

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

**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;

Note: The labor force is under considerable strain due to the pandemic. Economic data often lags real world situations. It is possible that old data is no longer relevant. Likewise, we do not assume that the economic climate in 2020 will continue throughout the planning period.

During 2020, Upper Savannah partnered with ten school districts, Piedmont Technical College, 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.

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.

The summary is on the next page. Occupational clusters with the greatest potential and wages were highlighted in green. The occupations in the top tier (in green) account for more than half of the area's jobs and 60% of the area's payroll. The top two (green and yellow) make up 68% of the jobs and 78% of the payroll.

Employment Sector	Rank	Base Employment	Projected Change in ten years (%)	2018 Upper Savannah Median Wage
Production Occupations	1	19,220	4.4	\$15.45
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	2	4,832	13.5	\$28.42
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3	1,594	12.7	\$35.77
Management Occupations	4	6,780	-5.2	\$37.98
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	5	12,017	5.0	\$15.06
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	6	6,595	16.1	\$12.80
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	7	5,088	10.5	\$21.29
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	8	368	10.1	\$29.91
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	9	2,048	10.1	\$25.84
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	10	532	11.5	\$27.33
Construction and Extraction Occupations	11	3,092	10.5	\$16.81
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	12	5,871	11.6	\$8.99
Sales and Related Occupations	13	6,861	4.8	\$10.52
Legal Occupations	14	260	11.5	\$18.62
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	15	3,270	10.9	\$10.47
Protective Service Occupations	16	2,271	4.4	\$17.19
Personal Care and Service Occupations	17	2,831	8.4	\$10.47
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	18	721	4.4	\$15.72
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	19	2,587	-16.7	\$15.67

The 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.

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>.

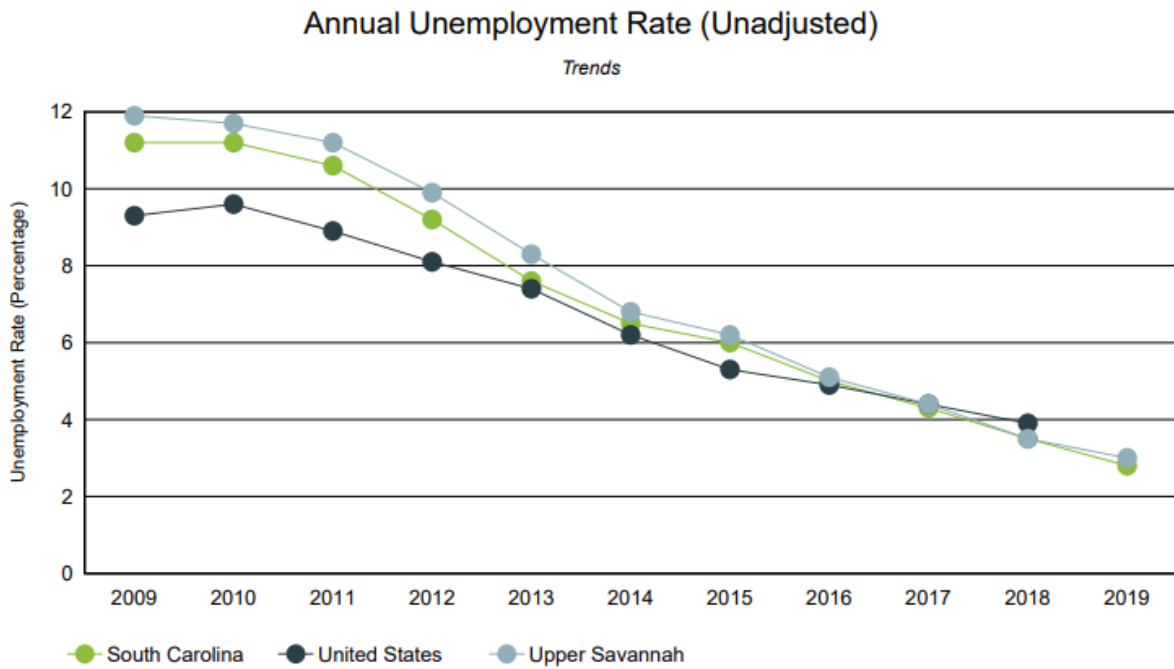
	Knowledge	Skills
Assemblers & Fabricators (Slight decline expected due to automation.)	High school degree, Manufacturing terminology, Safety protocols	Read blueprints Use hand tools Perform quality checks
Team Assemblers (Slight decline expected due to automation)	High school degree, Manufacturing terminology, 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
<p>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.</p>		

	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.		

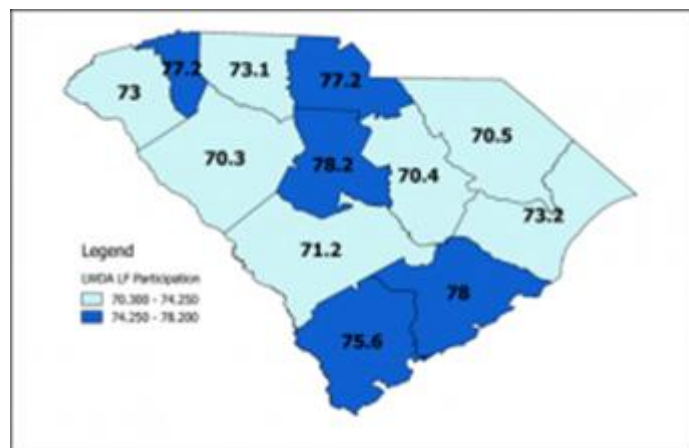
- An analysis of the current workforce in the region, including employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment; and

It is hard to present a current analysis of the workforce because, much of the demographic data comes from the census, which is a decade old. At the time that the plan is being compiled, the country is under an emergency declaration due to the pandemic. Unless specified, the data in this section came from the Department of Employment and Workforce Community Profile for Upper Savannah.

