

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local Plan
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024
Updated December, 2022**

Local Area:

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area

Counties within the Local Area:

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda

Local Area Administrator and Contact Information:

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Attachment B: Local Plan Requirements

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

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

The local plan must include:

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

Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

- 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;

During 2022, Upper Savannah partnered with ten school districts, Piedmont Technical College, Western Piedmont Educational Consortium, and the Department of Commerce to define in-demand occupational clusters and occupations for the seven-county area. The study included workforce statistics and projections furnished through the Department of Employment and Workforce, surveys of nearly 200 businesses, and included student, teacher, and parent comments. This is an update of a plan completed in 2020.

Because students are looking at long-term career strategies, the team focused on clusters or career ladders rather than specific occupations. When selecting in-demand careers, the team focused on occupational clusters which had sufficient openings to warrant class-size training, growth, and above average wages. A full copy of the report is available upon request.

This section is updated on the next page. The methodology changed. Rather than doing a weighted average of factors, the planners calculated future payroll by occupational cluster by multiplying number of workers projected times average wages (current). The simplified methodology shows relevance by annual payroll. Projections and wages came from SCDEW.

Updated Chart Showing Ranking of Occupational Clusters

SOC Code	SOC Title	Projection Employment 2026	Avg. Annual Wages 2021	Annual Payroll	Rank
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	98,310	\$43,922	\$ 4,317,993,448	
11-0000	Management	4,568	\$95,893	\$ 438,036,986	4
13-0000	Business, Financial Operations	2,089	\$65,332	\$ 136,478,130	
15-0000	Computer, Mathematical	659	\$79,123	\$ 52,142,057	
17-0000	Architecture, Engineering	1,927	\$75,561	\$ 145,606,066	
19-0000	Life, Physical, Social Science	471	\$76,115	\$ 35,850,396	
21-0000	Community, Social Service	1,250	\$41,225	\$ 51,531,825	
23-0000	Legal Occupations	319	\$48,585	\$ 15,498,494	
25-0000	Education, Training, Library	5,302	\$47,400	\$ 251,313,103	6
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports,Media	903	\$42,754	\$ 38,607,205	
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners	6,477	\$81,687	\$ 529,086,505	2
31-0000	Healthcare Support	2,466	\$29,116	\$ 71,801,092	
33-0000	Protective Service	1,983	\$40,519	\$ 80,349,236	
35-0000	Food Preparation, Serving	7,607	\$22,942	\$ 174,522,761	
37-0000	Building, Grounds Cleaning, Maintenance	2,900	\$28,408	\$ 82,384,302	
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	3,454	\$30,337	\$ 104,785,034	
41-0000	Sales	6,605	\$37,793	\$ 249,625,539	
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	11,569	\$38,737	\$ 448,150,204	3
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, Forestry	1,165	\$40,603	\$ 47,302,553	
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	3,684	\$43,664	\$ 160,858,508	

49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, Repair	4,683	\$49,943	\$ 233,881,570	
51-0000	Production Occupations	20,509	\$38,117	\$ 781,731,299	1
53-0000	Transportation, Material Moving	7,720	\$33,657	\$ 259,831,808	5

The 2020 and 2022 results confirm the area’s ongoing priority to the manufacturing and healthcare sectors. Both industry clusters are complex, employing workers in both their core business functions and ancillary roles such as maintenance and accounting.

Following is a new chart which shows the employees and payroll by sector. It is different because it looks at the employer type rather than the occupational type. The numbers are smaller because it uses actual workers (2021) rather than 2026 projections.

Annualized Payroll by Sector Based on Q1 of 2022

Industry Title	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Sector Payroll
Total, All Industries	80,916	\$869	\$3,656,432,208
Manufacturing	23,356	\$1,121	\$ 1,361,467,952
Health Care and Social Assistance	10,792	\$957	\$ 537,053,088
Retail Trade	7,971	\$560	\$ 232,115,520
Educational Services	7,751	\$777	\$ 313,171,404
Accommodation and Food Services	5,934	\$302	\$ 93,187,536
Public Administration	5,388	\$790	\$ 221,339,040
Administrative and Waste Services	4,426	\$534	\$ 122,901,168
Construction	2,983	\$889	\$ 137,898,124
Transportation and Warehousing	255	\$925	\$ 12,265,500
Wholesale Trade	1,846	\$1,428	\$ 137,076,576
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	1,563	\$856	\$ 69,572,256
Other Services,	1,473	\$657	\$ 50,323,572
Professional and Technical Services	1,273	\$1,078	\$ 71,359,288
Finance and Insurance	1,191	\$1,116	\$ 69,116,112
Utilities	752	\$1,315	\$ 51,421,760
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	642	\$294	\$ 9,814,896
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	426	\$724	\$ 16,038,048
Information	407	\$1,098	\$ 23,238,072
Management	130	\$1,616	\$ 10,924,160
Mining, Quarrying	53	\$1,490	\$ 4,106,440

This approach also confirms that manufacturing and healthcare are the top two sectors, together accounting for almost half of the region’s payroll. It should be noted that both would probably be higher if temporary workers were included. The sector administrative and waste services includes staffing agencies which supply workers for factories and healthcare facilities.

There are hundreds of occupations within the top two tiers of occupational clusters. The six most common in each of manufacturing (including production and engineering) and healthcare are listed below with the knowledge and skills necessary. More detailed profiles can be obtained at <https://www.onetonline.org>.

	Knowledge	Skills
Assemblers & Fabricators (Slight decline expected due to automation.)	High school degree, Manufacturing terminology, Safety protocols	Read blueprints Use hand tools Perform quality checks
Team Assemblers (Slight decline expected due to automation)	High school degree, Manufacturing terminology, Safety protocols	Read blueprints Performs range of functions Perform quality checks
Food Processing (Slight decline expected due to automation.)	Basic skills, Sanitation, Safety protocols	Follow protocols Measure Perform quality checks
First Line Supervisors of Manufacturing	Associate degree or higher Safety protocols Efficiency protocols Quality protocols	Analyze trends Find root causes Mechanical troubleshooting Budget resources
Mechanical Engineering Technician	Associate degree or higher Mechanical knowledge Electrical knowledge CAD knowledge Computer knowledge	Automate production Design machines Adjust machines to improve output Improve processes
Electronic Engineering Technician	Associate degree or higher Electronic knowledge Mechanical knowledge CAD knowledge Computer knowledge	Create control systems Automate production Adjust machines to improve output Improve processes
Summary of manufacturing knowledge and skills: There is a wide range of skills. There are production jobs which do not require classroom training beyond a high school degree, but automation is reducing the number of entry-level jobs and making the remaining jobs more complex. Foundational skills include reading blueprints and performing quality checks (measurement). Foundational knowledge includes high school level math and reading, manufacturing terminology and safety protocols. Higher paying jobs are in supervision and in related engineering fields. It should also be noted, in addition, to knowledge and skills		

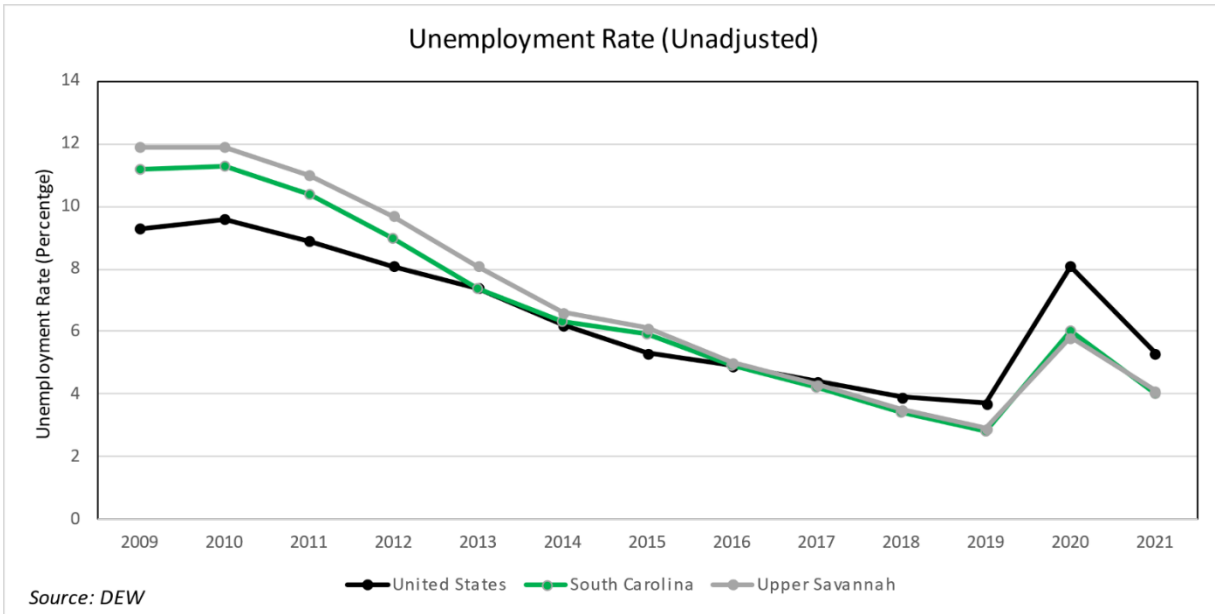
most manufacturing workers are required to work shifts which may require physical stamina. Manufacturing is a good fit for apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training because many skills are unique to companies' standard operating procedures.

	Knowledge	Skills
Nurses Aid (uncertified)	Record keeping Housekeeping Safety	Move or lift patient Personal care Communication
Nursing Assistant (certified)	Medicine administration Medical terminology Vital signs Pass certification exam	Move or lift patient Personal care Read care plan Communication
Health Care Support	This occupational code is similar to other entry-level medical occupations listed above	
Emergency Medical Technician	High school diploma, training and pass exam Medical knowledge	Decision making Observation Driving Move or lift patient
Licensed Practical Nurse	Post-secondary training and pass licensing exam Medical knowledge	Nursing skills Observation Communication
Registered Nurse	Associate degree or higher and pass exam Medical knowledge	Nursing skills Planning Communication
Summary of healthcare jobs knowledge and skills: There is a wide range of skills. Entry level skills can be learned on the job or through short-term training. Midlevel jobs require excellent basic skills and take training of two years or more. Like manufacturing, most healthcare jobs are shift-based and require stamina. Health care employees must have clean criminal backgrounds.		

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

Employment and Unemployment Data – Just before the surge of layoffs caused by the pandemic, the area had the lowest unemployment rate in history. The following graph tracks

unemployment over the last decade. Upper Savannah has essentially matched the state average which is approximately 25% lower than the national rate.



