

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

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

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

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

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

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

The local plan must include:

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

Section I: Workforce and Economic Analysis

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

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

To provide an accurate and comprehensive analysis of the Upper Savannah South Carolina Workforce Region's labor market and economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand sectors and employment needs, let's break down each aspect.

1. Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions

a. Overview of the Region:

- The Upper Savannah region includes counties such as Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda. It is largely rural, with manufacturing, healthcare, and retail trade being significant components of the economy.
 - The population in the Upper Savannah WDA was 253,796 per American Community Survey data for 2018-2022.
 - The region has a civilian labor force of 113,739 with a participation rate of 55.1%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Upper Savannah WDA, **20.2% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 35.8% in the nation.**
 - The median household income in the Upper Savannah WDA is \$52,109 and the median house value is \$137,841.
 - Demographics breakdown.

Upper Savannah WDA		
Demographics		
Population (ACS)	—	253,796
Male	49.4%	125,269
Female	50.6%	128,527
Median Age ²	—	42.4
Under 18 Years	20.8%	52,886
18 to 24 Years	9.4%	23,951
25 to 34 Years	11.4%	29,050
35 to 44 Years	11.6%	29,460
45 to 54 Years	12.5%	31,652
55 to 64 Years	14.1%	35,759
65 to 74 Years	11.9%	30,168
75 Years and Over	8.2%	20,870
Race: White	63.8%	162,003
Race: Black or African American	28.5%	72,403
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	437
Race: Asian	0.5%	1,153
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	111
Race: Some Other Race	2.6%	6,488
Race: Two or More Races	4.4%	11,201
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6.6%	16,736

- Labor Force participation statistics.

Upper Savannah WDA		
Economic		
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over)	55.1%	113,739
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54)	76.1%	68,499
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.1%	240
Veterans, Age 18-64	4.2%	6,335
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64	71.2%	4,512
Median Household Income ²	—	\$52,109
Per Capita Income	—	\$29,849
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	—	25.3
Commute via Public Transportation	0.2%	188

- Educational attainment statistics.

Educational Attainment, Age 25-64		
No High School Diploma	14.6%	18,410
High School Graduate	34.2%	43,074
Some College, No Degree	17.9%	22,582
Associate's Degree	13.1%	16,454
Bachelor's Degree	13.2%	16,604
Postgraduate Degree	7.0%	8,797

- b. Employment and Unemployment:
 - Based on recent data, the region has experienced fluctuations in the unemployment rate, reflecting broader economic trends, including the recovery from COVID-19. The unemployment rate in the region has generally followed the state and national trends, with rates typically ranging between 3-5% in recent years. The unemployment rate for the Upper Savannah WDA was 3.5% as of March 2024. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 3.9%. One year earlier, in March 2023, the unemployment rate in the Upper Savannah WDA was 3.4%.



- c. Income and Wages:
 - Wages in the Upper Savannah region are generally below the national average due to the region's industry mix and rural nature. Median household incomes are also slightly lower than the state average, reflecting the concentration of employment in lower-wage sectors such as manufacturing and retail trade.

Upper Savannah WDA, 2023Q4:											
NAICS	Industry	Current		5-Year History			1-Year Forecast			Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers		
31	Manufacturing	23,654	\$59,829	3.30	-1,014	-0.8%	2,433	955	1,431	47	0.2%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	12,713	\$52,935	0.97	168	0.3%	1,337	600	645	91	0.7%
44	Retail Trade	8,501	\$29,864	0.96	-32	-0.1%	1,157	518	649	-10	-0.1%
61	Educational Services	7,304	\$43,579	1.02	629	1.8%	711	338	350	24	0.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	6,244	\$18,036	0.80	292	1.0%	1,125	497	606	21	0.3%
92	Public Administration	5,236	\$47,534	1.27	-285	-1.1%	508	213	270	26	0.5%
23	Construction	4,387	\$50,109	0.82	391	1.9%	400	154	226	21	0.5%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,235	\$33,472	0.76	-1,024	-4.2%	510	209	277	24	0.6%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,653	\$28,945	0.97	127	0.7%	440	182	235	22	0.6%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,856	\$37,498	2.58	-204	-1.4%	346	166	175	5	0.2%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	2,490	\$52,878	0.56	-337	-2.5%	299	119	154	26	1.0%
42	Wholesale Trade	1,925	\$77,647	0.57	-111	-1.1%	194	78	116	0	0.0%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,805	\$57,670	0.28	172	2.0%	161	60	88	14	0.8%
52	Finance and Insurance	1,284	\$59,083	0.36	-21	-0.3%	114	45	62	6	0.5%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	972	\$17,365	0.54	-204	-3.7%	157	62	84	12	1.2%
22	Utilities	809	\$69,652	1.76	-23	-0.5%	67	29	42	-3	-0.4%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	668	\$49,886	0.42	56	1.8%	67	31	34	3	0.4%
51	Information	482	\$63,440	0.27	36	1.6%	44	17	26	1	0.3%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	151	\$82,000	0.11	-16	-2.0%	14	5	8	1	0.7%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	78	\$59,488	0.24	-53	-9.7%	8	3	5	0	0.6%
	Total - All Industries	89,446	\$47,533	1.00	-1,454	-0.3%	10,100	4,307	5,459	334	0.4%

d. Gross Domestic Product:

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2022, nominal GDP in the Upper Savannah WDA expanded 9.9%. This follows growth of 8.9% in 2021. As of 2022, total GDP in the Upper Savannah WDA was \$9,206,300,000.
- Of the sectors in the Upper Savannah WDA, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2022, \$3,468,506,000. The next-largest contributions came from Health Care and Social Assistance (\$1,030,391,000); Educational Services (\$547,370,000); and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (\$537,600,000).

2. Existing In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

The largest major occupation group in the Upper Savannah WDA is Production Occupations, employing 14,229 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Office and Administrative Support Occupations (9,432 workers) and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (8,255). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Production Occupations (LQ = 2.86), Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (1.86), and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (1.17).

Occupation groups in the Upper Savannah WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$98,800), Legal Occupations (\$91,200), and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$91,000). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 0.8% among Legal Occupations to 5.1% among Transportation and Material Moving Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Upper Savannah WDA is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +1.2% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (+56 jobs) and Healthcare Support Occupations (+44). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to

retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Production Occupations (1,536 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1,211).

Upper Savannah WDA, 2023Q4:														
SOC	Occupation	Empl	Mean Ann Wages ₂	Current			5-Year History			Total Demand	1-Year Forecast		Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ₃	Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers		
51-0000	Production	14,229	\$43,300	2.86	657	3.9%	346	-1,288	-1.7%	1,532	612	924	-4	0.0%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	9,432	\$40,300	0.87	319	2.7%	364	-610	-1.2%	999	494	552	-47	-0.5%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	8,255	\$37,600	1.05	615	5.1%	462	-482	-1.1%	1,127	433	637	56	0.7%
41-0000	Sales and Related	6,641	\$40,500	0.84	356	4.0%	768	-158	-0.5%	890	409	489	-8	-0.1%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,338	\$26,900	0.87	479	4.9%	429	157	0.5%	1,233	551	660	22	0.3%
11-0000	Management	6,191	\$98,800	0.92	94	1.5%	425	432	1.5%	536	224	279	33	0.5%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5,073	\$91,000	0.97	76	1.3%	1,253	173	0.7%	323	163	127	33	0.6%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	4,770	\$51,000	1.00	102	2.1%	318	325	1.4%	436	211	203	22	0.5%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	4,080	\$51,500	1.17	123	2.1%	373	10	0.1%	388	162	197	29	0.7%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	3,718	\$32,200	0.92	143	2.9%	303	218	1.2%	567	242	281	44	1.2%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	3,519	\$46,900	0.86	261	4.5%	116	67	0.4%	323	124	180	20	0.6%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	3,122	\$71,500	0.55	73	2.1%	201	195	1.3%	275	97	160	18	0.6%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,935	\$31,600	1.00	193	4.3%	178	-151	-1.0%	414	185	214	16	0.5%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	2,225	\$30,900	1.00	88	3.5%	51	-58	-0.5%	406	151	236	20	0.9%
33-0000	Protective Service	1,674	\$44,100	0.87	44	2.3%	113	-148	-1.7%	174	74	93	7	0.4%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	1,670	\$46,500	1.03	34	2.1%	167	-37	-0.4%	158	65	80	14	0.8%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	1,562	\$81,900	1.08	29	1.8%	131	78	1.0%	119	46	60	13	0.8%

a. Advanced Manufacturing

- Key Occupations: CNC operators, maintenance technicians, quality inspectors, machine operators, and production supervisors.
- Employer Needs: Advanced manufacturing is a cornerstone of the Upper Savannah region, driven by automotive and aerospace supply chains. Employers emphasize a need for workers with skills in precision machining, robotics, and industrial maintenance.
- Skills and Knowledge:
 - Proficiency in computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) software.
 - Familiarity with Lean Manufacturing principles and Six Sigma methodologies.
 - Certification in mechatronics or industrial automation.

b. Healthcare

- Key Occupations: Registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), medical technicians, and allied health professionals.
- Employer Needs: With an aging population, healthcare employers require staff capable of providing long-term care, outpatient services, and emergency response.
- Skills and Knowledge:

- Clinical care competencies and knowledge of electronic health record (EHR) systems.
- Strong interpersonal skills for patient care.
- Certifications such as Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).

c. Transportation and Logistics

- Key Occupations: CDL truck drivers, logistics coordinators, forklift operators, and warehouse supervisors.
- Employer Needs: **Employers seek workers adept at supply chain management and handling the region's growing demand for freight and logistics services.**
- Skills and Knowledge:
 - **Commercial driver's license (CDL) for long-haul** and regional driving roles.
 - Knowledge of warehouse management systems (WMS) and inventory control.
 - Ability to analyze supply chain metrics and optimize delivery routes.

3. Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

a. Information Technology (IT)

- Key Occupations: Software developers, cybersecurity analysts, IT support specialists, and network administrators.
- Employer Needs: Employers increasingly require technology solutions for data security, cloud computing, and automation in traditional industries.
- Skills and Knowledge:
 - Proficiency in programming languages (Python, Java, etc.) and cloud platforms (AWS, Azure).
 - Cybersecurity certifications such as CompTIA Security+ and CISSP.
 - Understanding data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI).

b. Renewable Energy and Environmental Sustainability

- Key Occupations: Solar panel installers, energy auditors, environmental technicians, and project managers for green initiatives.
- Employer Needs: The growing focus on sustainability creates demand for expertise in energy-efficient construction, renewable energy systems, and environmental compliance.
- Skills and Knowledge:
 - Knowledge of energy management systems and renewable energy technology.
 - Certifications like LEED Accreditation or NABCEP Solar Installer Certification.
 - Understanding of environmental regulations and reporting standards.

4. Employment Needs of Employers

a. Cross-Sector Needs

Employers across industries emphasize the importance of:

- **Soft Skills:** Communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving.
- **Technology Skills:** Digital literacy and the ability to use industry-specific software and tools.
- **Workforce Development:** Access to training programs and partnerships with technical colleges and workforce boards to upskill and reskill the local labor pool.

b. Specific Needs for Workforce Growth

- Recruitment strategies to address labor shortages in rural areas.
- Apprenticeship and internship programs to build a pipeline of skilled workers.
- Strong partnerships between employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards to align training with industry needs.

5. Strategic Objectives

- Expand Workforce Training
 - Invest in sector-specific training programs, such as CNC machining certifications and healthcare technician diplomas.
 - Promote work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships in manufacturing and healthcare.
- Strengthen Educational Pipelines
 - Foster collaborations between local high schools, technical colleges, and universities to create dual-enrollment programs in STEM fields.
 - Provide grants and incentives for individuals pursuing certifications in high-demand fields.
- Address Transportation Barriers
 - Improve public transportation options for accessing job sites, especially in logistics and healthcare sectors.
- Support Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship
 - Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in emerging industries such as renewable energy and IT.

The Upper Savannah region's economy relies on a diverse mix of industries, each with distinct labor market needs. Strategic investments in workforce development, training, and partnerships between educational institutions and employers will ensure the **region's workforce is equipped with the skills and knowledge to meet these needs**. By addressing existing challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities, the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board can play a pivotal role in fostering economic resilience and growth in the region.

- *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*

The Upper Savannah Workforce region in South Carolina, encompassing the counties of Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties, is characterized by a diverse economic landscape **and workforce dynamics**. **Here's a detailed analysis of its employment, unemployment, labor market trends, and workforce education/skills, including barriers to employment.**

Employment and Unemployment Data

- Employment Levels:
 - The region primarily employs individuals in manufacturing, healthcare, retail trade, education, and agriculture.
 - Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of the economy, particularly in Greenwood and Laurens counties, with a significant number of jobs in textiles, automotive parts, and advanced manufacturing.

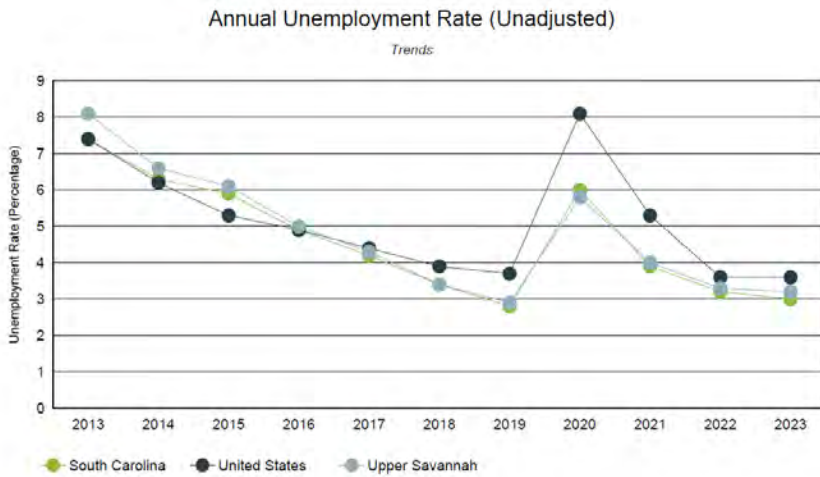
Area Job Openings

Period	Upper Savannah			South Carolina				
	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	Job Openings
Sep-24	108,489	5,422	4.8%		2,413,337	113,982	4.5%	
Aug-24	108,181	6,592	5.7%		2,414,624	107,891	4.3%	
Jul-24	108,869	6,103	5.3%		2,415,158	97,764	3.9%	
Jun-24	109,585	5,735	5.0%		2,410,159	89,718	3.6%	
May-24	108,942	4,422	3.9%		2,406,512	83,589	3.4%	
Apr-24	110,108	3,484	3.1%		2,404,517	79,782	3.2%	
Mar-24	110,204	4,016	3.5%		2,399,640	77,948	3.1%	
Feb-24	108,769	4,629	4.1%		2,396,195	76,424	3.1%	
Jan-24	107,272	3,969	3.6%		2,396,514	75,325	3.0%	
Dec-23	108,098	3,674	3.3%		2,395,427	74,873	3.0%	
Nov-23	108,934	3,450	3.1%		2,395,934	74,957	3.0%	
Oct-23	109,169	3,709	3.3%	2,062	2,396,218	74,511	3.0%	91,724
Sep-23	109,246	3,285	2.9%	2,348	2,394,416	72,805	3.0%	101,555

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

2. Unemployment Trends:

- Historically, unemployment in the Upper Savannah region has mirrored statewide trends but has shown slower recovery in some areas due to rural economic challenges.
- As of recent data, unemployment rates vary across the counties, with rural areas such as McCormick typically experiencing higher rates compared to more industrialized counties like Greenwood.
- Seasonal fluctuations are common in agriculture-dependent areas like Saluda.



Year	Upper Savannah			South Carolina			United States		
	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate	Employment	Unemp	Rate
2023	108,494	3,617	3.2%	2,380,392	72,668	3.0%	161,037,000	6,080,000	3.6%
2022	107,249	3,684	3.3%	2,316,435	76,894	3.2%	158,291,000	5,996,000	3.6%
2021	106,426	4,417	4.0%	2,266,611	92,558	3.9%	152,581,000	8,623,000	5.3%
2020	104,417	6,435	5.8%	2,199,751	139,389	6.0%	147,795,000	12,947,000	8.1%
2019	108,384	3,191	2.9%	2,268,884	64,649	2.8%	157,538,000	6,001,000	3.7%
2018	106,273	3,779	3.4%	2,205,356	76,666	3.4%	155,761,000	6,314,000	3.9%
2017	104,727	4,727	4.3%	2,166,708	95,058	4.2%	153,337,000	6,982,000	4.4%
2016	107,698	5,651	5.0%	2,174,301	111,753	4.9%	151,436,000	7,751,000	4.9%
2015	106,675	6,988	6.1%	2,134,087	133,750	5.9%	148,834,000	8,296,000	5.3%
2014	105,912	7,443	6.6%	2,082,941	139,485	6.3%	146,305,000	9,617,000	6.2%
2013	103,684	9,153	8.1%	2,034,404	163,472	7.4%	143,929,000	11,460,000	7.4%

Source: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce

County	Unemp	Unemp rate	CNP	Emp	Emp Pop Rat%	Laborforce	LFPR%	Population	
McCormick County	135	3.00%		6952	3329	47.00%	3464.00	49.80%	8592.6
Edgefield County	350	3.00%		19079	9855	51.00%	1020.00	53.50%	23578.55
Greenwood County	1,103	3.00%		54749	28737	52.00%	29840.00	54.50%	67660.05
Laurens County	1,086	3.00%		54614	29797	54.00%	30883.00	56.50%	67494.2
Saluda County	266	3.00%		14033	8240	58.00%	8506.00	60.60%	17343.4
Newberry County	654	3.00%		30452	18033	59.00%	18687.00	61.40%	37633.95
Abbeville County	377	4.00%		18904	9162	48.00%	9539.00	50.50%	23362.2
January 2024 - SC DEW									

Labor Market Trends

1. Industry Shifts:
 - o A shift toward automation and advanced manufacturing has reduced some traditional manufacturing roles while increasing demand for skilled technical positions.
 - o The healthcare sector is expanding due to population aging, particularly in services like elder care and nursing.
2. Growth Sectors:
 - o Healthcare and social assistance, construction, and professional services are projected to grow steadily.
 - o **Renewable energy and logistics/distribution are emerging industries, benefiting from the region's infrastructure and workforce development initiatives.**
3. Workforce Challenges:
 - o Many workers in the region face challenges transitioning from declining industries like textiles to growing sectors requiring specialized skills.
 - o **There is a mismatch between job openings and the available workforce's skills, particularly in technical and healthcare roles.**

Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce

1. General Education:
 - o The region has lower educational attainment levels compared to state and national averages. A significant portion of the workforce holds a high school diploma or less, particularly in rural counties like McCormick and Saluda.
 - o Enrollment in technical and vocational programs is increasing, spurred by partnerships with Piedmont Technical College and other institutions.

Educational Attainment, Age 25-64		
No High School Diploma	14.6%	18,410
High School Graduate	34.2%	43,074
Some College, No Degree	17.9%	22,582
Associate's Degree	13.1%	16,454
Bachelor's Degree	13.2%	16,604
Postgraduate Degree	7.0%	8,797

2. Skill Development:

- o Many workers lack the advanced technical skills required for high-demand jobs in sectors like advanced manufacturing and IT.
- o Many of our workforce development programs focus on certifications in welding, CNC machining, nursing, and logistics.