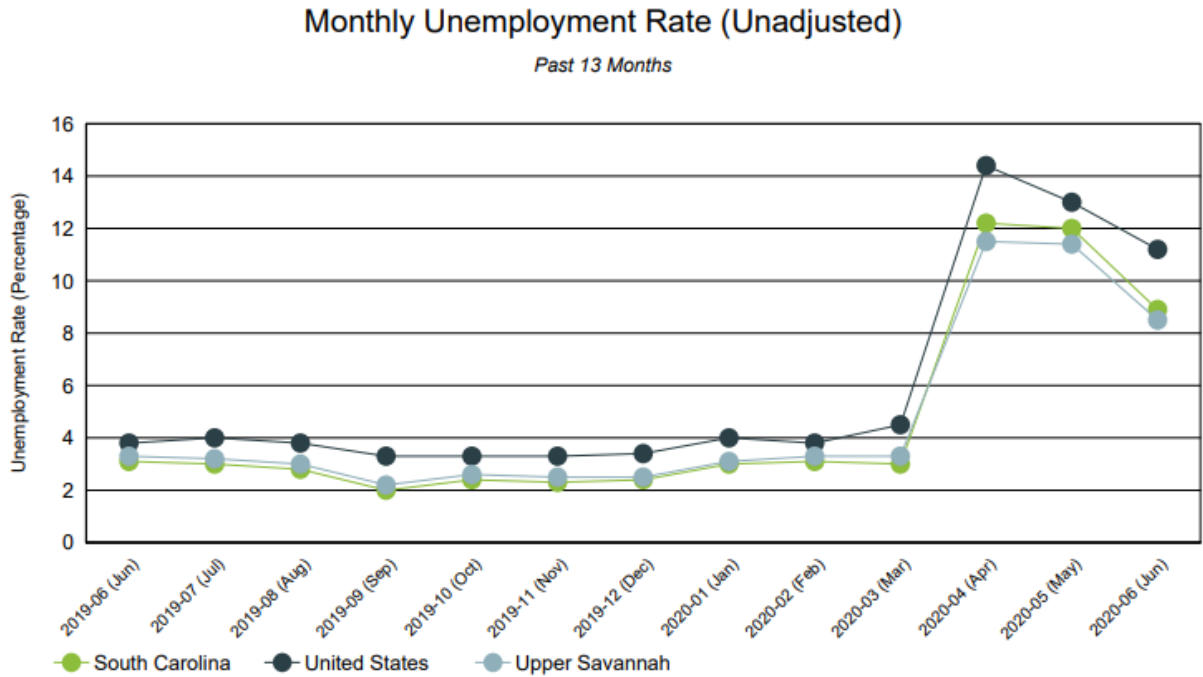
**Employment and Unemployment Data** – Just before the surge of layoffs caused by the pandemic, the area had the lowest unemployment rate in history. The following graph tracks unemployment over the last decade.



What is not presented in the profile is that between 2008 (7.4% unemployed) and 2018 (3.5% unemployed), the number of employed individuals remained the same- 108,120 in 2008 versus 108,860 in 2018, meaning the workforce shrank. According to pages 16 and 17 of the state workforce plan, South Carolina lags the nation in workforce participation and Upper Savannah has the lowest workforce participation rates of all of the areas.