Although there are less people defined as unemployed. There are more who are out of the labor force and who are not looking. Upper Savannah’s labor force participation is one of the lowest in the nation.

S.C. Labor Force Participation Rate			
WDA	Population 16 years and over	Civilian labor force	LFPR
Catawba	318,433	200,560	63.0%
Greenville	410,664	266,109	64.8%
Lowcountry	228,557	121,276	53.1%
Lower Savannah	255,007	141,915	55.7%
Midlands	589,548	371,457	63.0%
Pee Dee	270,102	149,499	55.3%
Santee-Lynches	179,176	96,781	54.0%
Trident	637,230	402,901	63.2%
Upper Savannah	209,257	114,850	54.9%
Upstate	317,309	191,366	60.3%
Waccamaw	367,350	199,736	54.4%
WorkLink	329,112	191,865	58.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; DEW, County data aggregated to WDA

Labor Market Trends – The Upper Savannah workforce is getting older. It is expected that a substantial number of baby boomers will leave the workforce between 2020 and 2023. Certain sectors will be affected more than others. In 2021, 26% of health care workers were 55 years old or older. The same table from the US Census Bureau – Local Employment Dynamics shows that 22% of construction workers and 26 % of manufacturing labor were older than 55.

There are less high school students than there were 20 and 30 years ago, and high school students are less likely to work, meaning employers will have to develop strategies to find and train replacement workers.

High school students are also less likely to enter manufacturing. Surveys of nearly seven thousand students in the Upper Savannah region showed that interest in manufacturing lagged behind health care, science, engineering, art, business, education and law enforcement. (Upper Savannah CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment data)

Education and Skill Level of Workforce

As of the last census data (ACS 2013 survey), the Upper Savannah region lags the state and the nation in high school graduates, associate degrees, and college graduates.

NEW TABLE	Upper Savannah		South Carolina	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Label				
AGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT				
High school graduate or higher	179,977	100.0%	3,512,626	(X)
High school graduate or higher	149,894	83.3%	3,102,292	88.30%
Associate's degree	20,235	11.2%	347,421	9.90%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35,571	19.8%	1,018,306	29.00%
Graduate or professional degree	12,170	6.8%	379,912	10.80%
Color shows comparison with state	Lower	Higher		

Barrier Characteristics

Upper Savannah is a rural area. Newberry is the only one of the seven counties to have a route-based public transportation system (and it exists primarily to transport workers to Columbia.) It is estimated that 10% of the working age population either does not drive or have access to a car. Lack of dependable transportation is a barrier to getting and keeping a job.

Another difficulty that rural residents face is a lack of childcare and elder care options. There are no licensed childcare facilities that have overnight care. Traditional day care centers had waiting lists prior to the pandemic. The shortage is especially acute for infant care.

Like the rest of the nation, offenders are more likely to be unemployed. Records are computerized and background checks are inexpensive. Upper Savannah knows only a handful of employers who do not screen and a couple of dozen employers who have the flexibility to hire someone with a recent felony.

Physical and mental disabilities are also a barrier, especially when substance abuse is considered. The 2017 American Community Survey indicates that 14.8% of state residents has a disability. The shift schedules of the largest employers in manufacturing and healthcare make it difficult for some with a disability to maintain consistent attendance.

Poverty is a barrier which touches all aspects of workforce development. Families in poverty have less resources to access employment and training services, supportive services, and health care. Statewide, 15.2% of the population is considered low-income. Since poverty is associated with rural, less-developed areas, Upper Savannah has more residents with less resources. (ACS Survey 2017)

Individuals with poor work history have a barrier to finding work, and often the poor work history is a symptom of other barriers.

- 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.

Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

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

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

GOALS: Upper Savannah has adopted the following goals from the state plan (*in italics*). Below each state goal is Upper Savannah's approach.

Objective 1: *Identify, invest in, and support educational and developmental strategies to better prepare and expand a skilled workforce for current and emerging jobs.*

Upper Savannah: The area’s number one priority is to increase the number of adults gaining a high school credential. A GED or high school diploma is foundational.

The second priority is to support skills training for in-demand jobs. The workforce board, in conjunction with educational partners, has identified sectors which are critical to the local economy. The chart below shows the board’s investment priorities.

TIER ONE: PRIMARY INVESTMENT	OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund classroom training • Advocate for training resources • Promote career opportunities • Consider as strategic sector 	Production Occupations
	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
	Architecture and Engineering Occupations
	Management Occupations
	Office and Administrative Support Occupations
TIER TWO: SECONDARY INVESTMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund classroom training for occupations that support manufacturing or healthcare • Advocate for training resources • Promote select career opportunities in sector • Develop relationships with key employers 	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
	Education, Training, and Library Occupations
	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
	Business and Financial Operations Occupations
	Computer and Mathematical Occupations
TIER THREE: LIMITED INVESTMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit training investment to On-the-Job Training or apprenticeship where company pays part of costs. • Promote jobs through SC Works system 	Construction and Extraction Occupations
	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
	Sales and Related Occupations
	Legal Occupations
TIER FOUR: LIMITED INVESTMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit training investment to On-the-Job Training or apprenticeship where company pays part of costs. • Promote jobs through SC Works system. 	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
	Protective Service Occupations

Upper Savannah will promote training opportunities to all target groups. Youth is a special target group for manufacturing with state initiatives sponsored by the manufacturing alliance and local projects such as the Greenwood Edge, which offers dual credit classes in manufacturing/engineering. Upper Savannah is committed to promoting nontraditional careers by getting women into engineering and men into healthcare. The area works to eliminate barriers, especially artificial barriers set by employers. One example is shift work often discourages students from working in manufacturing while in school. We publicize employers who offer flexible or part-time schedule.

Strategy 1.1 Increase participation in work-based learning activities, including registered apprenticeships.

The area has an active business services team contacting nearly one thousand businesses per year. All area business services representatives, regardless of their program affiliation, are familiar with registered apprenticeship, WIOA, VR, and DSS work-based training. The representatives present the portfolio of opportunities as a way for a business to tailor training just for their needs. Apprenticeship is promoted as a strategy to train the next generation of workers with existing subject matter experts. Youth apprenticeship is the next phase of the Greenwood Edge program. The Upper Savannah board will receive a work-based learning report each year at the first meeting in the fall.

Strategy 1.2 Increase the formal assessment of soft-skills and provision of soft skills training.

The first step in teaching soft skills is to understand employers' expectations. The next is to communicate those expectations. Teaching soft skills is not a one-time endeavor. It is something that must be "baked into" every component of service delivery. Request for Proposal guidelines issued for future service providers will require a plan for teaching soft skills. We will advocate for soft skills training to be incorporated into classroom training. We will assess soft skills before and after WIOA funded work-based training.

Objective 2: *Align resources, policies, and strategies between state, local, and regional systems to continuously improve outcomes for businesses, partners, and individuals, including those with barriers to employment.*

Strategy 2.1 Increase co-enrollment across partner programs.

Strategy 2.2 Develop and implement cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to businesses and job seekers.

Strategy 2.3 Streamline intake systems and referral processes.

Partners in the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area work closely to improve outcomes to all parties. A key metric is the number of referrals made by partners to other partners. Board members serve on the oversight committee, which reviews program integration. Each year all partner staff are asked to complete a survey which is distributed to the board.

Strategy 2.4 Implement strategies that increase access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and identification and vital records.

Resources are highlighted at quarterly partner meetings. Upper Savannah does not have the manpower to start any substantial initiatives, but it participates in on-going projects started by groups such as United Way and Chambers of Commerce. Upper Savannah secured a grant from Duke Energy to provide free transportation to the Greenwood SC Works center.

Strategy 2.5 Increase the number of regional, industry-led, sector partnerships.

Upper Savannah does not have a timetable for new sector partnerships. Instead we want to see the manufacturing sector partnership further along before starting any new initiatives and diluting efforts.

Objective 3: *Identify current and future workforce needs of South Carolina business and industry to support career pathways in growth sectors.*

Upper Savannah took the lead in getting input from nearly 200 businesses for the training needs assessment. Upper Savannah will continue to solicit business feedback.

Strategy 3.1 Identify the challenges and opportunities in rural communities.

Upper Savannah is a rural area. The board will maintain a center in each county. Upper Savannah welcomes help from the state board and partners. One priority for the board is to advocate for high speed internet in rural areas.

Strategy 3.2 Develop career pathway tools and templates.

Upper Savannah will work with the 10 school districts, Piedmont Technical College, and Apprenticeship Carolina to expand existing templates and create new ones. The Link Upstate Region has established a document which lists the core competencies for manufacturing maintenance technicians. The skills inventory was developed by manufacturers themselves and will be a starting point for further guides.

Objective 4: *Engage job seekers, employers, and other workforce partners through marketing and outreach and articulate a value proposition specific to each.*

Strategy 4.1 Share best practices across partner programs in order to increase awareness of partner services, promote a workforce of growth and continuous improvement, and encourage a system viewpoint.

Strategy 4.2 Improve strategic outreach to employers.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of how the local board will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above. |
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The board will continue to invest in website updates and tools for social media creation. The area will expand the distribution of its key communications tool, the weekly Hot Job blast. A key metric for the effectiveness of social media is the number of active followers. Upper Savannah is at 2,200 followers and it plans to add at least 10% each year.

ALIGNMENT – The board will foster alignment by reviewing outcomes from partner programs and benchmarking referrals. The area will continue to have quarterly area-wide partner meetings and monthly center coordination meetings.

Section III: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

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

Other than temporary changes due to the pandemic, there have been no major changes in the area's workforce. An executive summary of the plan has been sent to chief elected officials annually during the annual Memorandum of Understanding renewal process.

Upper Savannah was a core member of the Upper Savannah area Comprehensive Needs assessment for skill training funded through the Perkins Act. Upper Savannah assisted with obtaining nearly 200 employer comments on training needs. The survey was shared with locally elected officials, the boards of both Upper Savannah Council of Governments, and the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board.

Partners were asked to participate in the needs assessment and were also asked to give feedback on how the system is operating. Nearly 40 partner staff reviewed key changes, November 30, 2022. The workforce board received a summary of partner comments.

The Workforce Development Board reviewed the approved training list September 12, 2022. The operators and business services portion of the plan were reviewed November 14, 2022. The plan was published December 14, 2022 on the Upper Savannah website. Announcements were made to all parties. The plan has been sent to the full membership of the Board for review and approval.

