priority of service policy does not apply to participants who served as dislocated workers. Services will be made available to those who are under the barriers to the employment group as well (See attached Exhibit: TWDB Adult Priority of Service Policy).

The local board ensures compliance with the adult priority of service requirements under WIOA Title I:

- BCDCOG staff reviews the Ad hoc Report on Adult priority weekly.
- BCDCOG staff and the contractors meet weekly to discuss all performance measures and potential issues.
- BCDCOG staff provided technical assistance to the contractor staff regarding the Adult Priority report.
- The Contractor for WIOA program services has established a process to maintain a waitlist for those who do not meet the Priority of Service requirements when the Trident area is at 75%.

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

The TWDB follows the state instruction priority of service policy that 75% of individuals served are low-income and/or have basic skills deficiency. The policy established a priority of service policy to ensure services are provided to those as outlined in the training and employment letter 19-16 as priority of services and those with barriers to employment. Also, the MOUs and Statement of Work establish guidance on serving individuals with barriers to employment and special needs. A disabilities committee has been established to address services to individuals with disabilities and special needs.

The Trident Workforce Development Board has established a Disability Committee of the board to increase access to One-Stop services by special populations, including those with barriers to employment. The committee members are board members and non-board members who are subject matter experts on special populations, accessibility, and One Stop. This committee, in conjunction with the Youth and One-Stop committees and the Board, will develop local service strategies to improve outcomes, including education and employment, for youth and individuals with disabilities.

Currently, SCDEW has issued a state instruction letter that states seventy-five percent of customers receiving WIOA services must be in the priority of service group, which is low-income adults, adults receiving public assistance, or adults who are basic skills deficient.

If an adult is identified as being in one of these categories, they are enrolled in the WIOA program. All customers are assessed, and an individual employment plan (IEP) is designed based on their needs. For example, customers that are basic skills deficient are referred to Adult Education to receive skill enhancement services while they are working on other skills in the WIOA program. If a customer is identified as needing additional services, they will be referred to as one of the other partners as needed

per their IEP. Expungement services have been added as a service under the Supportive Service Policy as an additional service WIOA can assist with removing barriers for special populations.

As a goal, the Disability Committee is seeking ways to increase services to individuals with disabilities. Our partners with Vocation Rehabilitation and the Commission for the Blind will help the Operator of the centers identify accessibility issues so that physical changes can be made to better serve customers with disabilities. The local area is working on a partnership that would allow us to provide services to current and ex-offenders. Access to services through the SC Works system will be made available through affiliate centers and the promotion of the SC Works Online System. Recruitment and Outreach efforts through staff and the Business Services team to make individuals and employers aware of services in the SC Works system.

The Center Operator and partners will comply with nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act 1190 regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of the facilities, by making available the State Instruction Letters and policies to the Operators and partner, holding periodic training on the provisions for the Operator and partners, conducting self-assessments and conducting annual accessibility monitoring. The staff will also seek the involvement of the Disabilities Committee Members to help with training to educate staff, partners, and the Operator. Languages other than English are identified through Census language identification cards (Flash Cards) that are disbursed to staff, and partners, and kept at the entry point of each center. Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided services through a qualified interpreter service. SC Works Trident has established a limited English Proficient Plan (LEP) and an Interpreter Service Policy to ensure customers are provided with the most effective and efficient services.

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

To ensure that programs are operating following the federal statutes and regulations, state policies, local workforce development area instructions, and contract requirements, the local workforce development area (LWDA) will monitor programs, services, and administrative and financial procedures.

- Monitoring Policy Attached
- Monitoring Schedule is Attached
- Monitoring Tool is Attached

The Local area's fiscal and programmatic monitoring process:

- The Performance Outcomes Coordinator conducts a monthly monitoring review that includes reviewing five files, in their entirety, reviewing ad hoc reports, review uploaded documents and IEPs. The report is sent to BCDCOG and the contractor's staff.
- BCDCOG and the Contractor's staff have a monthly Performance Review Meeting to discuss performance issues. At this meeting, the following are reviewed:
  - A monthly report conducted by the Performance Outcomes Coordinator
  - Staff Activities
  - Case Notes/IEPs
  - Ad Hoc Reports
  - The priority of Service status
  - SC Works Certification Standards Status

- An Annual Performance Review monitoring is also conducted, including the above outlined and an accessibility review of the Centers.
- Quarterly data equal opportunity and nondiscrimination reports and data are collected and reviewed for any trends. These reports are provided to the EO Officers at the State level with SCDEW. The reports are reviewed and discussed regarding trends, and if trends are identified, this will be placed on the Partner meeting agenda to discuss and identify possible solutions.
- Training and education regarding equal opportunity and nondiscrimination will also be provided as part of the monitoring process.

**12. Copies of current LWDB policies and definitions, including the following:**

- 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”
- Adult and dislocated worker self-sufficiency definition(s) for training

**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
- Local monitoring schedules

**Local Plan Signatures**

**Local Workforce Development Board:**

Trident Workforce Development Board

Butch Clift, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Local Grant Recipient Signatory Official:**

Trident Workforce Development Area

Ronald E. Mitchum, Executive Director, Berkeley-Dorchester-Charleston COG

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date