3. Barriers to Employment:

- o Transportation: Limited public transportation systems hinder access to jobs and training programs.
- o Childcare: **Insufficient childcare options disproportionately affect women's workforce participation.**
- o Criminal Records: Individuals with criminal records often face challenges finding employment, despite state initiatives to improve access to jobs for these groups.
- o Digital Divide: A lack of digital literacy and internet access in rural areas limits opportunities for remote work and online training.

Social		
Poverty Level (of all people)	17.3%	42,087
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	14.7%	14,471
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	3,410
Disconnected Youth ³	3.9%	527
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	47.7%	23,282
Uninsured	10.8%	26,798
With a Disability, Age 18-64	12.6%	18,298
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	40.0%	7,325
Foreign Born	3.8%	9,711
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	2.9%	6,930

The Upper Savannah SC Workforce region is marked by industrial heritage and emerging opportunities in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and renewable energy. While economic diversification is creating new opportunities, barriers like low educational attainment, skills gaps, and infrastructure limitations need targeted interventions. Addressing these issues through expanded training programs, improved transportation, and technology access will be critical to unlocking the full potential of the workforce and ensuring inclusive economic growth.

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

The Upper Savannah Workforce Region, covering Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties, has a workforce development strategy that seeks to align the skills of local job seekers with the demands of employers in various industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and agribusiness. This analysis examines the strengths and weaknesses of current workforce development efforts in the Upper Savannah region, especially in addressing education and skill needs for job seekers, including individuals with employment barriers, and fulfilling the labor needs of local employers.

Strengths of Workforce Development in the Upper Savannah Region

1. **Industry-Aligned Training Programs:** **The region's workforce** development programs are closely aligned with the needs of its primary industries. Technical colleges like Piedmont Technical College provide industry-specific training in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. These programs are designed to ensure that job seekers receive practical skills that align with current employer demands. Our regional Adult Education programs offer workforce preparation training and Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs in collaboration with technical colleges and other training providers to assist individuals in attaining employment and industry recognized credentials
2. **Collaboration with Local Employers:** There is strong collaboration between workforce agencies, educational institutions, and employers. Employers participate in advisory boards, curriculum development, and offer internship and apprenticeship opportunities, which help ensure that the training provided is relevant and meets industry standards. Programs like apprenticeships and on-the-job training (OJT) allow participants to gain hands-on experience while earning income.
3. **Support for Individuals with Barriers to Employment:** The Upper Savannah Workforce Region provides targeted support for individuals facing barriers to employment. Programs include specialized services for veterans, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Partnerships with local social service agencies enhance accessibility to services such as childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, which helps reduce non-skill-related employment barriers.
4. **Emphasis on Work-Based Learning:** Through programs like registered apprenticeships, internships, and OJT, the region encourages work-based learning. This approach allows job seekers to gain real-world experience and develop work readiness skills, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals who may lack formal education or those reentering the workforce.
5. **Focus on Digital Skills:** Many training programs now incorporate essential digital literacy and computer skills, acknowledging the growing need for these skills across various sectors. Digital skills training is especially valuable for job seekers seeking entry-level positions in healthcare, administrative roles, and advanced manufacturing.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development in the Upper Savannah Region

1. **Limited Access to Higher-Level Skills Training:** While the region offers foundational skills and technical training for entry- and mid-level positions, there is a lack of advanced or specialized training in high-demand fields such as engineering, data analytics, and advanced IT. This gap could limit **the region's ability to meet** the needs of employers requiring highly specialized skills and could lead to job seekers pursuing such training outside the region.
2. **Transportation and Accessibility Challenges:** Access to transportation remains a major challenge, particularly in rural areas. The lack of reliable public transportation limits the ability of some residents to

participate in training programs or commute to work, especially those without personal vehicles. This disproportionately affects individuals with barriers to employment, such as low-income individuals and those with disabilities.

3. Limited Outreach and Awareness of Programs: Some job seekers and employers remain unaware of the available workforce development resources. This lack of awareness can be a barrier for individuals who might benefit from retraining or for businesses that could use assistance with workforce development solutions.
4. Insufficient Soft Skills Training: Although there is a focus on technical skills, many employers cite a gap in soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. Addressing this requires more emphasis on incorporating soft skills training into existing programs, which can improve employability and job retention rates for participants.
5. Insufficient Support for Transitioning Veterans: While veterans are recognized as an important segment of the workforce, more tailored programs could help military personnel transition more seamlessly into civilian employment. Many veterans have skills that are in demand but need assistance with translating these skills into a civilian context and adapting to the expectations of the private sector.

Education and Training Opportunities

1. Technical and Community Colleges: Institutions like Piedmont Technical College offer a range of certificate and associate degree programs tailored to regional industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. These colleges also offer flexible course schedules and financial aid, making them accessible to a broad demographic of learners.
2. Adult Education Programs: Adult Education programs offer a range of services, including High School Diploma and GED preparation/testing, English as a Second Language, career readiness, workplace literacy, IET, and basic computer skills for the SC Digital Literacy Certificate. Additional services include TABE testing, College and Career Services, WIN preparation, and reading/math refresher classes. Teachers are state-certified educators with SC teaching licenses. Programs are flexible and tailored to individual and employer needs, with Workplace Literacy providing customized on-site or off-site workforce training. Programs are available in Greenwood, Laurens, Edgefield, Abbeville, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties.
3. Apprenticeship Carolina and Registered Apprenticeship Programs: These programs are instrumental in providing structured training in skilled trades. Through partnerships with local employers, these apprenticeships offer hands-on experience and career pathways in fields such as advanced manufacturing, construction, and healthcare.
4. Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Services provided through the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) offer job readiness training, career counseling, and job placement assistance, specifically targeting individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.
5. Youth Workforce Initiatives: Youth-focused programs, such as those offered by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), provide training and work experience to young adults aged 16-24. These programs help address barriers for young individuals who are out of school or lack work experience, giving them a foundation for entering the workforce.
6. Workshops and Short-Term Certifications: The Upper Savannah region also offers short-term certification programs and workshops for skills such as forklift operation, medical assisting, CNC machining, and other industry-relevant skills. These programs help job seekers gain skills that can lead to quick entry into in-demand fields.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. Expand Advanced Training Options: To address the demand for higher-level skills, the region could work to attract more advanced programs in engineering, data science, and other high-tech fields. Partnering with universities and private organizations may help fill this gap.

2. Enhance Transportation Solutions: Establishing more regional transportation solutions, such as carpooling programs or employer-sponsored transportation subsidies, could help address transportation challenges, particularly for rural residents.
3. Increase Awareness and Outreach: More robust outreach efforts, including digital marketing, community events, and partnerships with local agencies, could help raise awareness of available workforce programs among both job seekers and employers.
4. Integrate Soft Skills Training: Incorporating soft skills into technical training programs can address employer needs by enhancing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. Adult education programs in the Upper Savannah Region already provide comprehensive soft skills training, culminating in the SC Essential Soft Skills Certificate. This state-recognized credential assures employers that individuals possess key skills like time management, professionalism, motivation, digital literacy, and advanced problem-solving.
5. Veteran-Specific Programs: Developing programs specifically tailored to help veterans transition their skills to civilian roles could support the integration of this workforce segment. Customized career counseling and **employer education on veterans' skills could improve placement** rates and job satisfaction for this group.

The Upper Savannah South Carolina Workforce Region has a robust framework of workforce development activities and training programs aligned with the needs of its key industries. While there are strengths, including strong industry partnerships and support for individuals with barriers, challenges remain. Addressing gaps in higher-level skills training, improving transportation access, increasing program awareness, integrating soft skills, and providing better support for veterans are critical to **strengthening the region's workforce development. By addressing these areas, the Upper Savannah region can more effectively meet the needs of both job seekers and employers, driving economic growth and prosperity in the area.**

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

The Upper Savannah Workforce Board's strategic vision is to drive sustainable regional economic growth by fostering a workforce ecosystem that equips individuals with the skills and opportunities needed for self-sufficiency and success. Through targeted partnerships with local industries, educational institutions, and community organizations, the Board aims to create a dynamic talent pipeline aligned with the evolving needs of employers in the region.

Central to this vision is a commitment to skills training, career pathway development, and support services designed to uplift the entire workforce, including those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. By increasing access to high-demand occupations, promoting lifelong learning, and encouraging innovation, the Board seeks to build a resilient workforce **that contributes to the economic vitality and prosperity of Upper Savannah's communities. This strategy not only focuses on meeting immediate workforce needs but also on creating an adaptable workforce prepared for future economic shifts and technological advancements.**

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

Here's a set of goals for the Upper Savannah South Carolina Workforce Board focused on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals facing barriers to employment. These goals aim to enhance workforce readiness, improve employability, and promote inclusive economic growth in the region.

1. Strengthen Career Pathways and Skills Training

- Goal: Develop and expand career pathways that lead to high-demand, high-wage jobs in key industries.
- Actions:
 - Partner with educational institutions to align curriculum with current and future workforce needs.
 - Increase access to technical and vocational training programs, apprenticeships, and certification programs.
 - Improve our regional partnership with our Adult Education programs serving individuals sixteen (16) years of age and older to improve their basic skills with an emphasis on literacy, mathematics, and English language proficiency. Our Vocational Rehabilitation programs provide support to individuals including youth with disabilities to support their access to career pathways.

2. Foster Youth Engagement and Early Workforce Development

- Goal: Prepare youth for successful entry into the workforce by providing career exploration, work readiness, and skill-building opportunities.
- Actions:
 - Partner with local schools to offer career awareness programs, internships, and job shadowing experiences.
 - Implement summer employment programs and after-school workshops focused on soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
 - Support initiatives for disconnected youth, ensuring that they have access to resources, mentors, and training to re-engage them in education or employment.