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| 2. A description of the workforce development system in the local area, including: |
| • Identification of the programs that are included in the system; and |

A narrative of the local system was included in Section I, analysis of workplace activities. System partners include:

- a. SCDEW (Wagner-Peyser)
- b. SCDEW-MSFW (Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker)
- c. SCDEW (Veterans)
- d. SCDEW (Trade Adjustment Assistance)
- e. GLEAMNS WIOA (Assessment, Intake, Core Service, Intensive and Training for Adults, Dislocated-Workers and Youth)
- f. Department of Social Services (TANF)
- g. SC Vocational Rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Programs for those with Disabilities)
- h. SC Commission on the Blind (Rehabilitation Programs for the Vision Impaired)
- i. CSBG (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program - LIHEAP)
- j. SCDEW (Unemployment Insurance)
- k. Adult Education (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs)

Partners who are offsite, have established referral systems/electronic links, and provide services for our clients include:

- a. Goodwill (SCSEP- Senior Community Service Employment Program)
- b. Job Corps (USDOL Job Corps Program)
- c. Piedmont Technical College (Post-secondary/Perkins)

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| • How the Local Board will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development program in the local area. |
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- The board reviews economic conditions and utilizes data from the state’s Labor Market information database, Sector Partnerships, employer surveys, as well as other data from Economic Development Boards, SC Department of Commerce, Chambers of Commerce to continually employ a proactive approach to serving businesses and job seekers.

- The local area is committed to recruiting businesses and partners to participate in the activities of the 14-county Link Upstate Sector Partnership and the collaborative efforts with other area partnerships in the state as they work to address the needs defined in each.
- Encouraging partnerships and a strong referral system to reduce the duplication of services and expedite the enrollment process, so that we can respond to our customer’s needs in a more efficient manner.
- Continue the strong relationship and communication with our education partners including K-12, CTE, Technical Colleges, and other training providers to increase pathways to careers to meet the local areas demand for qualified workers.
- Keep up with the latest technological advances in business, industry, and education, so that we are modifying our approved training vendors and course offerings to meet the needs of rapid changing technology.
- The board gets a quarterly report of referrals made between workforce partners

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

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

.The unemployed and underemployed residents include:

1. Individuals without reliable transportation
2. Individuals who have poor basic skills or who do not have a high school credential
3. Individuals with disabilities
4. Individuals with criminal backgrounds
5. Individuals who cannot pass a drug test
6. Young people without prior work experience
7. Adults with an unstable work history
8. Veterans
9. Individuals who are homeless

The WDB revised the priority of services policy to include adults who are not working full-time and have less than 18 months of consecutive employment in the last three years. Also students seeking a medical career who can complete training in a year or less, meet the priority definition.

Upper Savannah completed an offender navigator grantt dubbed “Solid Ground.” We worked with released inmates from the Young Offender Act (YOA) program to introduce them to the SC Works system. . In addition, the navigator offers consultations regarding expungements and pardons to those referred by SCDEW and WIOA case management.

Our system has a two-pronged approach to alerting residents about employment and training opportunities. First is a global approach, the second is a targeted approach.

The Operations Committee of the SC Works Partners group is tasked with increasing overall awareness of workforce programs. Upper Savannah SC Works has a dedicated website (www.upperscworks.com). This website is updated weekly to share daily activities and workshops in our seven-county region. The committee also utilizes social media to reach a larger audience. It is not uncommon for a post on the Upper Savannah Facebook page to have over 10K engagements in a 24-hour period. Events such as job fairs and hiring events seem to garner the most interest.

The Nontraditional Workers Committee continues to work on strategies to reach specific target groups. The Committee includes the following organizations: Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission for the Blind, Goodwill, ABLE, Upper Savannah, DSS, Adult Education and DEWA key goal is increasing the number of high school graduates.

- Improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, including an industry-recognized certificate or certification that is portable and stackable;

The WDB will continue to meet with partners and stakeholders to strategically stay abreast of career pathways programs in partnership with the region’s colleges and secondary schools. It is imperative that we increase client access to training and education programs that align with the needs of regional employers. An example is a partnership with Piedmont Technical College to start a commercial driver’s program to meet local demand. This includes apprenticeship programs and career pathway programs that support stackable credentials. The Partners will work to strengthen existing pathways in the in-demand sectors by working with the Link Upstate Sector Partnership.

As part of the Perkins Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Upper Savannah has advocated for industry-recognized credentials. The board has highlighted dual credit opportunities so high school students can get a head start on a post-secondary degree.

Short-term training and stackable credentials allow us to deploy training more quickly and responsively. Credentials will be assessed from a pathways perspective to articulate stackable credentials and connect the community we serve to pathways. The WDB, along with the Business Services Team, will use labor market information (LMI) to link training programs with job opportunities that are in-demand. The WDB ensures that training programs lead to employment in high growth/high demand occupations on career pathways that provide self-sustainable wages.

A key goal of all efforts is to increase the numbers of individuals gaining postsecondary credentials, particularly those needed by manufacturing. The gateway credential in manufacturing is the South Carolina Manufacturing Certificate (SCMC), which assures that completers are knowledgeable about safety, efficiency, and quality.

Over the past four years, PTC has worked closely with K-12 to communicate the prerequisites for medical training. Students can become a certified nursing assistant while in high school and complete college math, college communications, biology, chemistry and anatomy and physiology so they can bypass pre-nursing classes. The result is recent graduates can become a registered nurse within two years.

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

To be successful in training and placing job seekers, the workforce community must understand the needs of businesses. There are more than 4,000 businesses in the seven-county region. Upper Savannah focuses on two areas. First, the business services team is concentrating on serving manufacturers, because this is where the greatest need is. The Greater Upstate Sector Strategies Partnership, also referred to as Link Upstate, has also determined that manufacturing is the area that needs our help the most. Upper Savannah played a key role in assisting companies like Colgate-Palmolive, Teijin, and Samsung during their start-ups. Next, the area concentrates on small business. Businesses with fewer than 100 workers often do not have a human resources manager and appreciate assistance in recruiting and screening applicants. Because small businesses often are more flexible and have local key decision makers, they have a greater likelihood of hiring someone with a barrier to employment.

OJT provides payments to employers for training eligible WIOA participants. Payments are based on up to 50-75 percent of the wage rate of the WIOA participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training. Upper Savannah WDB recently reviewed their OJT policy and updated it so that small businesses are defined as those that have less than 100 employees. These small businesses now qualify for a higher reimbursement rate. At 75% wage reimbursement rate for up to a maximum of 480 hours, small businesses are more apt to participate. This is a Win/Win benefitting the business and the WIOA participant. Employers with 100 or more employees are reimbursed at the rate of 50%.

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

Upper Savannah has a business services team composed of individuals across partner agencies. The team meets quarterly to discuss coordination and strategies. Constant communication is important as we interact with employers who may have an immediate need, members e-mail and call each other sharing leads and brainstorming on how to fill jobs, etc.

Upper Savannah reviews key business services measures annually including the number of job listings managed by SC Works, the efficiency of the referral system (are enough qualified candidates sent?), and the numbers of placements made. The review is part of each center’s annual monitoring process.

The Upper Savannah Business Services Team Outreach Policy requires the use of a shared database for employer outreach. Each member of the team can see the weekly outreach plans for all team members. By reviewing the SCWOS case notes, they can plan the outreach activity and include any follow-up items from previous visits. Planning and communication are key to delivering our services in a way that is respected by the employers we serve.

Upper Savannah staff frequently attends the Piedmont Area Human Resources Association and chamber events in our area. This enables us to engage with more employers and gather information. Because of our involvement in these groups, we learn of workforce challenges and are able to collaborate with partners to help find a solution.

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

Upper Savannah leadership and economic developers meet quarterly. Upper Savannah Council of Governments hosts the area’s economic developers for a lunch meeting. The Upper Savannah Regional Education Consortium also convenes quarterly meetings of workforce leaders, economic developers, and chamber of commerce leaders. The periodic meetings ensure there is good communication, but the most productive meetings are in response to specific employer concerns.

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

The Upper Savannah area continues to seek help in strengthening the linkage between service delivery and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. The area assists businesses which are closing by offering re-employment services. Upper Savannah has staff that have been trained in Rapid Response and they attend all Rapid Response events in the region. The most productive Rapid Response meetings occur when there are representatives from the Unemployment Insurance program in attendance to answer questions.

SCDEW has a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment position in the Comprehensive SC Works Center in Greenwood. The representative works with the claimants to add another dimension to their job search. They help claimants remain in compliance so that their benefits are not interrupted. This position encourages them to apply for work and helps mine the SCWOS system to find jobs that meet their skills. They send numerous messages each week to inform claimants of open positions, hiring events, and job fairs in the community.

4. A description of how the strategies discussed in Question 3 above will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the State Plan; specifically:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing participation in work-based (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs;

Upper Savannah outlined each of the state priorities in section II of this plan and noted how each element will be addressed locally.

Upper Savannah works with Adult Education, CTE and other partners to support WBL and find opportunities for students. As part of our Comprehensive SC Works Center mission, we make suggestions for work-based learning. We have placed many work-based learners in the SC Works Centers, as well as at other partners and employers. We invite Apprenticeship Carolina to our partner meetings, and they have come to share information with our partners so that we can share this info with the clients and employers we serve. We have also invited Apprenticeship Carolina to come and speak at our Local Workforce Development Board Meeting.

The board tracks the number of WIOA funded work-based assignments. Staff requested a list of apprenticeship agreements with Apprenticeship Carolina and we will share it when it is received.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the formal assessment and provision of soft-skills training;

Following is the primary instrument used to assess soft skills in the Upper Savannah SC Works Centers. It is conducted by front line staff near the beginning of a client’s participation in the system.

Wagner-Peyser Initial Assessment Form

For staff use only. Check Yes or No for each statement regarding the customer.