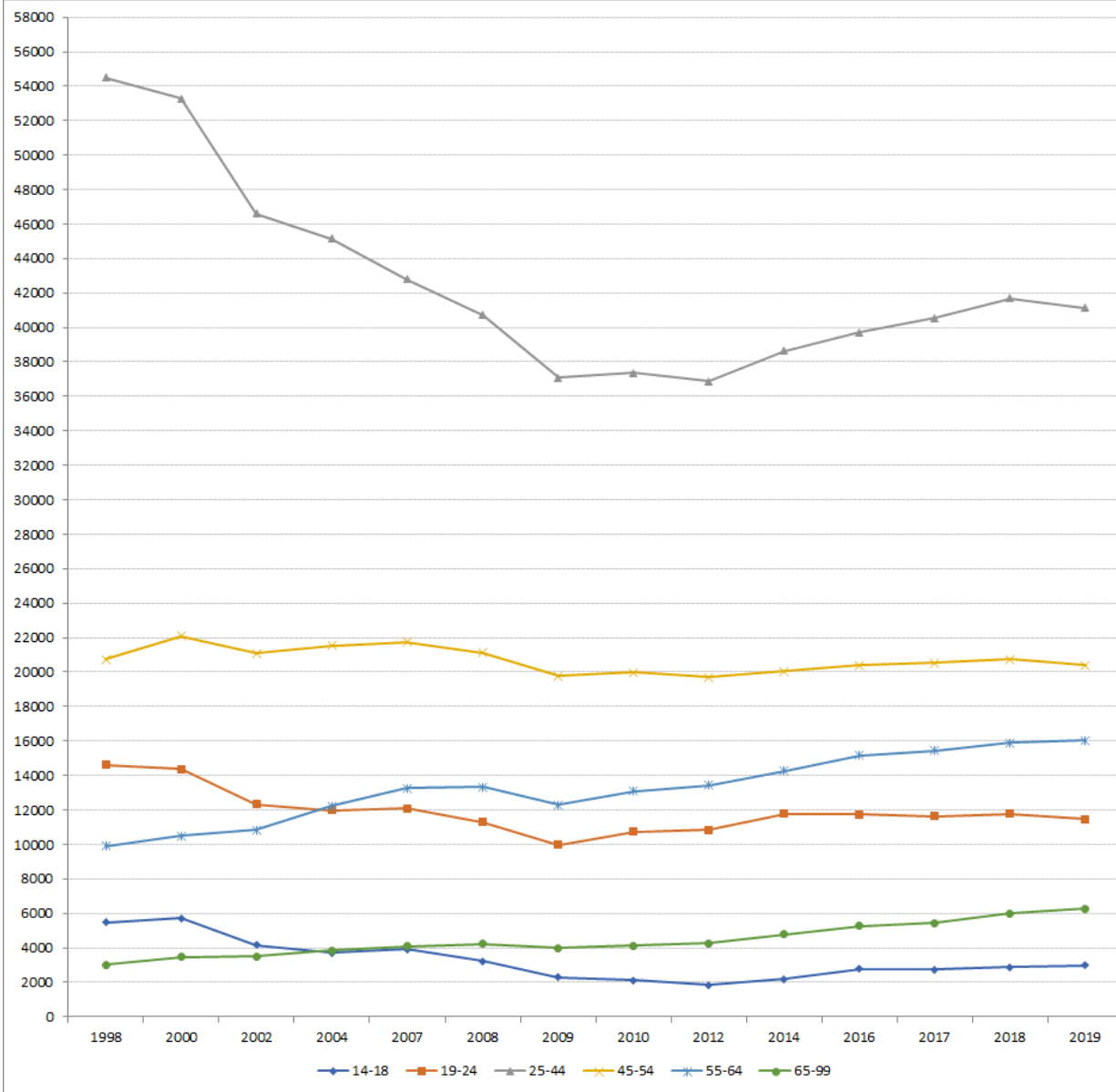
The next graph shows unemployment by month for the last year. In September 2019, Upper Savannah was 2.2%. In May of 2020, the area was 11.5%.



**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 2016, 26% of health care workers were 55 years old or older. The same table from the US Census Bureau – Local Employment Dynamics shows that 23% of construction workers and 22 % of manufacturing labor was 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.

Upper Savannah Region Employment by Age Group (1998-2019)														
Age	Year													
	1998	2000	2002	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019
14-18	5483	5710	4169	3701	3929	3223	2306	2104	1835	2169	2774	2755	2881	2965
19-24	14626	14377	12336	11993	12071	11282	9967	10725	10831	11781	11729	11620	11768	11469
25-44	54493	53271	46616	45156	42780	40727	37076	37368	36878	38640	39716	40556	41702	41138
45-54	20750	22107	21084	21538	21744	21108	19762	19967	19696	20047	20405	20547	20758	20382
55-64	9904	10482	10845	12210	13268	13335	12280	13089	13436	14278	15180	15429	15911	16022
65-99	3008	3456	3510	3852	4095	4225	3984	4117	4265	4784	5271	5425	6001	6267



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. As of that time, 21% of adults 25 years old and older lacked a high school credential. Half had less than an associate degree.

## **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. Many are currently closed, and we fear some may not reopen.

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 consistence 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.

Each year the local economy fills more than eleven thousand positions. Some are new, some are replacement hires due to retirement, some are transfers between positions. Following is a chart compiled from data supplied by DEW in 2019 using Bureau of Labor Statistics.

SOC Title	2018 Base Level	10 Year Level 2028	Numeric Change	Exits	Transfers	Change	Total Openings	Annual Total Openings
Total, All Occupations	95,233	101,667	6,434	46,194	62,531	6,434	115,159	11,515
Management Occupations	6,780	6,430	-350	2,598	2,385	-350	4,633	463
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	2,048	2,255	207	632	1,283	207	2,122	212
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	532	593	61	100	271	61	432	43
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,594	1,797	203	421	767	203	1,391	139
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	368	405	37	101	235	37	373	38
Community and Social Service Occupations	1,410	1,504	94	576	966	94	1,636	164
Legal Occupations	260	290	30	74	123	30	227	22
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	5,088	5,623	535	2,257	2,173	535	4,965	497
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	721	753	32	315	434	32	781	78
Healthcare Practitioners and	4,832	5,483	651	1,352	1,365	651	3,368	336

Technical Occupations								
Healthcare Support Occupations	2,478	2,827	349	1,507	1,449	349	3,305	331
Protective Service Occupations	2,271	2,371	100	860	1,096	100	2,056	206
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	5,871	6,554	683	4,454	5,605	683	10,742	1,073
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	543	605	62	253	546	62	861	86
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	3,270	3,626	356	2,119	2,189	356	4,664	467
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,831	3,068	237	2,265	2,021	237	4,523	452
Sales and Related Occupations	6,861	7,188	327	4,611	5,619	327	10,557	1,056
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	12,017	12,617	600	6,257	7,462	600	14,319	1,432
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	2,587	2,156	-431	870	2,657	-431	3,096	310
Construction and Extraction Occupations	3,092	3,415	323	1,126	2,155	323	3,604	361
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	4,507	4,988	481	1,700	2,769	481	4,950	495
Production Occupations	19,220	20,070	850	8,538	14,257	850	23,645	2,365
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	6,595	7,654	1,059	3,461	5,250	1,059	9,770	977

Students comprise a good portion of the new entrants to the workforce. The chart below shows the number of graduates for public K-12, Piedmont Technical College, and

the area's four liberal arts colleges. It should be noted that some students are counted multiple times as they progress through three or more schools.