3. Support Individuals with Barriers to Employment

- Goal: Increase workforce participation among individuals facing barriers, such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, and those experiencing economic hardship.
- Actions:

- Collaborate with community-based organizations to offer wraparound services, such as transportation assistance, childcare, and mental health support.
 - Create customized training and job placement services tailored to the specific needs of individuals with barriers, focusing on long-term employment.
 - Promote employer awareness and incentivize inclusive hiring practices, including partnerships for on-the-job training opportunities.
4. Enhance Employer Engagement and Collaboration
- Goal: Strengthen partnerships with local employers to ensure that workforce training aligns with industry needs and opens up more opportunities for job seekers.
 - Actions:
 - Establish industry advisory councils to provide feedback on workforce programs and skills gaps.
 - Promote employer-led training programs, such as apprenticeships and paid internships, to support on-the-job skill development.
 - Conduct regular surveys and needs assessments with employers to identify emerging job skills and trends.
 - Enhance collaboration between adult education providers and regional employers to meet business needs. Promote available resources for basic skills, career readiness, soft skills, digital literacy, and high school credentials.
5. Expand Access to Career Services and Digital Resources
- Goal: Ensure that all individuals, especially those in rural and underserved areas, have access to career counseling, job search resources, and digital tools.
 - Actions:
 - Increase the number of career centers, mobile career services, and online resources for individuals who cannot access in-person services easily.
 - Offer workshops and one-on-one assistance in resume building, interview skills, and digital literacy to improve job-seeking confidence.
 - Leverage adult education providers to deliver career services and digital literacy training in rural and underserved areas through existing satellite and regional sites. Expand partnerships with public libraries, community centers, and local organizations to deliver services in remote locations.
6. Measure and Improve Program Outcomes
- Goal: Establish metrics and evaluation systems to monitor program success and make data-informed improvements.
 - Actions:
 - Implement tracking systems to measure employment, retention, and wage progression among program participants.
 - Conduct annual reviews of workforce programs to ensure they meet regional economic and workforce development goals.
 - Use feedback from participants and employers to continually refine training content, support services, and delivery methods.

The Upper Savannah South Carolina Workforce Board seeks to achieve these goals to build a resilient workforce, empower underserved populations, and contribute to the region's economic vitality.

- *A description of how the LWDB will work with core and required partners to align local resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals referenced above; and*

The Upper Savannah SC Workforce Board (USWB) will work collaboratively with core and required partners to align local resources strategically, maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in achieving regional workforce development goals. This partnership will focus on leveraging each partner's strengths and expertise to provide comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality services to job seekers and employers.

Strategic Alignment

The USWB will coordinate with core partners such as adult education, vocational rehabilitation, and the Department of Employment and Workforce to ensure services are streamlined and avoid duplication. By sharing data, identifying skills gaps, and aligning programming, these partners will jointly craft a strategic response that addresses the local labor market's evolving needs, fostering a skilled workforce aligned with high-demand industries.

Resource Sharing and Coordination

Through regular meetings, joint planning sessions, and shared training initiatives, the USWB will encourage seamless collaboration among partners. Each partner will contribute resources, such as training facilities, instructors, funding, and technology, to create an interconnected network of services. This integrated approach will make workforce resources more accessible and flexible, accommodating both job seekers' and employers' needs.

Service Delivery and Access

The USWB and partners will work together to enhance service delivery, particularly for underserved populations, through a mix of in-person, virtual, and mobile outreach initiatives. Core and required partners will utilize coordinated case management systems to track progress, share referrals, and monitor outcomes, ensuring individuals receive timely, relevant support. Additionally, they will co-locate services wherever possible to streamline access points, creating one-stop centers that reduce barriers for participants and improve outcomes.

Continuous Improvement and Accountability

To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, the USWB will regularly evaluate partner collaboration through metrics tied to employment placement, retention, and employer satisfaction. Feedback loops will be established so partners can adjust strategies in real-time, **aligning resources to best meet the community's needs.**

By working in a united and strategic way, the USWB and its partners will achieve the region's workforce goals, supporting economic growth and community prosperity through a well-trained, adaptable workforce.

- *A description of how the LWDB will utilize technology to increase access to resources and services for job seekers and employers.*

The Upper Savannah SC Workforce Board plans to leverage technology to expand access to resources and services for both job seekers and employers, creating a more inclusive, efficient, and adaptable workforce ecosystem. By implementing user-friendly digital platforms and virtual tools, the Board aims to increase the accessibility and quality of workforce services across the region.

For job seekers, technology will streamline access to job listings, skills assessments, and training opportunities through an integrated online portal. This portal will offer personalized career resources, including virtual job coaching, résumé-building tools, and digital skills training modules, enabling individuals to develop the competencies needed for in-demand jobs. Additionally, virtual workshops, webinars, and real-time video consultations will eliminate geographical and time barriers, allowing users to engage in career development activities from any location.

Employers will benefit from an enhanced digital interface for job postings, candidate matching, and recruitment support, which will simplify the hiring process and improve access to a broader pool of qualified candidates. The Board will offer employers customized tools for workforce planning, labor market analysis, and skills-gap assessments, helping them make data-driven decisions to meet current and future workforce needs. Advanced analytics and real-time data tracking will further support local businesses by providing valuable insights into employment trends and labor supply, informing strategic workforce planning.

By harnessing technology, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Board is committed to making workforce resources more accessible, responsive, and impactful for job seekers and employers alike, ultimately fostering a stronger, more adaptable workforce throughout the region.

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 CEOs, LWDB, and core and required partners were involved in the development of the plan.*

The Upper Savannah Workforce Region's planning process for producing the four-year local workforce plan was a collaborative and inclusive effort, designed to align regional workforce development strategies with local economic needs. The process involved active participation from the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), and required partners to ensure comprehensive input and coordination.

Role of the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs)

The CEOs played a pivotal role by providing leadership and oversight throughout the planning process. Their responsibilities included ensuring that the plan aligned with regional priorities, approving the final draft, and maintaining accountability for workforce development activities. They also facilitated communication between the region's municipalities and stakeholders to ensure that the plan addressed diverse community needs.

Engagement of the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)

The LWDB, composed of representatives from business, labor, education, and community organizations, led the technical aspects of the plan's development. Board members conducted a detailed analysis of labor market trends, skills gaps, and employer needs within the region. They also coordinated public meetings, facilitated focus groups, and gathered feedback from stakeholders to identify strategic priorities and actionable goals. Their input ensured that the plan incorporated a balanced approach, addressing the needs of job seekers and employers alike.

Involvement of Required Partners

Required partners, including representatives from education and training providers, economic development organizations, social service agencies, and state workforce agencies, were integral to the process. These partners contributed expertise and data, ensuring the plan was both evidence-based and aligned with federal and state requirements. Regular consultations and workshops allowed partners to share insights and recommend strategies for addressing workforce challenges, such as increasing access to training, reducing barriers to employment, and supporting underserved populations.

Collaborative Planning Process

The planning process began with a series of stakeholder meetings to establish goals and identify key regional challenges. Data collection and analysis were conducted to inform decision-making, including labor market information, demographic trends, and input from employers. Draft sections of the plan were reviewed by all parties, and feedback was incorporated iteratively to refine strategies. A public comment period allowed additional input from community members and stakeholders before the plan was finalized.

The resulting four-year workforce plan reflects a shared vision for economic growth and workforce development in the Upper Savannah Workforce Region, emphasizing collaboration, inclusivity, and adaptability to evolving regional needs. A ten-day public comment period was provided for input. The Local Plan will be sent to chief elected officials annually during the annual Memorandum of Understanding renewal process.

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

- *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:

- SCDEW (Wagner-Peyser)
- SCDEW-MSFW (Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker)
- SCDEW (Veterans)

- SCDEW (Trade Adjustment Assistance)
- Eckerd Connects WIOA (Assessment, Intake, Core Service, Intensive and Training for Adults, Dislocated-Workers and Youth)
- Department of Social Services (TANF)
- SC Vocational Rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Programs for those with Disabilities)
- SC Commission on the Blind (Rehabilitation Programs for the Vision Impaired)
- CSBG (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program - LIHEAP)
- SCDEW (Unemployment Insurance)
- 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:

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

• *How the LWDB will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development programs in the LWDA.*

- **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 **customers'** 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 LWDA to achieve the following:*

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

The Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region employs a comprehensive approach to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services, with a focus on individuals facing barriers to employment. These strategies and services are designed to meet the unique needs of the region while leveraging partnerships and resources to enhance workforce development outcomes. Key strategies and services include:

1. Outreach and Accessibility
 - Targeted Outreach Efforts: Collaborating with community organizations, faith-based groups, and social service agencies to identify and reach underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those with limited English proficiency.
 - Enhanced Access Points: Establishing satellite offices, mobile workforce centers, and virtual service delivery platforms to ensure accessibility for individuals in rural and remote areas. The Upper Savannah Region is reviewing how to expand access through Connection Points with both Adult Education and Piedmont Technical College satellite campuses.
2. Customized Employment Services
 - Individualized Career Planning: Providing one-on-one career counseling and individualized employment plans tailored to align with the strengths, skills, and goals of each participant.
 - Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Expanding internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT), and work experience programs to connect participants with real-world, hands-on opportunities in high-demand industries.
 - Priority for High-Need Populations: Offering services to address specific challenges, such as reentry programs for justice-involved individuals or initiatives targeting older workers and youth aging out of foster care.
3. Expanding Training and Education Options
 - Industry-Recognized Credentials: Partnering with local technical colleges, adult education programs, training providers, and employers to provide short-term certifications, credentialing programs, and advanced skills training in key growth sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. Adult education programs in the Upper Savannah region offer Integrated Education Training (IET) programs with short-term, industry-recognized certifications in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and CDL, in partnership with Piedmont Technical College and other providers.
 - Support for Upskilling and Reskilling: Offering financial assistance for tuition, books, and supplies through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, as well as digital literacy and basic skills training to address foundational gaps. Adult Education provides training opportunities for adults to enhance existing skills (upskilling) or acquire new skillsets (reskilling) to adapt to changing job markets.
 - Stackable Credential Pathways: Creating pathways for participants to earn progressive credentials that lead to sustainable, long-term careers.
4. Comprehensive Supportive Services
 - Barrier Mitigation: Providing supportive services such as childcare assistance, transportation vouchers, housing referrals, and mental health counseling to reduce barriers to participation in workforce programs.
 - Coordination with Partners: Strengthening collaborations with agencies such as the Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and non-profits to ensure wraparound support for individuals. Strengthening collaboration, coordination, and communication among all core partners is crucial for building a skilled workforce. Collective goals for all partners should include clear and consistent communication, **clear understanding of each's partnering** organization roles and responsibilities, and processes.
5. Employer Engagement and Sector Strategies
 - Demand-Driven Solutions: Collaborating with employers to identify workforce needs and co-design training programs that meet those needs, ensuring participants are job-ready upon program completion.
 - Business Services Teams: Offering hiring assistance, incumbent worker training, and wage subsidies to incentivize employers to hire and retain individuals with barriers to employment.
6. Partnerships and Community Collaboration
 - Regional Partnerships: Aligning efforts with economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and community colleges to create a unified approach to workforce development.