Occupational Goal	Yes	No
Has no goal or goal is not relevant for local labor market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lists too many unrelated occupations under “goals” or “type of work looking for” or is unsure of goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge/Skills/Abilities (All questions should relate to the occupational goal)		
Has insufficient work experience (recent employment is of insufficient duration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs GED or HS Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Displays an inability to clearly articulate skills/abilities (no skills identified)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs training to support occupational goal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs translating assistance for English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs assistance in speaking, reading, or understanding English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lacks basic reading and writing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs basic computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs help identifying which jobs are appropriate for his/her aptitudes or would benefit from assistance in identifying transferable skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Wellness Issues/Barriers		

Customer identified a health restriction or other wellness-related barrier that would impact employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer requested auxiliary aids or services that indicate a need for a workplace accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer disclosed a history of a learning disability or received assistance in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Employment Related Issues/Barriers

Has gaps in employment or a history of terminations or job hopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needs help identifying jobs that are appropriate to his/her aptitudes, interests, or work values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is likely to have background check issues or needs additional assistance due to previous convictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Currently lacks transportation to get to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has child, elder care, or other personal family issues that affect his/her ability to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lacks positive references	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibits hygiene issues that would impact a successful job search	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a Veteran who is not living in stable housing that he or she owns, rents, or stays in as part of a household (A “YES” response indicates Veteran homelessness and needs a referral to a Veteran Representative.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any other issues that affect the customer’s ability to work or ability to find work? If “YES,” list:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any YES above indicates customer needs referral to a Workforce Consultant:

<input type="checkbox"/> Referred to a Workforce Consultant Customer needs further assistance with issues/barriers marked above. <i>* Enter activities 137 and 188 in SCWOS. Completed form must be attached as a PDF to the referral case note sent to the Workforce Consultant in SCWOS.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Job Search Ready Customer has a relevant labor market goal and has the necessary proficiencies to support the goal. <i>* Enter activity 137 in SCWOS. Completed form must be attached as a PDF to a case note in SCWOS indicating customer is job search ready.</i>
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There is no universal approach to addressing soft skills. A caregiver with gaps in her work history needs different support than someone whose gaps were due to being incarcerated. Soft skills expectations vary by employer and occupation. BMW requires a higher level of dependability than Lowes. Each partner has different tools and resources which they deploy as needed.

SCDEW – The Workforce Consultant provides counseling. Workshops may be recommended. The WIN Essential Soft Skills Curriculum is used. Veteran’s representatives have specialized training in helping returning service members to adjust to the expectations of civilian employers.

Adult Education- Weekly workshops are held. Often there are soft skills brush-up sessions prior to job fairs. The WIN curriculum is used.

SC Vocational Rehabilitation uses My Action Plan to identify barriers including soft skills deficiencies. VR has a workshop where customers can work under the supervision of rehabilitation counselors. VR has a twelve-hour soft skills class.

WIOA – The client interview guide embedded in the SC Works Online System is utilized. Special attention is paid when clients meet the definition of poor work history (has not worked for a single employer for at least 18 of the past 36 months). Counseling and workshops are available. Some clients are given work assignments to gain soft skills.

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

SC Works and WIOA works together to find participants for our program. Each visitor in SC Works is introduced to the variety of partners and programs available at SC Works. We work closely with the CATE centers and Piedmont Technical College to design programs to address the skills gaps for those who are looking for work. We utilized the SC Manufacturing Certification Training, which is about 6 weeks long, to make our clients work ready in a more cost-effective, timely manner. Many of these students are co-enrolled with multiple partners. It is not unheard of to have a client who is enrolled in WIOA, being served by VR, while enrolled in training at Piedmont Technical College, and they receive referrals to employers to land a job.

The LWDB also supports the work of the Sector Strategies Partnership as part of the 14 County Link Upstate Sector Partnership. The employers in this group work to identify the skills gaps and other key issues affecting their business. We take these discussions back to the local board and the state to create avenues to address them. Addressing issues in this manner is forward-thinking in the fact that we are not approaching business and industry with a pre-selected menu of services. This group has the autonomy to generate new ideas and suggest services needed by the workforce system.

To increase co-enrollment across center partners, partners have monthly placement sessions. The needs of individual clients are discussed, and partner contribute suggests how to help clients reach their goals. Sometimes clients are co-enrolled. The SC Works Operator maintains a referral database to track how referrals are made between partners.

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

SC Works Partners participate in the quarterly meetings. In these sessions, we share updates from various programs. Generally, we have a presentation from at least one partner during these meetings so they can inform us on updates to their specific programs. We have encouraged the use of one-page flyers that describe the services that each partner provides. We always have roundtable discussions so that each person has a time to share information about their programs. We always ask that during the roundtable discussion that each person share a success story; these stories show the systematic progression and referrals in place throughout the client's success.

We have a robust referral system between partners and maintain an up-to-date contact list to partners on our website. Referrals are made using names, phone numbers, appointments, and sharing of emails to increase follow-through. We keep track of referrals to and from our partners and share updated referral numbers in our partner meetings. We know, "to get referrals from partners, you must give referrals to partners." Monthly placement coordination meetings are another avenue for partners to share information about updated work procedures and practices.

SC Works partner staff participated in Your Next Step-SC Works 101 training. This increased the awareness of all the services offered in an SC Works Center and improves service delivery to job seekers and businesses, all while incorporating the branding of "Your Next Step."

- Streamline intake and referral processes;

State assistance is needed to streamline the intake and referral process. Only WIOA and DEW use the SC Works Online System.

State WIOA guidelines require customers to have very detailed Individual Services Strategies, having short-term, mid-term and long-term objectives. Every item has a different entry, for example, a student going to school would have entries related to school (tuition payments) and books (supportive services.) Clients with multiple barriers could go through the planning process with multiple agencies (adult education, vocational rehabilitation, WIOA). Each program has its own planning template. We seek state leadership in creating plan used by all partners.

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

The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board has limited resources. It has a budget of \$1.2 million dollars annually to serve an area workforce of 100,000. It has three full-time staff members to meet the needs in seven counties. The board must be strategic with resources.

Transportation is the greatest need. A five SC counties lack public transportation – three are in Upper Savannah. To be able to offer public transportation, counties must commit to matching funds. Upper Savannah staff have met with stakeholders. Greenwood now has a demand system which provides rides within a four-mile radius of the courthouse. Duke Energy has provided a grant which allows Greenwood County job seekers to get to and from the SC Works center at no cost.

Rather than trying to get a system going, we have focused on having services in each county. We have invited all partners to share space in rural offices. So far, just the Community Services Block Grant and Vocational Rehabilitation have joined WIOA in Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda.

The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board is trying to encourage employers to adopt van pooling. The supportive service policy can reimburse employers up to \$500 a month per WIOA On-the-Job Training participant for a trainees share of van pool costs for up to three months.

Upper Savannah lacks population density required by route-based service. Only Newberry has established routes. We will continue to partner with The Comet to promote ridership. We help customers access vital records to get state identification cards. SC Legal Services and Alston Wilkes can assist.

Housing is another area that is beyond our resources. We do work with GAME Housing Coalition. The Community Services Block Grant can pay for a month's rent to prevent eviction. The Pathway House is an emergency shelter/halfway house. Housing is available to victims of domestic abuse. We make referrals. GAME has participated in partner training. We now have flyers taped to the restroom stalls in each center. We have found that homeless individuals often use our facilities without engaging staff.

- Supporting industry-led, sector partnerships; and

Upper Savannah supports the sector strategy initiative, as it has assigned a staff member to represent our area in these events. Our LWDA is part of the 14-county Link Upstate Sector Partnership. We help to recruit local industry to participate in the partnership. We share communications, surveys, and results of these meetings with local staff, economic developers, chambers of commerce, and other partners. In our region, a representative from adult education is on the core team, as well and regularly attends the meetings so they can be a liaison for the educational system in our region. Our two core members participate in sector partnership meetings, and state sponsored sector partnership summits.

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

Best practices are an integral part of our partner-based workforce system. We start off every staff and partner meeting by going around the room and asking each attendee to give a success story. We share best practices in partner meetings and interagency councils. Our robust referral system helps move customers from partner to partner ensuring that the client's needs are met. Often there are many clients enrolled in our system who are being served in different capacities by multiple partners as we all work toward assisting the individual to meet their career goals and expectations. During this process we refine our processes and monitor them to find ways to be more efficient.

We utilize a customer-exit survey system in the SC Works Centers. If we get feedback from a customer on something that needs immediate attention, this is brought to the attention of the SC Works operator or another manager in the SC Works System. The key question we ask is, "After today's visit, do you feel closer to getting a job?" If anyone indicates they do not feel like they are closer to getting a job, we ask additional questions to insure they are getting the assistance they need.

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.

The LWDB takes a proactive approach, when possible, to address the workforce needs of the area. The funding restraints of our system encourage us to rely on a partner-based system so that we are more efficient and there is less duplication of services. Strategies to help our customers are at the forefront of everything we do. We must react to changes with the workforce when they happen. We use Labor Market Information to aid us in the decision-making process, but as of late, we have been working with information provided on news releases sent out to the local areas by SCDEW.

We communicate the information as needed with our partners via email. As with SCDEW, other partners are going through rapid changes within their systems due to impacts from Covid-19. While email may be the fastest way to send info, we use Zoom or a conference call to further explain the specifics of the shared information so that we can adjust our processes. We revise plans, work instructions, and supporting documents as needed to support the changes. A summary of the responses is reviewed annually by the board's oversight committee.

An example of the corporation is the on-boarding assistance provided to Samsung. The technical college was host to three job fairs. Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education assisted applicants in the computer lab. Business Services Representatives from WIOA, DEW and DSS helped with registration. Economic Development provided lunch. The Midlands Workforce Development Board provided assistance with interviews scheduled in Columbia.

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

A client's soft skills are reviewed during the assessment process. If a customer is late for an appointment or is not dressed appropriately, this is already an indication of poor soft skills. Reviewing a customer's work background, gaps, or many short-term jobs could lead to discussions

which discover issues with other soft skills. The form below is what we use to get feedback from employers who are hosting a client on a WIOA-funded Work Experience or OJT. This form may be submitted at different intervals throughout the clients Work Experience/OJT contract period.

Please rate the above trainee on the following five questions on a five-point scale from (5) Almost Always to Almost Never (1).

	Almost Always			Almost Never	
Does the trainee follow instructions? (Response to Supervision)	5	4	3	2	1
Is the trainee dependable? (attendance, punctuality)	5	4	3	2	1
Does the trainee work efficiently and ask for additional work when done with a task? (Taking Initiative)	5	4	3	2	1
Does the trainee follow safety procedures? (Workplace Policy and Safety)	5	4	3	2	1
Does the trainee dress appropriate for position and duties? (Workplace Appearance)	5	4	3	2	1
Is the trainee quality of work acceptable? (Quality of work)	5	4	3	2	1
Does the trainee relate positively with co-workers? (Teamwork)	5	4	3	2	1
Does the trainee use language appropriate for the workplace? (Communication skills)	5	4	3	2	1

Is there anything other than the above skills that the trainee should improve on?

Modeling soft skills is the best teaching modality. We hold staff and partners accountable and expect them to exhibit good soft skills. For example, if we expect clients to show up on time, we need to be good stewards of our own time and be available when clients arrive for their appointment. We provide workshops on soft skills and constantly relay the message of incorporating soft skills into a participant’s daily life. A lot of serving job seekers is coaching and changing behavior which leads to success. If a client is late to an appointment, we remind them that, if this were a job or an interview, it would not be acceptable.