School	Degree Type	Number	Notes
K-12	High School Degree	1,858	2018-2019
Adult Education	High School Equivalency	163	
Piedmont Technical College	Certificate Diploma Degree Continuing Ed.	1,102	Annual average 2014 - 2018)
Erskine College, Lander University, Newberry College, Presbyterian College	Bachelor's	1,008	Annual average (2014 - 2018
Total		4,131	

Upper Savannah compared student graduates with job opportunities in the investment sectors. The analysis is imperfect. One student may be counted multiple times if they earned multiple degrees or certifications. The crosswalk from academic programs to occupational titles is not clear (especially for four-year degrees). For example, a four-year grad in exercise science may be gaining the prerequisites for a medical career, preparing to be a teacher or a coach or recreation leader. We split some programs amongst the most likely employment outcomes. For this plan, we just examined the supply for the occupational clusters in green or yellow.

The result shows a significant training gap in production, management, and office and administration. Manufacturing is short more than two thousand workers annually. Management and Administrative jobs require experience as well as classroom training. The workforce board's greatest priority is to increase the pipeline of production workers. At first glance it looks like there is an oversupply of computer science, health care, and science graduates. Computer skills are foundational for all industries. Life sciences are required for advanced healthcare training. The number of healthcare graduates looks to be sufficient, but about half of the total are certified nursing assistant graduates and there is a shortage of workers higher on the career ladder.

Employment Sector	Annual Openings	Total Trainees	Demand Met	K-12	PTC	Area 4 Year
Production Occupations	2365	342	14%	82	260	
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	667	743	111%	279	344	120
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	139	82	59%	1	81	
Management Occupations	463	50	11%			50
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	1432	108	8%		8	100
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	977	57	6%		57	
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	497	359	72%	17	81	261
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	38	56	147%	1		55
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	212	171	81%	2	86	83
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	43	63	147%	1	37	25

The preceding chart shows that classroom training is abundant (strength), but that the occupational training does not train sufficient workers for most of the strategic career clusters (weakness). Another key weakness in relying on schools to solve talent shortages is financial. Four-year colleges have become more expensive and federal and state financial aid have not kept up. According to the NY Federal Reserve the per capita student loan debt for South Carolina was \$5,870 in 2018. The encumbrance is higher than mortgage debt, car loans and credit card balances. High costs discourage low-income residents from starting long-term training. Past debt handicaps adult learners.

The state technical college system has affordable options. Four of Upper Savannah’s counties have local foundations which offer recent high school graduates up to two years tuition at no cost.

Short-term training is free for adults. Below are courses available through Pathways funding at Piedmont Technical College as of February 2021.

Level 1 Maintenance	Truck Driver Training
Supervisory and Leadership Development	SERV Safe Food Manager
Lean Six Sigma Green Belt	Lean Six Sigma Black Belt
Computer Numeric Control	SHRM Exam Prep
Gas Metal Arc Welding	ISO 9001
Certified Nursing Assistant	EMT

Classroom training may be the most prevalent workforce preparation modality, but it is not the only one. The keystone of the Upper Savannah system is the job matching system operated by SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW). SC Works Online System (SCWOS) allows people to browse job listings and information. Registered users can apply for jobs and create a profile so that they can be matched with jobs. The Wagner Peyser services are universal and do not have entry requirements. SCDEW also has a case management component to guide job seekers through the process. Specialized services for veterans, offenders, and individuals with disabilities also are under the DEW umbrella. SCDEW operates the Unemployment Insurance system. SCDEW is a valuable partner because it can serve virtually all job seekers. It is complemented by other programs that offer more concentrated assistance. The weakness of Wagner-Peyser services is staffing is not sufficient to offer meaningful counseling to most job seekers. Veterans services offer comprehensive counseling.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program piggybacks on the SCWOS. Individuals may receive case management, training, and supportive services. There are eligibility and suitability criteria for the three WIOA funding sources, adult dislocated worker, and youth. Because of limited funding (weakness), WIOA can serve just a fraction of job seekers. In Program Year 2020, WIOA served 333 job seekers, providing training to 147. WIOA has lots of flexibility (strength) but has more paperwork than programs that just focus on training (weakness).

Vocational Rehabilitation is offered by two providers in South Carolina. The SC Commission for the Blind offers rehabilitation for individuals with visual disabilities. The SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department offers services to job seekers with a disability other than visual. Substance abusers are served. Like WIOA, the rehabilitation programs can serve only a fraction of job seekers. In 2019 there were 436 work-based training assignments in the Greenwood, Laurens, and Aiken areas. Twenty-six were in healthcare and twelve in manufacturing. VR is known for its sheltered workshops which allow students to gain job skills while earning a wage. The workshops allow staff to provide feedback on soft skills. The rehabilitation services include residential treatment/training programs. Career preparation is very comprehensive (strength), but the numbers of graduates are not enough to meet employer demand (weakness).

Adult Education provides instruction and a connection to the greater workforce system. Eligibility is based on the need for basic skills instruction. Adult Education can serve only a fraction of job seekers. Nearly all full-time jobs with benefits require a high school credential, so the training is directly relevant (strength.) Adult Education has funding to serve only a fraction of job seekers who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent (weakness). Some rural counties have part-time instruction (weakness), which lengthens the time to obtain a GED.