- Integrated Service Delivery: Utilizing the SC Works system as a hub to co-locate services and streamline access for participants.

By employing these strategies, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region aims to create a more inclusive workforce system, empowering individuals with the tools and resources needed to achieve sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency.

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

To enhance access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region will employ a range of targeted strategies and services. These initiatives aim to address barriers to education and training, promote engagement with industry-recognized certifications, and support participants in building portable and stackable credentials for long-term career advancement.

Strategies

1. Expanded Partnerships with Education and Training Providers
 - Collaborate with local community colleges, technical schools, and universities to align curriculum offerings with industry needs.
 - Establish articulation agreements to ensure smooth transitions from non-credit to credit programs.
 - Engage with online learning platforms to broaden access to flexible training options.
2. Employer Engagement and Industry Alignment
 - Work closely with regional employers and industry associations to identify high-demand occupations and required certifications.
 - Integrate employer-sponsored training programs and on-the-job learning opportunities into workforce development plans.
3. Focus on Stackable Credentials
 - Design career pathways that include incremental milestones, enabling participants to earn stackable credentials as they progress in their training and career.
 - Highlight credentials that are recognized across multiple industries, increasing their portability.
4. Targeted Outreach and Support
 - Conduct outreach campaigns to underserved populations, including rural residents, low-income individuals, and those with limited access to transportation.
 - Provide career coaching and navigation services to guide participants through training and credentialing pathways.
5. Financial Assistance and Incentives
 - Utilize federal, state, and local funding streams such as WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) resources to subsidize tuition, fees, and other training-related expenses.
 - Offer performance-based stipends for individuals completing key certification milestones.
6. Integration of Technology
 - Use digital platforms to deliver training programs and track credential attainment.
 - Implement virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) tools for hands-on skill development in high-demand industries such as advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

Services

1. Comprehensive Career Services
 - Provide career exploration tools and labor market information to help participants select training programs aligned with in-demand jobs.
 - Deliver resume writing, interview preparation, and job placement assistance to credential completers.
2. Customized Training Programs

- Develop short-term, intensive training programs tailored to meet the immediate needs of local industries.
 - Include apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities that incorporate credential attainment.
3. Supportive Services
 - Address barriers to participation by offering childcare, transportation vouchers, and access to mental health resources.
 - Provide academic and soft skills support, such as tutoring and time management workshops.
 4. Employer Partnerships for Credential Recognition
 - Facilitate agreements with regional employers to recognize and value specific credentials during hiring and promotion processes.
 - Promote local and regional recognition of credentials by hosting industry roundtables and job fairs.
 5. Follow-Up and Retention Services
 - Conduct regular follow-ups with program participants to ensure continued success and engagement in additional training or employment.
 - Offer alumni networks and peer mentorship programs to sustain motivation and support for lifelong learning.

By implementing these strategies and services, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region aims to enhance access to high-quality, industry-recognized credentials that empower individuals to achieve sustainable employment and upward mobility.

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

The Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region will employ a multifaceted approach to effectively engage employers, including small businesses and those in high-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs. These strategies and services are designed to foster strong employer partnerships, address workforce needs, and support economic growth.

1. Employer-Centric Outreach and Relationship Building
 - Business Services Teams: Form dedicated teams to serve as liaisons between workforce programs and local employers, ensuring consistent communication and responsiveness to business needs. Each team will be sector specific.
 - Customized Employer Engagement Plans: Develop tailored engagement plans based on individual employer needs, including workforce challenges, skill gaps, and recruitment goals.
 - Sector Partnerships: Establish and expand sector partnerships to engage employers in in-demand industries like manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and logistics. These partnerships provide a platform for collaboration on workforce strategies and solutions.
2. Workforce Training and Development Support
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs: Offer financial incentives to employers for hiring and training workers in real-world job environments.
 - Incumbent Worker Training (IWT): Support employers in upgrading the skills of their existing workforce to remain competitive.
 - Apprenticeships and Internships: Promote registered apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities to address skill gaps and pipeline development.
 - Customized Training Programs: Collaborate with technical colleges and training providers to develop curricula aligned with employer needs.
3. Small Business Engagement Strategies
 - Dedicated Small Business Resources: Provide small employers with access to specialized services, such as hiring assistance, workforce assessments, and guidance on navigating workforce programs.

- Simplified Processes: Streamline application and reporting processes for workforce programs to reduce the administrative burden on small businesses.
 - Small Business Roundtables: Host networking events and workshops specifically designed for small employers to share best practices and resources.
4. Data-Driven Solutions
 - Labor Market Analysis: Utilize real-time labor market information to identify trends, skill demands, and growth opportunities in the region.
 - Employer Feedback Mechanisms: Conduct regular surveys, focus groups, and consultations to ensure workforce programs align with employer expectations and industry changes.
 5. Comprehensive Recruitment Support
 - Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Organize targeted recruitment events to connect employers with job seekers in high-demand sectors.
 - Virtual and In-Person Platforms: Leverage technology to host virtual job fairs and maintain physical career center services for increased accessibility.
 - Customized Recruitment Strategies: Assist employers in creating effective job postings and outreach campaigns to attract qualified candidates.
 6. Collaborative Partnerships
 - Economic Development Agencies: Work closely with regional economic development organizations to align workforce strategies with broader economic goals.
 - Education and Training Providers: Partner with schools, colleges, and universities to create pathways from education to employment in high-demand fields.
 - Community-Based Organizations: Collaborate with local nonprofits to address barriers to employment and ensure an inclusive workforce system.
 7. Recognition and Advocacy
 - Employer Recognition Programs: Celebrate and promote employers actively participating in workforce development initiatives to encourage broader engagement.
 - Policy Advocacy: Advocate for policies that support employer involvement in workforce development, including funding and incentives.

By leveraging these strategies and services, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region aims to create a robust and collaborative workforce ecosystem that meets the needs of employers, empowers job seekers, and drives regional economic vitality.

• *Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the LWDA;*

The Upper Savannah Workforce region is committed to fostering a thriving business community by delivering innovative workforce solutions that address the unique needs of local employers. By connecting businesses with skilled talent, providing tailored training opportunities, and supporting economic growth, we aim to empower companies to succeed while enhancing the quality of life for workers in the region. Together, we build a strong, adaptable workforce to drive the future of the Upper Savannah region.

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.

- *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 the 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 the SCWOS system to find jobs that meet their skills. They send numerous messages each week to inform claimants of open positions, hiring events, and job fairs in the community.

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

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

The strategies discussed in Question 3 align closely with the priorities outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan by focusing on enhancing cross-partner collaboration and building staff capacity to deliver integrated, high-quality services. Specifically, the development and implementation of cross-partner staff training **directly support WIOA's emphasis on fostering a coordinated workforce development system that meets the needs of both job seekers and businesses.**

Alignment with WIOA Priorities:

1. **Improved Service Delivery to Job Seekers:** Cross-partner staff training ensures that workforce system staff are knowledgeable about the full range of services and resources available across partner organizations. This enables them to provide more comprehensive support to job seekers, including referrals to appropriate programs, tailored career counseling, and access to training opportunities. The training equips staff with consistent messaging and skills, ensuring seamless transitions for job seekers across partner agencies.
2. **Enhanced Engagement with Businesses:** Through cross-partner training, staff develop a unified understanding of labor market trends, employer needs, and industry demands. This allows workforce partners to present a coordinated approach to business engagement, improving their ability to provide relevant talent solutions and workforce development programs that align with regional economic priorities.
3. **Strengthened Collaboration and Integration:** Training sessions designed for cross-partner participation foster stronger relationships between staff from different agencies. These sessions provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and the development of shared goals, all of which are key to creating a truly integrated workforce system as envisioned by the WIOA State Plan.
4. **Focus on Equity and Accessibility:** The WIOA State Plan emphasizes increasing access to services for underserved populations. Cross-partner training can include components on cultural competency, accessibility standards, and strategies for reducing barriers to participation, ensuring that all staff are equipped to meet the diverse needs of job seekers and businesses.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** By embedding feedback mechanisms into cross-partner training, workforce agencies can regularly assess and refine their approaches to service delivery. This supports the WIOA goal of fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within the workforce system.

In summary, cross-partner staff training directly supports the WIOA State Plan priorities by enhancing the workforce **system's capacity to deliver integrated, responsive, and effective services to job seekers and businesses, while fostering** a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

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

To align the strategies discussed in Question 3 with the priorities outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, the focus will be on increasing the percentage of participants who obtain high-value credentials. These credentials are critical for ensuring participants can access in-demand, well-paying jobs and contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

Alignment Strategies:

1. **Targeted Sector-Based Training:**
Emphasizing training programs in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing, ensures participants pursue credentials valued by employers in these sectors. This aligns with

the WIOA State Plan's focus on addressing local labor market needs and enhancing economic growth. Identify and develop new apprenticeship opportunities with our business partners.