Our partners also encourage and teach soft skills. Piedmont Technical College gives an academic grade and a soft skills grade to students in certain programs and expects to expand this into others, as they know soft skills is an expectation of the employers they serve, by training their future workforce.

We introduce the WIN and ALISON soft skills training modules to clients and grant them access so that they can go through the online coursework for soft skills. SC Works staff and partners continue to work with clients to ensure they are learning and practicing good soft skills. If accepting a phone call during an interview is not acceptable, then it is not acceptable during your appointment with a case manager either.

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

The Business Services Team is a strong link in our communication with employers. The needs of employers are discussed during employer visits, phone calls, and online meetings. A full list of employer services is provided under the employer tab on the local board's website, www.upperscworks.com. The local area works closely with SCMEP to address companies that may need Rapid Response IWT services. Upper Savannah will review these on a case-by-case basis.

The board is in full support of the sector strategies initiative and sends representation to all sector strategy events in the 14 county Link Upstate Sector Partnership area. The local area has representation from the state department of commerce and adult education at the Link Upstate events and we attend state-level training and collaboration events when scheduled. The sector partnership involves representation from all core partners, and we react to the needs of the employers in our area. Finding and attracting the right talent is has been a topic of discussion in the sector strategy events. We have K-12, Adult Education, CTE, and Technical School representation at the events so they can hear first-hand the call of the sector partnership's employers to create a career pathway model to find the workers that are in demand.

Our board's vision is in-line with the other workforce areas in the 14 County Link Upstate area. Manufacturing has the highest need and the most demand for workers. These jobs require minimal training for entry-level positions and the technical schools have been coordinating with CATE and high schools to establish entry-level manufacturing training while in high school. Recently the SC Manufacturing Certification program was taught for McCormick High School, and these individuals who were not college bound had what they needed to gain an entry-level manufacturing position. After securing employment, many of these employers offer company-paid training, and this helps these individuals move up the career ladder within their organizations. We have a career pathways model on the Link Upstate website, <https://linkupstate.com/career-pathways>.

Following is a menu of business services:

1. Job Postings- Online, phone call, fax, email, in-person
2. Applicant screening and referral to business specifications
3. Customized Recruitment
4. Job Fairs and Hiring Events
5. Provision of Labor Market Information
6. Interviewing Space, Scheduling
7. Provision of Information and referral related to:
 - Tax Credits
 - Community Resources

- Federal Bonding
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Veterans Services
8. Incumbent Worker training (as funds are available)
 9. On-the-job training
 10. Customized Training
 11. Information on Unemployment Insurance (UI)
 12. Transition Services for laid off workers
 13. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) information and services
 14. Veterans Employment Services
 15. Apprenticeship connections
 16. Access to WIN Testing
 17. WorkKeys Job Profiling Services
 18. Labor Market Information Sharing
 19. Database of Ready to Work Career Readiness Assessment tested applicants
 20. Rehab Technology
 21. Comprehensive Evaluations
 22. In-patient Substance Abuse Treatment
 23. Job Readiness Training
 24. Expungement Education Services
 25. Hearing Impairment Services
 26. Job Accommodation for the Visually Impaired
 27. Vocational Assessments and Career Guidance
 28. Outsourcing Contracts

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.

Local staff from Upper Savannah currently participates in the Link Upstate Region’s Sector Strategy Team meetings. The key characteristics of sector partnership include focusing on an industry that is important to the regional economy: engaging firms in a “wholesale” manner, as multi-firm partnerships; serving regions that make sense to the industry based on labor sheds, supply chains, etc. (i.e. not based on geopolitical boundaries); creating a public-private partnership; being demand driven/industry-led; focusing on problem solutions, not programs, and understanding the critical role of an intermediary in aligning public resources and engaging employers.

These team meetings have provided the framework for identifying our Target Cluster for the Upstate Region: Diversified Manufacturing. This participation ensures that concerns and challenges in our local area will be identified and addressed. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board actively participates in the meetings. From our local area, we have representation from the SC Chamber of Commerce, Piedmont Technical College, Adult Education, and WIOA, who regularly

attends the Sector Strategies meetings. This team works to share information with partners and employers and when results are shared, it acts as a catalyst, bringing more employers to the table.

Upper Savannah also has a close working relationship with Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and they share space in the USCOG office. Upper Savannah Council of Governments has a revolving loan fund which provides gap financing for small businesses.

Upper Savannah regularly communicates with the economic developers in each of our seven counties. We are included in their newsletters and we share information about SC Works with them as it relates to business services, needs, grants, etc. We are at the table when there is a demand for a business to find skilled workers for business growth and we are present when there is a need for a company to down-size and lay off workers or close. Shelby Reeds on our local workforce board and he is employed with the SC Department of Commerce, so he is also a great resource. We also have a great working relationship with Susan Heath who leads the Ready SC projects in our area.

Upper Savannah makes referrals to the Small Business Development Center on a regular basis. Our area is included in the Ten at the Top. They have various free seminars and training opportunities and work to help solve problems and find solutions to business needs. As we engage with businesses, we share this information with them, and we post this upcoming news in the center. A lot of new businesses start when someone loses a job, so we have the opportunity in the center to direct these individuals to bounty of resources available for new or expanding businesses. We also offer space in our centers for small businesses to conduct interviews, hold hiring events and serve as a makeshift office while they are working to secure or build a permanent location. Referrals are also regularly made to the Chamber of Commerce Office(s) and other organizations they could benefit the organization such as Piedmont Area Human Resources Association, (PAHRA). The Small Business Development Center representative has also been a guest speak at our Workforce Development Board Meeting. This allows the board members from our seven counties to hear this valuable information and relay it to people that they know in their respective counties.

Section IV: Program Design and Evaluation

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

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

The board funds one contractor, GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission. Performance information including slot level utilization and client expenditures is transmitted quarterly. The

board provides guidance for selecting training providers. We are hopeful we can get reports to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs from DEW. There are other service providers (adult education, childcare, transportation) that are used by the contractor. The Upper Savannah area joined the WorkLink area to jointly solicit offers for adult and dislocated worker career services and SC Works operator (including business services and work-based learning.)

- How the local board will target rural communities, including facilitating increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system through the use of technology and other means;

Upper Savannah has seven counties and seven centers. It serves Abbeville, Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda in person one day a week and remotely the rest of the week. The mix of in-person and remote service keeps costs reasonable yet allows for relationship building. The Department of Employment and Workforce has a slate of workshops which can be offered virtually. WIOA can fund laptop leases and pay for internet access for clients enrolled in training.

- How entities within the SC Works delivery system, including center operators and partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and

Upper Savannah staff visits all centers at least once a year to perform an on-site accessibility review. Upper Savannah paid a consultant to review the website platform and make changes. Once a year the nontraditional worker committee (which functions as the area's disability committee) does a walkthrough of the comprehensive center. When needed/necessary information can be printed in a larger font, documents can be used with the zoom/magnifying component of the ADA computer. Appointments are requested at the Upper Savannah SC Works Centers. When appointments are being scheduled, individuals are to indicate if there is a need for ADA accommodations or Language Interpreter so that staff can plan and be prepared at time of appointment.

Training has been provided to staff by way of quarterly partner meetings, partner staff, state staff, webinars, and/or information received and forwarded to staff. The Upper Savannah SC Works Operator has collaborated with staff from the SC Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind for training and usage of ADA equipment and software. The Operator has trained and will continue to train staff and partner staff, as needed, on the use of the available ADA equipment in the SC Works Centers.

Upper Savannah included panel discussions at the December 2019 Partner Meeting on how to recognize invisible disabilities. Panelists included representatives from SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Commission for the Blind, and Beckman Center for Mental Health

Services. Also, at this quarterly meeting, the Disabilities/Non-traditional Committee reviewed the Greenwood SC Works ADA Monitoring Checklist.

The Disabilities/Non-traditional Committee meets during the Partner Quarterly meetings to discuss assigned issues such as ADA, disabilities, and non-traditional.

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

Partners that utilize office space at the SC Works Centers pay for space in the center based on the number of staff and days in the center. Those sharing in this cost include:

- a. Wagner Peyser, SCDEW
- b. Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker, SCDEW
- c. Veterans, SCDEW
- d. Trade Adjustment Assistance SCDEW
- e. WIOA Assessment, Intake, Core Service, Intensive and Training- GLEAMNS
- f. Department of Social Services
- g. SC Vocational Rehabilitation
- h. SC Commission on the Blind
- i. CSBG
- j. Unemployment Insurance, SCDEW
- k. Adult Education - TABE test our participants, gives referrals, helps with job readiness assessments (WIN/WorkKeys).

Partners who are offsite have established referral systems/electronic links and provide services for our clients in lieu of monetary contributions:

- a. Goodwill -Manages Senior employment program, participants work in our SC Works centers.
- b. Job Corps -Referrals to/from and provide follow-up on JC graduates.
- c. Piedmont Technical College - Free Job fair assistance, venue at no cost, promo.

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

Below is a table showing the most common activities in the last complete program year for adults and dislocated workers. The Workforce Development Board plans to increase utilization of labor market information consultations, resume assistance (appears in basic career services) and soft skills instruction (appears in information only). Planned service levels for program year 2022 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) are in the last column. Each number represents one client. A client may utilize an activity more than once but is counted one time.

I.	Participation Summary	Past Yr.	Planned 2022 Year
A.	Total Participants	387	350
B.	Program Activities / Services Summary		
	Basic Career Services (Staff-Assisted)	375	350
	Information Only/Workforce Information	74	100
	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	4	4
	Individualized Career Services	387	350
	Financial Literacy	1	1
	Pre-Vocational Activities	21	20
	Work Experience	17	16
	Employment opportunities, including internships, not limited to summer months	17	16
	Other work experience activities	17	16
	Training Services	195	200
	Occupational Skills Training	132	135
	ABE / ESL with Occupational Skills Training	6	6
	On the Job Training	61	61
	Secondary Education	50	52
	Comprehensive Guidance/Counseling Services	2	2
	Labor Market and Employment Information	0	24
	Established Individual Training Account (ITA)	62	50
	Support Services	225	225
II.	Co-Enrollment Summary	Enrolled	Enrolled
	Multiple WIOA Funding	67	67
	Wagner Peyser	120	120
	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	5	5

1. All clients will be offered basic career services designed to connect them with resources and employers. Common services include. Many of the basic career services are offered through Wagner Peyser. About a third of clients are co-enrolled with Wagner Peyser. Below are some of the most common basic career services. Resume assistance
2. Help with job applications, especially on-line applications
3. An evaluation of skills and work history and career planning

4. Basic skills assessment (WIN or Work Keys)
5. Interview preparation skills
6. Job search assistance
7. Connection to supportive services.