Upper Savannah has other niche providers. Goodwill operates the Senior Employment Program, which assists low-income older workers. The program has not been placing clients in work based training during the pandemic (weakness). GLEAMNS operates the Community Services Block Grant program which can help low-income job seekers who need short-term training to go to work. The Block grant has less paperwork than WIOA and more flexibility (strength). It primarily funds nursing assistant training. Training is not a core part of the Block grant program so the number of graduates is not enough to fill skills gaps (weakness).

There are two other significant training programs affiliated with the SC Works system but who are not a part of the partner system: Goodwill Job Connections and Apprenticeship Carolina. Goodwill is in three Upper Savannah Counties. It has flexibility and has relationships with some employers who do not participate in SC Works (strength). Goodwill's participation is not tracked by the state workforce system. Apprenticeship Carolina pays tuition for selected workers in registered apprenticeships. The model's advantage is training is directly related to employment and workers get paid to build their skills (strength). Some employers participate in the SC Works system. Others may have job openings that are not communicated and remain unfilled (weakness).

## Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

A description of the local board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency, including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and</li> </ul>

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"> <li>Fund classroom training</li> <li>Advocate for training resources</li> <li>Promote career opportunities</li> <li>Consider as strategic sector</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Fund classroom training for occupations that support manufacturing or healthcare</li> <li>Advocate for training resources</li> <li>Promote select career opportunities in sector</li> <li>Develop relationships with key employers</li> </ul>	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

<b>TIER THREE: LIMITED INVESTMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limit training investment to On-the-Job Training or apprenticeship where company pays part of costs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote jobs through SC Works system</b></li> </ul>	<b>Construction and Extraction Occupations</b>
	<b>Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations</b>
	<b>Sales and Related Occupations</b>
	<b>Legal Occupations</b>
<b>TIER FOUR: LIMITED INVESTMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limit training investment to On-the-Job Training or apprenticeship where company pays part of costs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote jobs through SC Works system.</b></li> </ul>	<b>Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations</b>
	<b>Protective Service Occupations</b>

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. As a board, Upper Savannah has an integrated dashboard which tracks the enrollments of all core partners. A key metric is the number of referrals made by partners to other partners. Upper Savannah has a goal of 1,200 referrals in program year 2020. 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.

*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.

**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.*

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul> |
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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 2,000 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. All parties were extensively briefed in 2016. A public hearing was held. 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. The workforce board received a summary of partner comments.

Closer to the start of the official workforce planning process, the emergency declaration was made. The workforce system was asked to detail how it would safely serve job seekers and employers. Meetings (in-person and remotely) were held and a plan was jointly developed.

An executive committee meeting was held August 3 to discuss the plan. A summary of the state plan with Upper Savannah's strategies was distributed. The three key components which had changed were discussed. Copies were distributed to the executive committee and courtesy copies were given to the entire board and meeting mailing list. The three components were: training priority list and training policies, priority of services refinement, and budget.

A consortium meeting was held on August 19, 2020. The plan was also discussed at the August 24, 2020 Upper Savannah Council of Governments Board meeting. The plan was discussed at the August 18, 2020 McCormick County Council meeting and the September 8, 2020 Laurens County Council Meeting.

The plan was published 9/10/2020 on the Upper Savannah website. Announcements were made to all parties. The plan was adopted at the full Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board meeting September 14, 2020.

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)

• 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, CATE, 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 region's economic condition has drastically changed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Upper Savannah unemployment went from 2% in February 2020 to 12% in July 2020. As of August 2020, there have been 31,772 initial unemployment claims filed in our region. In addition, there continues to be many individuals who are working part-time or are under-employed. More individuals will be seeking help finding a job or requesting training funds. These individuals are interested in assistance so they can progress to a job with better pay and benefits. 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

The WDB just revised our priority of services policy to enable us to also serve adults who are not working full-time and have less than 18 months of consecutive employment in the last three years.

Upper Savannah was recently awarded an offender navigator grant. This was dubbed “Solid Ground.” We work with released inmates from the Young Offender Act (YOA) program and introduce them to the SC Works system utilizing resources from the navigator grant and other partners including the WIOA program to provide a solid support system, which will enable participants to rebuild their lives and start careers, lowering the risk of incarceration. In addition, the navigator offers consultations regarding expungements and pardons to those referred by SCDEW and WIOA case management.

The work of the re-entry navigator in our area has enabled us to work with justice involved individuals to get them on the right path, including expungement of background issues, GED attainment, and other specialized training that has led to jobs and a promising future. This has grown into a greater partnership with the Eighth Circuit Solicitor’s Office in our region. We recently teamed up with them to create constructive paths of remediation, learning, and training that they can actively participate in to avoid incarceration.

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](http://www.upperscworks.com)). This website is updated weekly and has an event calendar 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, and DEW.

There are two committees working to facilitate the development of career pathways. The Sector Strategy Committee is working with the Greater Upstate Region sector strategy initiative (Link Upstate) to get job seekers to investigate jobs in manufacturing which have advancement potential. The Basic Skills Committee is trying to strengthen the connection between adult education and the bottom rungs of career ladders.

The Operations Committee has streamlined the referral process to make it easier for partner agencies to jointly serve job seekers. We report on incoming and outgoing referrals at each partner meeting.

The Adult Education Committee is working to increase the number of high school graduates. Adult education programs now help graduates transition into skills training.

Upper Savannah Workforce Board continues to reach out to secure more partner relationships to reach a wider array of customers and increase access of more services.

- 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.

- 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 Professional Human Resources groups 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.