2. Partnerships with Employers and Educational Institutions:
Strengthening partnerships with employers, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Technical Colleges, and technical training providers enables the co-development of curriculum and credentialing pathways. These partnerships ensure that credentials earned by participants meet industry standards and have immediate value in the job market. Our region continues to address many individuals lacking high school credential. Adult Education is an integral part of providing programming to out of school youth 17 to 21 years old and adult learners 22 and older to earn the South Carolina High School Diploma or the High School Equivalency Diploma.
3. Career Pathway Design:
Integrating career pathways into training programs supports participants in obtaining stackable credentials, allowing progressive skill-building and access to higher-level employment opportunities. This approach aligns **with the WIOA State Plan's goal of creating clear, attainable pathways for career advancement.**
4. Supportive Services for Credential Completion:
Providing wraparound support, such as childcare, transportation, and mentorship, ensures participants can overcome barriers to completing credential **programs. These services align with the WIOA State Plan's** commitment to reducing disparities and increasing equity in workforce outcomes.
5. Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:
Establishing systems to track the percentage of participants earning high-value credentials ensures accountability and facilitates continuous improvement. Data-driven adjustments to programs can better align with evolving state and regional priorities under WIOA.
6. Outreach to Underserved Populations:
Implementing outreach initiatives to engage underrepresented groups, such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, expands access to high-value credentials. **This supports the WIOA State Plan's emphasis on equity and inclusion.**

By aligning strategies with the WIOA State Plan, the initiative not only increases the percentage of participants obtaining high-value credentials but also addresses broader workforce development goals, including economic competitiveness, equity, and regional workforce needs.

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

The strategies discussed in Question 3 align with the priorities outlined in South Carolina's WIOA State Plan by directly addressing the need to increase access to education and training in broadband-related fields, a critical component for personal advancement and workforce development. These strategies aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. Enhancing Educational Access and Digital Inclusion
By expanding broadband infrastructure and implementing digital literacy programs, individuals across South Carolina, particularly in underserved and rural areas, will gain access to online education and training resources. This aligns with WIOA's emphasis on equitable access to learning opportunities and enables individuals to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the digital economy.
2. Leveraging Partnerships for Targeted Workforce Training
Collaborations with community colleges, technical schools, and employers in broadband and technology industries **will create workforce training programs tailored to the needs of the state's growing tech economy.** These partnerships, supported by WIOA funding, will ensure that individuals receive relevant, employer-driven training that aligns with market demands. Adult education programs provide digital literacy instruction and assessments through NorthStar Digital Literacy and WIN Learning Digital Literacy to certify that individuals have core digital literacy skills needed for life and the workplace.

3. Promoting Career Pathways in Technology

Through career pathways initiatives, the strategies will connect individuals to progressive opportunities in broadband and related fields, from foundational skills to advanced certifications. These efforts directly support WIOA's goals of fostering career advancement and economic self-sufficiency for participants.

4. Addressing Skills Gaps to Improve Workforce Competitiveness

The emphasis on broadband training will help bridge skills gaps in South Carolina's workforce, particularly in high-demand areas such as network installation, cybersecurity, and IT support. By equipping individuals with these in-demand skills, the state will enhance its overall technology workforce competitiveness.

5. Fostering Economic Mobility and Personal Goal Achievement

Increasing broadband access and related training opportunities will empower individuals to pursue personal goals, such as higher education, entrepreneurial ventures, or transitioning to higher-paying jobs in technology sectors. This focus aligns with the **WIOA State Plan's priority of improving economic outcomes for South Carolina's residents.**

By integrating these strategies into the WIOA framework, South Carolina can enhance its broadband workforce development efforts while ensuring individuals are equipped to thrive in a digitally connected world.

- *Improving strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match job seekers with employers;*

To align the strategies discussed in Question 3 with the priorities outlined in the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) State Plan, the following approaches can be implemented to improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers, thereby effectively matching job seekers with employers:

1. Employer Engagement and Partnership Building:

- A key priority of the WIOA State Plan is fostering partnerships between employers, workforce development systems, and education providers. The strategies will emphasize building strong relationships with local businesses, industry associations, and chambers of commerce. By understanding employer needs, workforce systems can design programs that equip job seekers with relevant skills and credentials that match local labor market demands.
- Through dedicated business service teams, workforce boards will engage employers directly to understand their workforce needs and help bridge skills gaps. These engagements can be supplemented by surveys and regular meetings to stay aligned with changing market demands.

2. Customized Workforce Solutions:

- The WIOA State Plan stresses the importance of providing tailored workforce solutions. Strategies discussed earlier will align with this by offering customized training programs, apprenticeships, and on-the-job learning opportunities designed specifically to meet the needs of local employers. This helps employers access a pool of skilled candidates who are prepared for the specific demands of their industries.
- Workforce systems will also leverage data analytics to identify emerging sectors and skills, allowing for the proactive development of workforce solutions that align with economic development strategies.

3. Job Seeker Training and Support:

- To effectively match job seekers with employers, workforce development systems will invest in training **and career services that are aligned with WIOA's emphasis on building the skills of the workforce.** This includes offering career counseling, resume workshops, interview preparation, and skills training, all tailored to meet the requirements of specific employers and sectors.
- Strategies will integrate sector-specific training and internships that provide job seekers with real-world experience, ensuring that they are job-ready and employers can rely on them to meet their immediate needs.

4. Increased Access to Resources for Employers:
 - The WIOA State Plan encourages increased support for employers, particularly small and medium-sized businesses. Strategies will enhance employer access to tax incentives, recruitment assistance, and workforce development resources, making it easier for them to hire from the local labor pool. Additionally, workforce systems will streamline the process for employers to post job openings, access training grants, and participate in job fairs and other recruitment events.
5. Data-Driven Decision Making:
 - Data collection and analysis play a significant role in the WIOA plan. Strategies will align with this priority by utilizing labor market information and feedback from employers to improve service delivery. Workforce development boards will track employer satisfaction and the effectiveness of workforce solutions, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptability of outreach efforts.
 - By analyzing trends, workforce systems will be able to predict industry needs and prepare job seekers for high-demand careers, ensuring a smoother match between job seekers and employers.

By aligning these strategies with the WIOA State Plan, workforce systems will be better equipped to meet both employer needs and job seekers' aspirations, fostering a more effective and dynamic labor market.

- *Increasing awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment;*

The strategies discussed in Question 3 will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the WIOA State Plan by focusing on increasing awareness of available resources and services that can help individuals overcome barriers to employment. This includes targeted outreach efforts to ensure that individuals, especially those from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, are aware of job training programs, career counseling, and support services. Collaborative partnerships between workforce development agencies, community organizations, and employers will also be strengthened to ensure that resources are accessible and effectively communicated. Additionally, leveraging technology and data-driven tools will enhance the visibility and accessibility of resources, ensuring that individuals can easily find the support they need to overcome obstacles to employment and improve their career outcomes.

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

The strategies outlined in Question 3 aim to align with the priorities of the WIOA State Plan by addressing the specific needs of rural and underserved communities in South Carolina, ensuring that these individuals have equitable access to employment and training resources. By focusing on implementing a multifaceted outreach strategy, the goal is to remove barriers to workforce development in these areas, which often face challenges such as limited access to technology, transportation, and awareness of available programs.

1. Targeted Outreach and Awareness Campaigns: The strategy will involve community-based marketing and outreach through local organizations, schools, SC DEW Rural Outreach Team, and workforce development partners. This approach ensures that the message reaches individuals who may not typically have access to mainstream outreach methods. By targeting community centers, faith-based organizations, and local leaders, the outreach campaign can effectively communicate the availability of employment services and training resources.
2. Leveraging Technology for Virtual Access: Recognizing the geographic isolation of rural areas, a robust digital strategy will be developed to provide online resources, webinars, and virtual career fairs. This will be essential for individuals in remote areas who may have limited access to in-person services. Virtual training and job search platforms will be integrated into the strategy to ensure that participants have opportunities to engage with workforce development programs from the comfort of their homes.
3. Mobile Workforce Units: Given the distance many rural residents must travel to access services, mobile workforce development units will be deployed. These mobile units will travel to underserved areas to deliver employment counseling, training, and other resources directly to individuals who may struggle with transportation.

This strategy aligns with WIOA's focus on increasing access to training and education for individuals facing barriers to employment.

4. Partnerships with Local Employers and Industry Leaders: To ensure that the training provided aligns with local workforce needs, the outreach strategy will engage employers in rural and underserved communities to understand skill gaps and workforce demand. These partnerships can help tailor training programs that are directly relevant to the needs of the local economy, ensuring that individuals in these areas gain skills that lead to employment.
5. Tailored Services for Special Populations: The outreach efforts will specifically target groups such as **individuals with disabilities, veterans, and individuals with barriers to employment**. WIOA's focus on increasing access for these populations will be reflected in the development of specialized services, including mentorship programs, accommodations for training, and job placement assistance.

By aligning these strategies with the priorities outlined in the WIOA State Plan, the overall approach will ensure that individuals in rural South Carolina are not only aware of but also able to access the resources and support they need to improve their employment prospects. This multifaceted outreach approach will ultimately bridge the gap between workforce services and underserved populations, contributing to a stronger, more inclusive workforce.

• *Identifying resources and funding opportunities to provide services to jobseekers:*

To align the strategies discussed in Question 3 with the priorities outlined in the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) State Plan, it is essential to identify resources and funding opportunities that will enhance service delivery for jobseekers. This alignment will ensure that the resources are used efficiently to support the workforce development needs identified in the plan.