The remaining services relate to skill attainment. GED or high school instruction is foundational. Nearly all full-time jobs with benefits require high school credentials. Computer skills are as important as traditional language and math skills.

At the time that the plan revision is being finalized, traditional technical college courses are offered at no cost. The role of the workforce system is changing. Rather than being the payer, we will concentrate on:

1. Building awareness of career potential by providing information about wages and demand.
2. Offering assessment so undecided students can narrow career choices.
3. Assisting with supportive services including books, supplies, Transportation, childcare, laptop lease, testing and tutoring.
4. Being the workplace learning partner.

The board will continue to fund skill training through the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL).

Below are common programs which have been funded in the past.

Accounting Certificate	Automotive Technology	Business
Cardiovascular Tech.	CNC Certificate	Computer Tech.
Electrical Maintenance	Electronic Engineering	Emergency Medical Tech.
Engineering Graphics	HVAC	Industrial Electronics
Machine Tool	Mechanical Engineering	Nursing (LPN)
Mechatronics	Nursing (RN)	PC Technician
Rad. Tech	Respiratory Therapy	Surgical Tech
Truck Driver Training	Welding	SC Manufacturing Certificate (SCMC)

People in training must attend class, make satisfactory progress, and participate in activities as scheduled. The current training limit is \$10,000 per training with a \$14,000 life time cap. Scholarship funding may be decreased if the Workforce Area experiences a budget cut.

Below are the Requirements, Which Must Be Met to Be Eligible for a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Scholarship

- Be eligible for service from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Been unable to obtain/retain employment through services offered by the Workforce System.
- Been determined to be in need of training.
- Have the skills/qualifications and resources to successfully participate in the selected program and work in a training-related occupation.
- Wants training for a job where there is a demand for workers.
- Must not be in default of a student loan.

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

The local area participates in all State-level Rapid Response Training Events to ensure we are conducting and contributing to all local Rapid Response Meetings. As we learn of employers who are facing a layoff, we communicate with the Rapid Response State Lead and help to gather information and plan management meetings with the business. This typically leads to meetings with groups of affected employees.

Roles of local staff during a Rapid Response Meeting:

Local WIOA Representative's Role:

- Prior to the sessions, submit an electronic list of SC Works locations surrounding the affected workers, the hours of operations (including any holiday closures), contact information, and a calendar of upcoming events
- Discuss SC Works locations, hours of operation, and contact details
- Discuss calendar of upcoming events
- Discuss training opportunities (e.g., classroom, On-the-Job Training [OJT])

Local SC Works Representative's Role:

- Create position templates for resume assistance
- Assign staff to provide services per company schedule
- Assist workers with resume building, SCWOS and/or UI registration, job search assistance

When providing job seekers services to an individual associated with a Rapid Response event, local SC Works representatives will enter the code 110 in SCWOS.

It is important to keep in mind the impact of these services. Not only do they help soon-to-be displaced workers avoid unemployment, it shows company management that the SC Works system can serve businesses effectively and efficiently. Representatives should be comfortable and competent in building resumes, using SCWOS, and overall customer service skills.

Regardless of where a service is provided (e.g., onsite, in the Career Coach, at a local SC Works Center, etc.), the individuals should be tied to the layoff/closure by using the Federal ID number assigned to that event. This can be found in SCWOS under the company's profile.

Upper Savannah works with the State Team to host onsite workshops, Job Fairs, etc. If there are other specific needs for the affected employer/employees, we request approval to invite other partners. For example, one employer had local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors onsite to offer services to existing workers. When the business decided to close, the VR Counselor attended the Rapid Response meetings. This gave the affected workers a familiar face and allowed VR to continue to work with these clients as they transitioned to SC Works and WIOA to get assistance as they worked toward a new job opportunity.

In conjunction with the state dislocated worker unit, Upper Savannah created an eight minute video in English and Spanish covering job search and training assistance.

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 chart below shows youth activities for the past year and projected levels for program year 2022.

I.	Participation Summary	Past Yr.	Planned
A.	Total Participants	81	70
B.	Program Activities / Services Summary		
	Basic Career Services (Staff-Assisted)	27	30
	Information Only/Workforce Information	3	5
	Referred to Other Federal/State Assistance	2	2
	Individualized Career Services	81	75
	Pre-Vocational Activities	14	15
	Work Experience	12	15
	Summer Employment/Internship during the Summer (WIOA Youth)	0	0
	Employment opportunities, including internships, not limited to summer months	8	5
	On-the-Job Training (WIOA Youth)	5	10
	Transitional Job (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Dislocated Worker Grants)	0	0
	Other work experience activities	8	5
	Training Services	16	16
	Occupational Skills Training	1	1
	Youth Occupational Skills Training	15	13
	Youth Services	81	40
	Secondary Education	50	55
	Alternative Secondary Education	1	0
	Educational Achievement Services	59	60
	Leadership Development	27	28
	Adult Mentoring Services	1	1
	Comprehensive Guidance/Counseling Services	2	1
	Labor Market and Employment Information	31	40
	Postsecondary Transition and Preparatory Activities	1	1
	Established Individual Training Account (ITA)	9	9
	Support Services	37	40

	Needs - Related Payments	0	2
II.	Co-Enrollment Summary	Past Yr.	Planned
	Multiple WIOA Funding	13	8
	Wagner Peyser	21	5

Funding for youth workforce activities is limited. Youth often have less resources and as a result, cost more to serve than adults. We anticipate in 2022 serving 70 youth with WIOA formula funding and another 10 with WIOA discretionary money.

WIOA works closely with Voc. Rehab for the youth population who may have disabilities. By co-enrolling these Youth Participants, we can serve this population expeditiously, leading to earlier wins and successes. As one of our core partners, Vocational Rehabilitation has a scheduled weekly presence in some of our centers and are available by appointment in the others. Having such a close relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation has enabled SC Works staff to be more aware of people with hidden disabilities, leading to earlier referrals. Vocational Rehabilitation can serve a great number of high school students.

Often, WIOA Youth Participants take part in Work Experience to acclimate them to the world of work. The case managers work with the employers to design an experience that facilitates individual growth in work and soft skills.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programmatic services for Youth are provided in all seven counties in the Upper Savannah Workforce Area by GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission. Access to self-service employment services, such as online job searches and filing for unemployment and maintenance of the claim, are available at all SC Works Centers in the area. The primary focus of the area’s youth program is on out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 to 24, who are not attending any school and meet one of the seven criteria prescribed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 75 percent of the youth allocation must be spent on out-of-school youth. At a minimum, 20 percent must be spent on work experience opportunities for youth.

Individuals who are interested in WIOA programs are asked to attend an orientation to WIOA. If an individual is unable to attend the scheduled orientation session, WIOA staff can conduct a one-on-one session with the individual or attend the session virtually by following the YouTube link provided to them. The orientation session is an overview of services that are available to individuals enrolled in WIOA. If the attendee is interested in WIOA they are scheduled for an eligibility determination appointment and given information on what documentation is needed for the eligibility appointment. At the eligibility appointment, staff input the gathered data into the SCWOS WIOA application then make a determination of

eligibility for the WIOA Youth program. If the applicant is eligible for WIOA, a comprehensive assessment appointment is scheduled. Individuals who fail to meet the eligibility criteria for WIOA are given information and referrals to other community services that may address their specific needs. The comprehensive assessment gathers information on the education and employment needs of the applicant, as well as identifies any potential barrier that may hinder their pathway to success.

The comprehensive assessment is the first WIOA activity. Once enrolled, the participant and staff develop an employment and training plan. Services that are available to Youth participants include individualized job placement assistance, GED preparation, referrals to services through partner agencies, workshops ranging from application skills to expungement information, as well as work experience opportunities, on-the-job training opportunities, and apprenticeship opportunities. Occupational skills and classroom training in targeted in-demand occupational sectors is available to participants needing this type of service to obtain or retain employment. If it is determined that the participant would benefit from or needs one or more of the fourteen program elements as prescribed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, arrangements are made to provide that service.

The SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) has always served youth with disabilities. Their specially trained counselors get referrals from high school staff. They develop success strategies for each student. The first goal is to finish high school. They can provide mentoring and advocacy. Often youth are placed in summer work experience assignments. Students are provided transitional assistance and about a third of the graduates are sponsored for post-secondary training.

Upper Savannah completed a re-entry navigator grant targeting youth offenders. It is a partnership between WIOA and the Youth Offender Act. All referrals are set up with an SC Works account and told about Federal Bonding. Youth who want to participate are offered career counseling, education and work experience. Those services have been incorporated into the regular youth program. The area seeking to identify and serving those who are aging out of foster care.

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

1. **Tutoring, study skills, dropout prevention and recovery:** The services provided include: tutoring, remediation, computer training, assistance with class scheduling, and collaboration with teachers and counselors. The Student Support Services TRiO programs offered at local community colleges and universities are also leveraged to provide educational opportunities for low-income youth and individuals with disabilities. The SSS provides support for students seeking academic development and assists students to meet basic college requirements.

2. **Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery service:** This includes basic education skills training, individualized academic instruction, and English as a second language training.
3. **Paid and unpaid work experiences:** Employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing and on-the-job training opportunities are provided through the case management and job development process, with the Business Services Representative coordinating and monitoring the placement, and the Case Manager coordinating counseling and supportive services.

On the Job Training (OJT)/Work Experience (WE): Title I of WIOA includes a requirement that a minimum of 20 percent of local area youth funds must be spent on work-based learning, and Upper Savannah complies with this requirement. Youth Program participants are often deficient in soft and work readiness skills necessary to achieve success in the workforce. When a youth elects to participate in the work experience component of the Youth Program, staff spend time working with the youth to complete a comprehensive Work Readiness Goal using the Individual Service Strategy.

OJT and Work Experience are guided by a contract with the employer. Using WIOA funding, GLEAMNS is able to provide funding for youth wages, workers compensation, and FICA for work experience participants.

In the case that employment ends in a negative manner, the case manager guides the youth in how to remedy the situation and handle the next job differently. The purpose of all work experience is to increase work ethic, employability, and positive interactions with co-workers, customers, and supervisors for future long-term self-sufficiency.

Other opportunities such as pre-apprenticeships, internships, and job shadowing are also used when available and appropriate for the participating youth. For these options, a contract would be developed with the Registered Apprenticeship, internship, or job shadowing program that would involve both classroom and on-the-job instruction, and the guidelines and procedures for WE would be followed. For this option, the requirements for employed workers would also be a requirement met by the employer partner.