Upper Savannah has recently adopted an appointment model; and when making an appointment the visitor chooses the type of service(s) that they are booking an appointment for. SC Works Staff reviews the upcoming appointments and those requesting help with unemployment are called ahead of the appointment to see if the issue can be resolved over the phone or locally if they come into a center. For issues which cannot be resolved in a local office, the visitor's information is put on a callback list which is sent to the call center so that they can reach out to these individuals and they are not spending so much time waiting in the queue at the call center.

As the unemployment insurance system pivots to re-employment rather than claims-taking, Upper Savannah requests that the area be assigned to Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Associates. Upper Savannah covers seven counties. Parts of our area are more than an hour's drive to the comprehensive center. Having an additional person stationed in either Laurens or Newberry would help customers. It would also enable the associates to build relationships with employers and learn local hiring practices.

Upper Savannah seeks to strengthen the linkages between unemployment and the other partners. Unemployment Insurance has not been represented at any partner meetings in the last three years. Before the implementation of the new UI system (SCUBI), Upper Savannah sought training for resource room staff; but did not receive training.

Upper Savannah has facilitated meetings between state UI staff and local employers and is willing to continue to connect employers with the UI system.

SCDEW has a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment position in our Comprehensive SC Works Center in Greenwood, but it has been vacant since March. 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.

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| 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"> <li>Increasing participation in work-based (WBL) activities, including registered apprenticeship programs;</li> </ul> |

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, CATE 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.

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

<b>Occupational Goal</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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"/>
<b>Knowledge/Skills/Abilities (All questions should relate to the occupational goal)</b>		
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 <b>not</b> 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"/> <b>Referred to a Workforce Consultant</b> <b>Customer needs further assistance with issues/barriers marked above.</b>  <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"/> <b>Job Search Ready</b> <b>Customer has a relevant labor market goal and has the necessary proficiencies to support the goal.</b>  <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 care giver 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 recently 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.

As much as we can streamline WIOA processes, Upper Savannah utilizes SCWOS to enter or scan in client intake information. We have a referral system that has contact information for each partner listed on our website at [www.upperscworks.com](http://www.upperscworks.com) and these documents can be shared with partners when the client gives consent by signing the partner referral consent form. This takes place during the intake process and/or if there is another referral at a later date to a different partner while being served. This form, which was created by input from our partners, streamlines information which is utilized by other agencies to expedite services.

- 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 half dozen SC counties lack public transportation – four are in Upper Savannah. To be able to offer public transportation, counties must commit to matching funds. Upper Savannah staff have met with stakeholders. Before the pandemic there was limited interest in Greenwood for starting a service, but plans have been put on hold.

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.

Upper Savannah lacks population density required by route-based service. Just Newberry has established routes. We hosted an outreach event with the Comet last year and introduced them to the representatives from Samsung and Kraft.

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. Last year we had a secret shopper who told SC Works staff that she was sleeping in her car. We used the responses to plan staff training. As a result of staff training, we developed flyers which are 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 one-page partner flyers give a broad overview of all the services provided by our partners. 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 and conduct quarterly, in-person surveys for an entire day at our three busiest SC Works Centers. The smaller satellite centers are staffed by the same staff who work at the largest centers, so this is a good indication of what the customer may experience in another smaller center. 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. We have called on the LWDB to make some decisions outside of the normally scheduled board meetings. We have also worked with the executive committee of the LWDB recently to advise us on some recent 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	
<b>Does the trainee follow instructions?</b> (Response to Supervision)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Is the trainee dependable?</b> (attendance, punctuality)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Does the trainee work efficiently and ask for additional work when done with a task?</b> (Taking Initiative)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Does the trainee follow safety procedures?</b> (Workplace Policy and Safety)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Does the trainee dress appropriate for position and duties?</b> (Workplace Appearance)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Is the trainee quality of work acceptable?</b> (Quality of work)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Does the trainee relate positively with co-workers?</b> (Teamwork)	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Does the trainee use language appropriate for the workplace?</b> (Communication skills)	5	4	3	2	1

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

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Modeling soft skills is the best teacher. 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](http://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, CATE, 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. Matt Wiggins is 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. In fact, the Small Business Development Center staff is located here in our building, so our representative is very accessible. 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 a small business 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**

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| 1. A description of the SC Works delivery system in the local area, including: |
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Upper Savannah provides oversight and conducts monthly monitoring of the WIOA Program. This report is sent to the contractor periodically for explanation, corrective action, and preventative action development. Findings and discrepancies must be corrected. If any major issues are found the contractor is called immediately so that the issues can be rectified, and the erroneous practice (if found) discontinued. The WIOA program manager uses these reports to help develop staff training. Slot levels are reported monthly and corrective action addressing the low enrollment is required monthly until the case load levels are at their agreed upon capacity per the contract. Early in PY2020 Upper Savannah instructed the contractor, GLEAMNS to not to fill a staff vacancy until the participant enrollment numbers were at a higher level.

- 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.

- 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. Currently (August 2020) SCDEW is visiting all counties to assist with unemployment. Until the pandemic increased service needs, DEW was visiting outlying counties infrequently putting all the burden on WIOA and the Community Services Block Grant program.

WIOA participants are being supplied laptops equipped with mobile HotSpot capability when deemed necessary for training. In most of our rural counties, we benefit for having a good connection with a communications company who has provided WiFi Hotspots in rural areas. We inform our clients of these HotSpot locations. We have also worked with one of our training providers (Piedmont Technical College) to address these concerns. PTC now has some training programs where the coursework can be downloaded on a computer, and it can be completed offline.