1. Leveraging Federal and State Funding: One of the key elements of the WIOA State Plan is maximizing the use of federal and state resources. The strategies discussed will prioritize identifying funding streams such as Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs), Title II (Adult Education and Literacy), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). By aligning the service delivery strategies with these funding opportunities, jobseeker services will be better equipped to provide a comprehensive set of resources, including training, career counseling, and support services.
2. Partnerships with Local Workforce Development Boards: WIOA emphasizes regional collaboration and the creation of strong local workforce development systems. The Upstate Link Region comprised of Greenville, Upper Savannah, Upstate and WorkLink Regions is an example of the existing coordinated effort and plan. The strategies will align with the State Plan by fostering partnerships with local workforce development boards and other regional entities to tap into local and regional funding opportunities. These boards can guide the alignment of resources to local workforce needs and ensure that services are tailored to jobseekers within specific communities.
3. Employer Engagement and Industry Partnerships: Another priority of the WIOA is to strengthen the connection between workforce development and the needs of employers. The strategies will identify resources and funding that support employer engagement initiatives, including sector-based training programs, apprenticeships, and internships, which are aligned with industry demands. These programs may be funded through initiatives such as the Employer Training Incentive Program (ETIP) or the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP).
4. Expanding Access to Training and Education: A key priority in the WIOA State Plan is to increase access to education and training for jobseekers, particularly those in underserved populations. Strategies for identifying funding sources will include federal and state grants for training programs, such as Pell Grants, Workforce Innovation Funds, or State Adult Education grants. These funds will support efforts to offer skill development **opportunities that align with the state's economic needs, enhancing the employability** of jobseekers.
5. Technology and Data Systems: Effective use of data systems to track jobseeker outcomes and service delivery is critical under the WIOA framework. The strategies will incorporate funding for technology enhancements,

including the implementation or upgrading of case management and tracking systems. By utilizing resources like the WIOA-funded state data systems or Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grants, services will be more **effective in identifying jobseekers'** needs and matching them to appropriate opportunities.

6. Youth Employment Programs: Given the emphasis WIOA places on supporting youth employment, strategies will align with funding opportunities for programs like YouthBuild or Youth Employment and Training grants. These funding sources will support the creation of pathways for youth to access work experience, training, and **mentorship, which are integral to the state's long-term** workforce development goals.

By aligning the strategies with these funding opportunities, services to jobseekers will be enhanced, ensuring they receive the support, training, and resources needed to succeed in the workforce.

• *Communicating opportunities to the workforce system; and*

To align the strategies discussed in Question 3 with the priorities outlined in the WIOA State Plan, it is essential to ensure that communication efforts are targeted, inclusive, and accessible across all sectors of the workforce system. This can be achieved by:

1. Leveraging Technology: Utilize digital platforms to disseminate information about available opportunities, ensuring that all stakeholders, including job seekers, employers, and training providers, have easy access to relevant resources.
2. Cross-Agency Collaboration: Foster strong partnerships between local workforce development boards, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and employers. This will enhance the flow of information and enable a cohesive approach in communicating job and training opportunities.
3. Targeted Outreach: Tailor outreach strategies to specific populations, such as youth, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, ensuring that communication is culturally and linguistically appropriate, and reaches underserved communities.
4. Clear Messaging: Ensure that information about career pathways, skill development, and support services is communicated clearly and concisely through multiple channels—online, in-person, and through social media—so that it is accessible to all individuals in the workforce system.

By focusing on these strategies, the workforce system can effectively align with WIOA's priorities of improving access to employment, training, and educational opportunities, and fostering a more equitable labor market.

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

The strategies discussed in Question 3 above will be aligned with the priorities outlined in the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) State Plan by strategically targeting training providers that offer programs in key sectors identified as critical for economic growth—namely infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing. These sectors align with **the state's workforce development goals to address skills gaps, provide pathways to high-demand jobs, and support industry-driven economic priorities.**

1. Targeted Industry Focus: The WIOA State Plan emphasizes the importance of aligning workforce development **efforts with the state's high-demand** industries, including infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing. By prioritizing training providers in these sectors, the **strategies will ensure that the state's workforce is equipped** with the skills necessary to meet industry needs and support economic growth. For example, the plan may prioritize the development of training programs that address emerging trends in clean energy, renewable technologies, and modernized infrastructure.
2. Partnerships with Industry-Specific Providers: The state will collaborate with employers, industry associations, and education/training institutions to identify high-quality training providers who are already offering relevant programs. This includes evaluating the efficacy of current training initiatives and providing support to

expand capacity where needed. Strategic partnerships with local community colleges, technical schools, and specialized training centers will help create a pipeline of skilled workers for the infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing sectors.

3. **Aligning Training with Job Demand:** The strategies will ensure that training providers align their curricula with the skills and competencies needed by employers in these high-demand sectors. This can involve adapting training programs to meet specific industry standards or incorporating feedback from employers to make sure graduates are work-ready. The alignment will also be guided by labor market data, ensuring that the skills being taught match current and projected workforce demands.
4. **Incentivizing Sector-Specific Credentials and Certifications:** To further align with the WIOA State Plan, the strategies will encourage training providers to offer credentials and certifications that are highly valued by employers in the infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing sectors. This approach supports workforce mobility by ensuring workers have portable, industry-recognized credentials that enhance their employability.
5. **Support for Underrepresented Populations:** The WIOA State Plan focuses on ensuring equitable access to training and employment opportunities, particularly for underrepresented populations such as women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities. The strategies discussed will prioritize outreach to these populations to ensure they are aware of training opportunities in infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing, thus fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce.
6. **Leveraging State and Federal Resources:** To maximize the impact of these strategies, the state will leverage federal funding, such as WIOA and other related workforce development grants, to support training providers and workers in these priority sectors. Funding may be used to enhance training facilities, provide financial assistance to participants, and incentivize employers to partner in apprenticeship programs.

By targeting training providers in the infrastructure, energy, and advanced manufacturing sectors and aligning them with the workforce needs outlined in the WIOA State Plan, these strategies will help to create a skilled, competitive workforce that meets **the state's economic and employment priorities**.

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

The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) plays a critical role in implementing the strategies and services outlined in Question 3, working collaboratively with core, required, and other partners, including economic development entities. Here's an overview of how the LWDB will coordinate and partner with these stakeholders:

1. Core Partners:

The LWDB will align its efforts with core partners, such as the American Job Centers (AJCs), Adult Education and Literacy providers, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. These core partners will work together to provide a seamless delivery of workforce services by:

- **Coordinating Service Delivery:** LWDB will ensure that workforce services are easily accessible to individuals through the AJCs, with core partners providing necessary job training, career counseling, and employment placement services.
- **Data Sharing and Tracking:** To ensure effective outcomes, the LWDB will establish protocols for data sharing, monitoring, and evaluating progress in real-time. This will enable all partners to track individual participant progress, identify gaps in services, and adjust strategies as needed.
- **Leveraging Resources:** The LWDB will coordinate funding, training programs, and other resources provided by core partners to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts. This will ensure that both public and private sector funding is used effectively to support training and career pathways.

2. Required Partners:

The LWDB will also engage with required partners, including the Department of Human Services, local chambers of commerce, and other local agencies, to ensure a comprehensive approach to workforce development. This collaboration will focus on:

- Access to Supportive Services: Partnering with required agencies such as human services will provide access to critical resources like transportation, childcare, and other barriers to employment. The LWDB will help connect individuals to these services.
- Collaboration with Employers: The LWDB will partner with businesses and employers through required partners like chambers of commerce, labor unions, and industry-specific associations to align workforce development strategies with local economic needs and labor market trends.
- Policy Alignment: Ensuring that policies across required partner organizations support workforce development goals. This includes aligning eligibility requirements, career services, and case management protocols.

3. Economic Development Partners:

Collaboration with economic development organizations will be essential for aligning workforce strategies with regional growth and industry trends. The LWDB will engage with local economic development agencies to:

- Align Workforce and Economic Strategies: By working with economic development partners, the LWDB will ensure that workforce initiatives are aligned with regional economic growth sectors and industries with high demand for skilled workers.
- Industry-Specific Talent Pipelines: The LWDB will collaborate with economic development partners to develop industry-specific training programs and talent pipelines that meet the needs of local businesses. This will involve gathering data on in-demand skills and occupations and ensuring that training programs are developed to fill these gaps.
- Attracting New Employers: By ensuring a skilled and ready workforce, the LWDB can support efforts to attract new businesses to the region, helping to boost economic growth and job creation.

4. Other Community Partners:

The LWDB will also collaborate with other community-based organizations, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations to create a holistic support system for individuals. This will include:

- Educational Institutions: By partnering with K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities, the LWDB will facilitate the alignment of educational curricula with workforce needs. This may include career and technical education (CTE) programs, apprenticeships, and certifications.
- Community-Based Organizations: The LWDB will partner with local non-profits to ensure that underserved and at-risk populations receive the support and training needed to succeed in the workforce, addressing equity and inclusion concerns.

5. Implementation and Coordination:

The LWDB will establish clear communication and coordination mechanisms to ensure that all partners are aligned and working toward the common goal of improving workforce outcomes. Regular meetings, shared performance metrics, and joint planning will be essential for the successful implementation of strategies. The board will also oversee the evaluation and continuous improvement of the services and partnerships to ensure maximum impact.

In conclusion, the LWDB will foster a collaborative, integrated approach to workforce development by bringing together core partners, required agencies, economic development organizations, and community partners. This will ensure that the strategies and services discussed in Question 3 are effectively implemented, creating a strong, sustainable workforce that meets the needs of both workers and employers.

6. A description of the Adult, DW, and 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. Adult education programs offer soft-skills training and assessments utilizing the essential soft skills courses in WIN. Individuals can earn a state-recognized Soft

Skills Assessment that measures entry-level work tasks and behaviors, including communicating effectively; conveying professionalism; promoting teamwork and collaboration; and thinking critically and solving problems.

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

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

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

Modeling soft skills is the best 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 job seekers are coaching and changing behavior which leads to success. If a client is late for 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 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 career coach 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 LWDB's strategic vision and goals.*

The Upper Savannah Workforce Board (USWB) strategically supports regional employers by offering a variety of workforce development initiatives designed to strengthen businesses, enhance employee skills, and foster economic growth. These services and strategies are tailored to meet the unique needs of businesses across various industries, with a focus on both short-term and long-term workforce needs. Key strategies include:

1. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Programs:

IWT programs provide current employees with opportunities to upgrade their skills and adapt to changing technologies and business practices. By funding training for incumbent workers, employers can ensure their workforce remains competitive and capable of meeting new industry demands, improving retention and productivity. These programs are particularly beneficial for employers seeking to address skill gaps in their existing workforce.