4. **Occupational skills training:** Occupational Skills Training is designed to provide an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that transfer into the functions required by certain occupational fields upon entry into the industry. It is time-limited, but of a sufficient duration to help the youth develop the skills they need and is part of a pathway leading to the attainment of a recognized credential.

Funding for Occupational Skills Training can be made available to WIOA Youth participants through the Individual Training Account Scholarship (ITA) process.

5. Concurrent education with workforce preparation: Integrated education and training offers youth the opportunity to participate in workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway. To implement this process, GLEAMNS uses cross-agency partnerships, engages employers in high-demand industries, and utilizes education and training programs.

Leveraged and braided funding is used to pay for specific components of the pathway. For example, a referral to Adult Education will link youth to basic academic skills while OJT is supported by WIOA funding. Contextualized training is another option. Other support services that are integrated include co-enrollment in TANF, housing, and other programs to facilitate success. The staff working with the youth in workforce preparation programs communicate regularly to discuss progress.

6. Leadership development: Leadership development activities include community service opportunities, peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility and contributions to the community, and positive social and civic behaviors. GLEAMNS offers several additional programs that can promote youth leadership development and civic engagement such as CSBG Youth Leadership program and financial literacy programs. In the context of career services, youth are taught to list volunteer work and community involvement on their resumes to demonstrate responsibility, social advocacy, and community awareness.

7. Supportive services: As part of the objective assessment process, all youth are assessed individually to determine the need for supportive services, appropriate community resources, and referrals to enable them to reach their goals. To ensure that supportive services do not duplicate other services already available in the community, GLEAMNS makes referrals to various community partners and helps participants complete any necessary paperwork to obtain the services. The formalized referral system helps to establish the best avenue for accessing individual needs. When a participant receives supportive services, the case manager also assists them in developing a plan to cover the costs once WIOA funds are no longer available. Case managers work with each participant in developing an individualized budget so youth can begin to budget monthly costs, as well as establish a savings plan to better prepare for unforeseen financial crisis. The youth contractor follows the Upper Savannah supportive services policy.

8. Adult mentoring: Youth have a greater likelihood of achieving success if they have participated in an intentional, integrated, and well-coordinated set of supports. The Case Managers can arrange for mentoring to occur using a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor. GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc. will link youth to existing mentoring programs in the various

communities. Currently, there are fraternal and business organizations offering mentoring for youth in our service area. Mentors are unpaid.

Mentoring is an aspect of the program that offers youth participants individualized and specialized support for growth. The activities are structured and the mentors offer guidance, support, and encouragement that builds the character of the mentee. Planning and preparing for independent living, providing connections to safe stable adult relationships, creating opportunities for youth to develop advocacy skills, and engaging youth in all of these activities is the key to their future economic stability.

- 9. Follow-up services:** Follow-up services are provided for no less than 12 months for all youth exiting the WIOA program. The follow-up services are provided by the Case Manager and the WIOA Program Assistant. Each quarter, program staff track follow-up participants in the SC Works Online Services system as required by WIOA regulations. Contact is made with participants in-person, by telephone, using e-mail, by text, through social media, or through letters.

Youth program staff contact youth regularly for one year after they exit the program to keep up to date on participants' employment, education status, and wage information. The follow-up is documented upon occurrence and also documented quarterly beginning with the 1st quarter after the last date of service.

- 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling:** Youth who are transitioning into young adulthood or to the world of work and postsecondary education are in need of more intensive services. Youth Program staff work one-on-one with youth to offer initial support and assessment to determine appropriate referrals. An ISS (Individual Service Strategy) is developed at the time of enrollment which is updated with any changes throughout the youth's participation in the WIOA program. Case managers meet with participants as often as needed. Meetings take place in the office, at the worksite, or at school. Initial and ongoing assessments note any issues needing to be addressed.

SC Vocational Rehabilitation staff have specialized training in serving individuals with mental health or substance abuse issues. Often youth are co-enrolled with VR. A cohort of SC Works staff completed Mental Health First Aid sponsored by SC Thrive. If a client needs additional assistance referrals can be made to local providers.

- 11. Financial literacy education:** Program staff provide assistance to Youth with budgeting, as well as provide referrals to financial literacy education courses in the community. GLEAMNS WIOA provides financial literacy workshops to WIOA clients. These workshops are performed by Case Managers and utilize the FDIC Money Smart Financial Education Program, which provides participants with practical knowledge, skills-building opportunities, and resources they can use to manage their finances with confidence. Topics Include:

- Importance of Checking and Savings Accounts
- Benefits of Direct Deposit
- Developing and Sticking to a Budget
- Banking Institution/Credit Union vs. Payday Loan/Title Loans
- Credit Score and Credit Report
- Education on identity theft
- Making informed financial decisions
- Comparing financial information
- Money management
- Hands-on scenarios related to financial management

GLEAMNS Case Managers will also help clients open a checking or savings account.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training: Program staff work with small business owners who offer work experience sites and who have expressed an interest in providing additional mentoring services and in creating entrepreneurship pathways for participating youth. Referrals to the Small Business Development Center will be made.

13. Labor Market Information: Youth program staff provide youth with information on the labor market and case managers help youth understand the relationship between labor demands, employment opportunities, and career awareness.

Case Managers and other program staff receive training to remain current on labor market information resources. Staff utilize labor market information from SC Works to assist youth in making appropriate career choices (e.g. high demand jobs for projected county and statewide industries). In addition, staff works with employers in the community to determine the skills needed for careers in high demand in the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area.

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training: Case managers provide opportunities that prepare youth for the transition into postsecondary education and training. These services include exploring postsecondary education options (technical training, community college, universities, apprenticeship/ certification programs), assisting youth to prepare for testing (ACT/SAT), assisting with college admission applications and helping youth to obtain related documents and financial aid, and connecting youth to postsecondary programs through site visits, presentations, and information provided during case management and other meetings. WIOA youth are also eligible to apply for Individual Training Account Scholarships that offer financial support in participating in postsecondary education.

6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), what is the LWDA's policy that further defines how to determine if a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the

job, in the individual's family, or in society. If your area continues to use TABE for determining youth basic skills deficiency, a local policy is not required.

Upper Savannah uses TABE.

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

The Upper Savannah Workforce Board reviews labor market needs. It directs employers and job seekers to existing resources. When there is a gap, the board investigates funding opportunities. In 2018, the board worked with Piedmont Technical College to establish truck driver training. Two local employers contributed land and paved a practice field for the program.

The board notes skill shortages and communicates those to educators in ten school districts. The Western Piedmont Educational Consortium (WPEC) is housed in the same building as Upper Savannah Council of Governments. WPEC convenes guidance counselors, Career and Technology center directors, and adult education directors monthly.

An example of the coordination are frequent joint job fairs held at Piedmont Technical College for the college, high school students, and the general public.

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

The board has established a supportive services policy for its contractor to follow when using WIOA funds.

The transportation needs for the region exceed the area's capabilities. Even if the area spent all its available funding on just transportation, Upper Savannah would not be able to establish a route-based public transportation system. Greenwood County now has a service which can transport riders within a four-mile radius of the courthouse. Duke Energy agreed to fund rides to and from the SC Works Center. Child care is one of the most expensive supportive services. Childcare especially for infants often has waiting lists. First Steps is now represented on the board. First Steps offers funding childcare scholarships. Also, Head Start is represented on the board.

WIOA can pay when other funds are not available. Below are local policies:

Transportation Reimbursement- \$6 dollars a day for 5 to 24 miles one way. \$16 dollars a day for 25 miles one way or more. Transportation payments for work-based learning are limited to three weeks.

Transportation Assistance - A payment to a transportation provider such as a taxi service, public transportation provider or service such as Uber or Lyft. It is expected payments \$30 or less one way. Transportation can only be provided from residence to work and cannot include stops. The assistance is limited to three weeks or 15 round trip journeys

Clients who need help getting to an On-the-Job Training assignment may be assisted if their employer participated in a van pool. WIOA can pay the trainee's share of ride pool costs up to \$500 for three months.

Childcare or Dependent Care - A payment of up to \$25 a day for all day care or up to \$12 a day for care less than four hours. The payment must be to the provider. Relatives may be used as childcare providers, but a reimbursement will not be made to a parent. For example, a dad cannot be paid for keeping his child so the mother can attend class.

Assistance with Housing - The Upper Savannah Workforce Area does not provide assistance with housing. The agencies, which may help, include GLEAMNS Community Services Block Grant, churches and the GAMES Homeless Coalition.

Needs Related Payments - \$240 a week payment for eligible clients who are in occupational skills training. Clients may use the payment for more than one training program if multiple programs are recommended in the Individual Employment Plan. Reimbursement is capped at 17 weeks. The Needs Related Payment is reserved for those who are not working and are documented as homeless or transitioning from foster care.

Assistance with Educational Testing - Payment for licensing exams or tests for educational credentials. WIOA will not pay for an exam twice without remediation. If a client fails the initial exam, the client must participate in at least one hour of remediation for every \$20 of the cost of the retest.

Reasonable Accommodations for individuals with Disabilities - The Upper Savannah area is committed to eliminating barriers to employment. The area ensures its locations are ADA compliant. From time-to-time, there may be need for services such as a sign language interpreter. Upper Savannah and its contractor will handle situations on an as-needed basis.

Referrals to Health Care - Upper Savannah can pay for health care expenses, which are necessary for a client to go to class or get employment. Examples of services include: immunizations, TB testing, prescription eyeglasses, clinic visit to get a prescription to treat health condition which would cause client to fail pre-employment physical (such as high blood pressure), prescription medicine. The limit for an individual is \$500 and includes: immunizations, testing, medical care, prescriptions, prescription eyeglasses.

Assistance with uniforms or other work attire and work-related tools - Up to \$250 in uniforms, personal protective equipment and tools may be purchased for a client. If the client is attending training, the items must be required by the school. If the items are needed for work, they must be required by the employer. It is recommended that uniforms be purchased for the client or the client be given a voucher. There is a \$100 limit on general clothes such as work pants.

Assistance with books, fees, and other necessary items for student enrolled in post-secondary classes- Items must be required for students.

Technology Equipment and IT Access for Students - Depending on the technology needs the student can be provided a laptop, a Chromebook or I-Pad. Laptops should only be purchased if a Chromebook will not be adequate. Laptops are limited to \$1,000 or less unless there are technical specifications that require more power. If a lease option is available, that is preferred. Internet access can be reimbursed for the duration that the client is in approved training. Case managers can approve up to \$40 a month and \$100 for installation. If the cost exceeds the limit, the case manager should document the options available and get approval from a supervisor. The reimbursement for internet access cannot include cable television or phone.