- 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

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Upper Savannah staff visits all centers at least once a year to perform an on-site accessibility review. Upper Savannah has 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. During the pandemic, area centers are operating on an appointment basis. The appointment system inquires if a person needs an accommodation. It allows us to position adaptive equipment and staff with specialized training as needed.

When needed/necessary information can be printed in a larger font, documents can be used with the zoom/magnifying component of the ADA computer.

Because of the health crisis, appointments are required to visit and/or receive services 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

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- 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.
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In the Program Year 2020, the Upper Savannah workforce area is expecting to serve 310 adults and dislocated workers. The area has applied for additional funding to serve another 43 residents. The supply and demand analysis shows that even if all the trainees went into manufacturing, there still will be a skill shortage. The area has more than 350 public assistance beneficiaries. At the current time (with the area recovering from the Pandemic), there are ten Unemployment Insurance recipients for each slot.

About half will be assisted with career services including:

1. 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.

With limited funding, the board's strategy is to connect those with job skills with employers. Some of the area's top employers have in-house training programs and tuition assistance. There are six case managers partly funded with adult and dislocated worker money who help with one-on-one career services. Two business services representatives also help those who are job ready.

The remaining job seekers will be assisted with:

1. Basic skills upgrading, including GED
2. Computer skills
3. Work experience
4. On-the-Job Training
5. Classroom training

Classroom training has had the greatest change since the last strategic plan. Historically, state-funded two-year colleges have provided most of the training. We relied on them because they were relatively inexpensive, had federal and state aid to defray costs, and had a network for local employers who hired graduates. One reason why state technical colleges have low cost, is they have the capacity to spread the costs of skilled instructors, technology and equipment over a large number of students. That advantage is a disadvantage with the WIOA Eligible Training Provider system. Federal law requires programs on the list to submit detailed information on ALL program trainees so results can be tracked. For popular programs like Licensed Practical Nursing, that can be hundreds of students. When just a couple of students are funded through WIOA, the administrative costs of tracking all students is not worth the effort.

When South Carolina indicated this summer that it would require the record-keeping for all students in a program, our primary college, Piedmont Technical, withdrew nearly all training from the list. In response, we have adopted two strategies.

1. We are continuing to support the programs which align with the board's goals, but not funding tuition. Only tuition and required fees are coded as "training". We will continue to support students by funding books, tool kits, uniforms, and certification exams.
2. We are researching smaller, for-profit schools on the eligible training provider list. We have requested performance information from the state administrative office since performance can vary quite a bit. To minimize risks, we require schools which cost more than \$4,500 to agree to wait for the second half of payment until students get a credential (25%) and go to work (25%). The agreement means that schools share in the risk with WIOA and are eager to help with retention and placement efforts.

Prior to changes from the state's requirements on reporting from the technical colleges, we provided scholarships which covered tuition and books for the list of trainings below. We are now focused on getting individuals back to work faster, helping more clients, and spending less money per client. This enables us to help more people. We do, however, provide supportive services to those in these longer-term offerings.

Eligible clients may receive a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship to help them pay the costs of Supportive Services for necessary training. Scholarships can pay the cost of books and fees that are not covered by other forms of financial aid such as the Pell Grant, Lottery, Trade Act, etc. If in approved coursework, we can cover the fees associated with access to Laptop/Chromebook and internet via hotspot/Wi-Fi technology.

The purpose of scholarships is to help qualified individuals prepare for employment which pays enough to support their family. Scholarships may be used for training programs or supportive services for those enrolled in longer-term training. Prior to recent state policy changes, the list of our area's approved training programs is below. We hope to be able to support tuition for two-year programs again in the near future.



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. 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.

The criteria above are reviewed by a panel of workforce staff and are considered in individual funding decisions.

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.

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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.

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 2020 serving 53 youth, 43 with WIOA formula funding and another 10 with WIOA supplemental money.

Upper Savannah holds quarterly partner meetings and as part of that meeting, we have breakout sessions for various committees. Our Youth Committee is composed of various partners including WIOA, K-12, CATE, Adult Ed., Voc. Rehab, and DSS. We also make referrals to other partners including Job Corps and our Solid Ground Navigator.

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 has a successful re-entry navigator program 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.

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.

**9. 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 LWDAs policy that further defines how to determine if a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or 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 the semiannual 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. There is interest in Greenwood and Laurens tapping into the McCormick Area Transportation system to provide on-demand rides. Groups in Greenwood and Laurens are looking into purchasing software to efficiently match riders with available vans. The pandemic has temporarily stopped the planning.

Upper Savannah is anticipating getting a new board member representing First Steps. First Steps has funding in all Upper Savannah counties for childcare "scholarships." Also, Head Start is represented on the board.

Transportation Reimbursement- \$5 dollars a day for 5 to 24 miles one way. \$12 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 \$20 or less one way. Transportation can only be provided from residence to work and cannot include stops. The assistance is limited to three weeks.

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#### 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 - \$150 a week payment for eligible clients who are in class. A client cannot receive NRP and transportation and/or childcare simultaneously. 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 12 weeks.

#### 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.

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

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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 of a South Carolina minor 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.

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.
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Upper Savannah closely coordinates with Wagner-Peyser. For the most part, Wagner Peyser provides all of the basic job search assistance services in Greenwood, Laurens, and Newberry Counties. WIOA and other partners fill in as necessary. Other partners help job seekers in Abbeville, Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda counties where Wagner Peyser staff is not stationed. Since the pandemic, a representative from Wagner Peyser has been sent out at least once weekly to the centers in Abbeville, Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda.

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.
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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.

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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.

<p>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.</p>
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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.