Payments and fees for employment and training - related applications, tests and certifications- Payments for employment-related applications, tests and certifications are allowable as long as they are consistent with the client's individual employment plan. Please note however, that it is not Upper Savannah's policy to conduct background checks and drug screens on all clients as a condition for program participation. Screening is limited to what is required by training vendors and employers.

Legal Aid Services - The cost for filing for an expungement or pardon of an offense may be paid for clients who are enrolled and actively working towards goals in their Individual Employment Plan. A case manager may set goals which must be met prior to WIOA authorizing payment for expungement funding.

Other Supportive Services - Driver's Education Training Clients who lack a driver's license may be offered instruction through a commercial training provider.

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

Adult Education providers are full partners in the SC Works system. For years, the seven local agencies have worked to build awareness of the value of a high school credential and of having the basics required for employers including the WorkKeys/WIN assessments. Adult education providers serve on the Sector Partnership initiative and hear first-hand what the employer's needs and hiring requirements are.

Adult education providers developed strategic plans which were submitted to their state office. All have identified potential career ladders which they will support. The lists vary, but all include some manufacturing occupations which continue to be the largest need in the Greater Upstate Region that includes Upper Savannah (Link Upstate).

We continue to survey manufacturers regarding their training needs. This enables us to inform job seekers and students of training programs which align with these manufacturing opportunities. We communicate these needs to the school district's CATE centers and technical schools in our region. Measurement continues to be a skill which needs to be taught. Adult education providers help provide that needed instruction.

Adult education administers TABE and work readiness assessments in our area. We continue to have a great referral network with the adult education centers; in fact, Laurens County Adult Education had the most referrals to SC Works than any other partner in PY2019.

Supportive services are available to adult education clients including:

Assistance with Educational Testing -Payment for licensing exams or tests for educational credentials. WIOA will not pay for an exam twice without remediation. If a client fails the initial exam, the client must participate in at least one hour of remediation for every \$10 of the cost of the retest.

Technology Equipment and IT Access for Students- Depending on the technology needs the student can be provided a laptop, a Chromebook or I-Pad. Laptops should only be purchased if a Chromebook will not be adequate. Laptops are limited to \$1,000 or less unless there are technical specifications that require more power. If a lease option is available, that is preferred. Internet access can be reimbursed for the duration that the client is in approved training. Case managers can approve up to \$40 a month and \$100 for installation. If the cost exceeds the limit, the case manager should document the options available and get approval from a supervisor. The reimbursement for internet access cannot include cable television or phone.

The Workforce Board agreed that it would help review Adult Ed providers as it did in 2017-2018. An Ad Hoc committee was formed by the board that continues to work together during all Upper Savannah SC Works Partner Meetings to address any of the Adult Education needs.

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.

It is the policy of the Upper Savannah Workforce System to treat all employees with dignity and respect and to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination, whether that discrimination is based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity or pregnancy), nationality, origin, disability, political affiliation, marital status, age, sexual orientation or other non-merit factors.

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act retains the same non-discrimination provisions found in Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act, and as the workforce system transitions to operations under the new law, this guidance will remain in effect. The relevant nondiscrimination provision in WIOA states that “no individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, among other basis.”

Grantees and partners will adhere to Equal Opportunity requirements and will not discriminate against any employee or participant because of race, color, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, disability, political affiliation, or national origin. As a federally funded program, Equal Opportunities apply. Grantees and partners will comply with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and instructions transmitted by Upper Savannah.

Grantees and partners are responsible for ensuring that their staff are trained. On an ongoing basis, Grantees and partners will assess the need for staff training and will provide training as needed. Staff will attend periodic training sponsored by Upper Savannah and will attend the annual Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act state symposium and/or other training recommended by Upper Savannah. Grantees will conduct ongoing customer satisfaction training with the case managers and other agency staff. Grantees will also provide ongoing training to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded staff and other agency staff on aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act and training on effectively communicating with individuals with disabilities and meeting their accommodation needs. Grantees will take every possible measure to serve individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities.

SC Works Centers are reviewed for accessibility during the monthly reviews. Reasonable accommodations are provided as the need arises and when requested.

At Quarterly Partner meetings in the past, partners such as SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Commission on the Blind, DSS, etc. have given presentations about their program services. Some of these partners have a presence at the Upper Savannah SC Works Centers. There is a referral process in place where referrals can be made between WIOA and partner staff. The Upper Savannah SC Works Operator sends communications to partners and staff on a regular basis. There is constant communication between staff and partners, including Hot Jobs listings, job fairs, hiring events, etc.

Bilingual services are offered by request by completing a request for interpreter services request form. SCWOS job search portal has a toggle which enables the user to translate the site into Spanish. Many areas of SCDEW's database have the information available in various languages, including Spanish. All required Equal Opportunity postings are presented on the SC Works Centers' EO information board. When information is to be presented, or shared, we make sure that accommodations are made to offer the information in the required language and/or have an interpreter assigned to the project. For example, a Rapid Response meeting with an employer who has a large Hispanic workforce; this may require that the documents provided be presented in Spanish. Often, a bilingual representative attends these meetings to translate the information provided.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT Rights Handout for Registrants, Applicants, and Participants for the Upper Savannah Region is available in English and Spanish versions. .

The Upper Savannah area as created a staff guide of commonly asked questions with direction on how to direct individuals to the best program. The guide is included in the operations plan.

Section V: Operations and Compliance

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

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

Upper Savannah Council of Governments was chosen by the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board and the local elected officials to be the fiscal and administrative entity for WIOA funds. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Director reports to the Local Workforce Development Board and to the Upper Savannah Council of Governments' Executive Director. Local workforce staff are on the payroll for the Upper Savannah Council of Governments.

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

The starting point for procuring subgrants is the workforce plan. A list of what the board needs is compiled. A draft budget is developed and the board votes on the services it will procure, along with any specifications. The procurement is advertised and an offeror's conference is held. Staff reviews submissions to ensure they meet minimum standards. The executive committee reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the full board.

Upper Savannah has an active joint Request for Proposal for adult and dislocated worker career services, one stop operator (including work-based learning) with WorkLink. A youth RFP will be developed after consultation with the Youth Council.

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

The performance goals will be added to the plan.

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

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

The board will get a quarterly SC Works outcomes report. The board has an SC Works operations committee which reviews staff and customer service surveys annually.

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

The Request of Proposal format requires those offering services to create a report card which will be used for quarterly reviews. In addition to federal and state mandated measures the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board will track: resumes added to system, labor market information consultations, soft skills activities and referrals. The board has articulated that it expects to see each partner staff to add one referral, one soft skills activity and one labor market consultation each month.

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

Upper Savannah has seven centers. Most staff travel to more than one center, often using a desk for the day. Because space usage is fluid, the area uses the Full-Time Equivalent staff methodology. The threshold for cost sharing is a half day a week.

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

The following partners are included in the cost share methodology: SCDEW, SCDSS, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission on the Blind, Greenwood County Adult Education, GLEAMNS Community Services Block Grant.

Other partners pay their share by investing in goods or services that reduce costs for others or expand services. Below are recent contributions:

1. Piedmont Technical College - Host two area job fairs saving partners about \$3,000 in table rental and event insurance. Provide outreach support including billboards and below market cost direct mail assistance.
2. Goodwill –Provides outreach assistance via signs at their retail stores.
3. OAdult education providers – Offer TABE and WIN testing at no cost to individuals referred by SC Works partners.

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

- If contracts for training services will be used;

There is no plan to use contracts for training services at this time.

- How the use of training service contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs; and

Not applicable.

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

Information is available through the PATh system.

7. A description of the process used by the local board to provide a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of the businesses, labor organizations, and education.

The cornerstone of the plan is the training priority list. We received input from nearly 200 businesses and four thousand students and ten school districts. The outline of the plan was approved by the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board November 14, 2022. The full narrative and accompanying documents was published on the area’s website, December 14, 2022 The area’s Facebook page was used to distribute a link. Labor organizations had the ability to comment. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board has a member representing organized labor. Upper Savannah sent an email to workforce development board members on December 14, 2022. A copy of comments will be sent to board members along with the complete plan for approval by January 2, 2023.

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

We started using an internet-based appointment system to manage capacity. It has worked better than we expected. We follow-up on appointments to ensure customers bring what they need to accomplish their goals. It helps with staffing. If a key person is scheduled to be off, we reduce appointments. We recently had a day when the internet was not available due to scheduled maintenance. We sent staff to other offices and picked up more appointments there.

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

The percentage of adults who meet the priority of services definition is reviewed by staff quarterly. The board receives a report annually unless there is a problem.

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

Upper Savannah focuses on individuals with poor work history as defined:

“not currently working full-time and has not had a single job of at least 18 months in duration in the last 36 months.” By focusing on poor work history, in addition to family income, we are more likely to encounter individuals who have other characteristics (barriers) which make them less likely to work. With this definition we work with youth and young adults who have

not yet established a career. We find those with health issues and those with in adequate support networks. There are many reasons why people are unable to keep a job.

Upper Savannah makes extensive use of “gatekeepers” - organizations who have ties to communities. Each week the SC Works operator sends a Hot Jobs blast to nearly 100 community leaders. This allows us to reach different priority population groups.

Through the CAREER Dislocated Worker Grant, Upper Savannah created a eight minute orientation video in English and Spanish.

11. A description of the local area’s fiscal and programmatic monitoring process.

The area reviews a sample eight times a year consisting of:

1. One file for each case manager to review eligibility determination
2. One file for each case manager to review classroom training
3. One file for each case manager to review case management for someone not in classroom training
4. One file for someone in follow-up.

Records in the SCWOS system are utilized and additional documents are requested as needed. Reports are issued noting incomplete records or inaccuracies.

Monitoring is embedded in processes. For instance, when change notices are received, the file is examined to see what happened and how mistakes can be reduced. Staff reviews On-the-Job Training contracts as they are written.

Each year, four centers are visited, and a sample of files is reviewed in person. During the annual review, staff are interviewed. In addition to the sample chosen by the monitor, we ask each staff member to share one success story.

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

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

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

- Memorandum(s) of Understanding, including signature sheets;
- Resources Sharing Agreements, including signature sheets;
- All service provider grants, including statements of work and budgets;
- Statements of work for in-house operational staff (where applicable);

- Current or most recent Grant Application Request(s)/Request(s) for Proposals;
- LWDB By-Laws
- LWDB and Committee meeting schedules;
- LWDB budgets; and
- Local monitoring schedules.

Local Plan Signatures

Local Workforce Development Board:

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board

_____, Chair
Name

Signature

Date

Local Grant Recipient Signatory Official:

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area

Name

Title

Signature

Date