We have a bilingual (Spanish/English) speaking person in our comprehensive SC Works Center and they can answer calls from the Spanish speaking population who come into any of our centers and can also make appointments to go out and assist when necessary. We work with Goodwill to employ older individuals to assist in the reception area of our centers. The business services team is constantly interacting with businesses to share with them the

available services, such as work experiences, OJT program, job listings and candidate screening, etc.

## Section V: Operations and Compliance

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

Agreements are attached as document V 1

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

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.

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

The board gets the outcome report quarterly. The board reviews expenditures.

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

The board reviews infrastructure costs each February. It has approved to allocate costs based on staffing ratios.

The Upper Savannah Area is led by Workforce Development Director, Ann Skinner who provides oversight and direction to the WIOA service providers/grantees. The providers communicate regularly, and reports are submitted monthly, more often when requested or needed. Employers surveys are also collected and reviewed. These surveys are a great tool to ensure we are doing our best to serve the job seeker and businesses and allows us to see where improvements can be made.

WIOA providers operate in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines. Reports are submitted monthly at a minimum, and these are reviewed by Upper Savannah Workforce management. Monthly and periodic WIOA monitoring is completed on the providers. This allows us to see if processes are working and where changes may be needed. If corrective action is deemed necessary, the provider is given a timeline to respond and satisfy the discrepancy.

During grantee meetings we discuss what is going well and bring any issues to the table so they can be discussed. Based on reports and responses, the local area may determine that more training is needed. Upper Savannah may conduct their own training or request a subject matter expert, so that the provider has every opportunity to perform their best. If this results in a need for change, new or revised instructions/policies may be generated.

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

Most costs are shared by partners located in SC Works Centers. The system is enhanced by other contributions:

1. Piedmont Technical College hosts job fairs on campus. They also assist with recruiting by emailing messages regarding SC Works services to all students.
2. Adult education helps with TABE testing and WIN/Work Keys administration.
3. Goodwill contributed a full-size trailer to the truck driver training program. The contribution doubled the college's training capacity.

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.

Limited information regarding performance is available. Most providers do not submit information on all students. South Carolina generates outcomes on WIOA-funded trainees measuring: completions/credentials, initial employment retention and wages. The information is available via the PATH system. Potential trainees are required to use the PATH system to gain information.

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 plan was approved by the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board September 12, 2020 and was published on the area's website. 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.

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.

As part of our area's reopening plan, 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. We anticipate keeping the appointment system after the pandemic is over.

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.

The most significant change is the board has a plan to serve more adults. Previously, the priority of service policy focused on low-income individuals or job seekers with low basic skills. Up to 30% of adults can qualify through locally defined characteristics. The Upper Savannah board selected “poor work history” as a qualifier. Poor work history is defined as “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.

Upper Savannah is eager to show that it is serving the hardest to serve. Upper Savannah has the second highest percentage of adults meeting the state’s priority of service definition. WIOA collects data on: welfare recipients, homeless, individuals with disabilities, offenders, and others, but we seek assistance setting benchmarks so that we can compare ourselves with other areas. Until benchmarks can be set, the board cannot set meaningful goals.

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.

Over the course of the year, 320 reviews will be made.

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.

Area staff hear coordination and placement reports from case managers monthly. Currently, the meetings are being held via phone but generally the meetings are held in centers so area staff can review the physical condition of the center.

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.

Upper Savannah sent the following information e-mail to county council chairs and administrators. One county, McCormick, requested a presentation. The minutes have been added to the attachments.

Email excerpt:

*As the chief elected official in your county, you have many concerns. The pandemic has created new problems. I want to touch base with you to ensure that we are meeting your county’s workforce needs. The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board was created by a consortium of seven county council chairs. The board oversees federal workforce programs and directs the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Upper Savannah Council of Governments is the administrative entity.*

*We have centers in each county. Our mission is to provide information to job seekers and employers and to facilitate solving problems. Until March our primary problem was finding enough workers. Currently we have workers and are now trying to locate employers who are hiring. We have funding to fill in the gaps and provide training for in-demand jobs.*

*The area is finalizing a three-year workforce plan which will be submitted to the governor on behalf of the seven counties.*

*Each area has a different relationship between the workforce board, the consortium, and the administrative entity. Upper Savannah is the largest area in the state by area and has the most counties. It is hard to get seven county council chairs together at once. Historically we have kept consortium members involved while simultaneously communicating with county councils rather than meeting as a group.*

*I think everyone has become accustomed to conference calls now and I think the economy is on resident's minds, I am hoping that we can "meet" to go over the executive summary of the workforce plan via a scheduled call. I can answer questions. Of course, Upper Savannah staff are available to meet with county councils, but I think there is value in bringing the chief elected officials together.*

*I know some of you have professional duties in addition to your council leadership, we have found that 4:30 pm meetings work best for the workforce development board executive committee and hope that we can meet Wednesday, August 19 at 4:30 pm. We do not need a quorum to vote. Individual consortium members can sign the plan at their convenience. We do want those who do want to participate to be able to do so and would be glad to tape the call or reschedule it if there are conflicts. The meeting will be informal and is open to the public. In addition to the consortium we will invite the Workforce Development Board chair and vice chair and Upper Savannah Council of Governments leadership.*

*Attached to this message are:*

- 1. Executive summary of workforce plan*
- 2. Training policy showing investment areas and guidelines*
- 3. Priority of services policy allowing for enrollment of individuals who are above income guidelines but have poor work history.*
- 4. Plan signature sheet*
- 5. MOU packet and signature sheet, if not received earlier*
- 6. Request for appointments for Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens and Newberry counties.*

**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