2. On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs:

OJT programs offer employers the chance to train new hires or existing employees while they work, ensuring that training is directly relevant to the job. Employers can receive reimbursement of 50% or 75% of the training costs, reducing the financial burden of onboarding new staff. These programs are highly effective for industries with specialized needs or when rapid skill development is necessary.

3. Customized Training Programs:

Tailored training initiatives are designed to meet the specific needs of an employer, ensuring that employees gain the precise skills required for their roles. These programs can be developed in collaboration with local educational institutions, training providers, or workforce development professionals, ensuring they are relevant and effective in meeting industry demands.

4. Industry and Sector Strategies:

The USWB fosters industry-specific partnerships to address sector-wide workforce challenges. By creating sector strategies, the board can align workforce development efforts with the evolving needs of key industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Manufacturing is a key strategy of the Upstate Manufacturing Network and Sector Strategies plan. These strategies focus on addressing regional workforce shortages, improving skillsets, and ensuring that industries have access to a sustainable talent pool.

5. Career Pathways Initiatives:

Career pathways initiatives are designed to create clear and accessible pathways for workers to advance within their careers. These programs focus on building connections between entry-level positions and higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs within specific industries. Employers benefit by having a pipeline of skilled workers ready for advancement, while workers benefit from a structured framework that guides them through skill development and career growth.

6. Utilization of Effective Business Intermediaries:

Business intermediaries such as local chambers of commerce, industry associations, and workforce development agencies act as connectors between employers and workforce resources. These intermediaries help businesses navigate available training opportunities, connect with funding sources, and streamline the hiring process, ensuring employers have access to the resources they need to succeed.

7. Other Business Services and Strategies:

The USWB also offers additional services and strategies designed to support regional employers. These may include workforce assessments, labor market data, recruitment assistance, and incentives for hiring individuals from targeted populations. These services are designed to address the diverse needs of employers, from small businesses to large corporations, by providing customized solutions that enhance business performance and workforce development.

Through these comprehensive services, the Upper Savannah Workforce Board works to meet the strategic vision of fostering a strong, adaptable, and skilled workforce that supports regional economic growth and the success of local employers. By focusing on both the development of employees and the needs of businesses, the USWB ensures that employers can access a pool of talent that is ready to contribute to their long-term success. The Business Services Team is a strong link in our communication with employers. The needs of employers are discussed during employer visits, phone calls, and online meetings. **A full list of employer services is provided under the employer tab on the local board's website, www.upperscworks.com.** The local area works closely with SCMEP to address companies that may need Rapid Response IWT services. Upper Savannah will review these on a case-by-case basis.

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>.

Below is a list of business services offer:

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 LWDB will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional and economic development activities that are carried out in the LWDA, including how the LWDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

Local staff from Upper Savannah currently participate **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.

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.

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

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

Upper Savannah provides oversight and conducts ongoing monthly monitoring of the WIOA Program. Monthly reports are 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.

The board funds one contractor, Eckerd Connects. 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 LWDB will target rural communities, including how the LWDB will use technology and other means to facilitate increased access to services provided through the SC Works delivery system;*

The Upper Savannah Workforce Region focuses on enhancing services for rural communities through several strategies. Here are some key approaches that the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) may employ:

1. **Outreach Programs:** The LWDB has implemented targeted outreach initiatives to connect with residents in rural areas. Including organizing informational sessions, workshops, and job fairs at local community centers or schools and on Piedmont Technical College Campuses.
2. **Mobile Services:** Utilizing mobile units or pop-up service centers can help bring SC Works services directly to underserved rural populations, making it easier for them to access resources without having to travel long distances.
3. **Technology Integration:** The LWDB can leverage technology by offering virtual services, such as online workshops, job search assistance, and resume-building resources. This reduces the need for physical travel and can increase participation among residents.
4. **Collaboration with Local Organizations:** Partnering with local nonprofits, community colleges, and businesses can enhance service delivery. These organizations often have established relationships in rural areas and can help facilitate access to workforce development programs.
5. **Training Programs:** Offering remote or hybrid training programs can ensure that individuals in rural communities have the opportunity to gain new skills without the need for extensive travel.
6. **Resource Accessibility:** The LWDB might enhance online resources, such as a user-friendly website that provides information about job openings, career training, and other workforce resources tailored specifically for rural residents.
7. **Community Engagement:** Engaging local leaders and community members in the development of services ensures that the programs meet the unique needs of the rural workforce. We are partnering with the various Chambers of Commerce in each rural community to participate in events and provide services.

By employing these strategies, the Upper Savannah SC Workforce Region aims to improve access to workforce services and support the development of a skilled workforce in rural areas.

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

To comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the South Carolina Nondiscrimination Plan, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), entities within the SC Works delivery system can take the following steps:

1. **Policy Development:** Establish clear nondiscrimination policies that outline commitments to equal access for individuals with disabilities. These policies should be publicly available and explicitly cover all aspects of services and programs. This is part of our SC Works Operations Plan.
2. **Physical Accessibility:** Ensure that all facilities are compliant with ADA accessibility standards. This includes ramps, elevators, appropriate signage, and accessible restrooms. Regular audits should be conducted to maintain accessibility. The One Stop Operator conducts a quarterly compliance review.
3. **Programmatic Accessibility:** Review all programs and services to identify barriers to access for individuals with disabilities. Implement necessary adaptations or alternatives to ensure equitable participation in training, workshops, and job placement services. Our intake assessments include questions regarding barriers to better assist each individual with the appropriate services.
4. **Technology Accessibility:** Ensure that all technology (including websites, applications, and digital resources) meets accessibility standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This allows individuals with disabilities to access information and services effectively.
5. **Staff Training:** Provide comprehensive training for staff on the rights of individuals with disabilities and best practices for providing assistance and accommodations. This includes disability awareness training and workshops on how to interact with and support individuals with various disabilities.
6. **Collaboration with Partners:** Work with community organizations and disability advocacy groups to enhance services and ensure that all needs are understood and addressed. This network can also assist in developing outreach efforts and resources for individuals with disabilities. SC Vocational Rehabilitation and SC Commission for the Blind are SC Works partner and often provide training in these areas.
7. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish channels for individuals with disabilities to provide feedback about accessibility and services. This could be through surveys, focus groups, or direct communication, which can inform continuous improvement.
8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a system for regularly monitoring compliance and evaluating the effectiveness of accessibility measures. Use data to identify gaps and make necessary adjustments in policies and practices.

By focusing on these areas, SC Works can create a more inclusive environment that meets the legal requirements for nondiscrimination and positively impacts individuals with disabilities, enhancing their access to workforce development resources. The Upper Savannah Workforce Board has a Priority Populations Committee who addresses the needs of persons with disabilities and other potential barriers to employment.

• *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:

- Wagner Peyser, SCDEW
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker, SCDEW
- Veterans, SCDEW
- Trade Adjustment Assistance SCDEW
- WIOA Assessment, Intake, Core Service, Intensive and Training- GLEAMNS
- Department of Social Services
- SC Vocational Rehabilitation
- SC Commission on the Blind
- CSBG
- Unemployment Insurance, SCDEW
- Adult Education – Offers TABE testing, provides referrals, proctors the WIN job readiness assessments.

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

- Goodwill -Manages Senior employment program, participants work in our SC Works centers.
- Job Corps -Referrals to/from and provide follow-up on JC graduates.
- 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.*

The Upper Savannah Workforce Area offers a host of assessment, training, and support services to the Adult and Dislocated Worker populations. Advanced Manufacturing and Health Care are our top in demand occupations in the region and demand analysis shows that even if all the trainees went into one of these two areas, there still will be a skill shortage.

All of our Adult and Dislocated Workers will have access to workshops, career services, and training including:

1. Resume assistance
2. How to complete an online job application.
3. Work History Analysis for transferable skills and career planning
4. Basic skills assessment (TABE & WIN)
5. Interview preparation skills
6. Job search assistance
7. Connection to supportive services and other community service providers.

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.

Adult & Dislocated Workers seeking training have access to:

1. Basic skills upgrading, including GED
2. Computer skills
3. Work Experience
4. On-the-Job Training
5. Occupational Skills Training
6. Apprenticeships

Classroom training has seen 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 are not worth the effort.

Our primary college, Piedmont Technical College, withdrew nearly all training from the list several years ago now. In response, we have adopted two strategies.

1. Under this new plan we are creating a local eligible training provider list to include Piedmont Technical College to re-institute the services previously lost.
2. **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.**
3. We have expanded our eligible training provider list (ETPL) with for-profit schools. To minimize risks, we require schools which cost more than \$4,500 to agree to incremental payments. The agreement means that schools share in the risk with WIOA and are eager to help with retention and placement efforts.

Prior to **the state's requirements** for 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 participants, 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 participants 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 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 soon.

- 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 LWDB will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the LWDA 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, but it also 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.

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

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 Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and DSS. We also make referrals to other partners including Job Corps.

WIOA works closely with SCVR 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 Eckerd Connects. 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 identifying 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, High School Diploma and 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 which identifies the entities involved and the function(s) they are providing, and a description of formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program. (UPDATED)*

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 Student Support Services provides support for students seeking academic development and assists students to meet basic college requirements. Adult education programs per WIOA provide academic instruction, tutoring, remediation, computer training, basic reading and math instruction that are necessary for youth to obtain employment, post-secondary education, and for those who do not have a high school credential with a priority given to those who are low income, with disabilities, on public assistance, or lack basic work skills.
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. Adult education programs serve out-of-school youth to promote the achievement of a high school diploma, GED, or increase basic skills to become qualified for job training, work experience or employment. School District alternative schools serve in-school youth in an alternative setting.

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, Eckerd Connects 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. Eckerd Connects offers several additional programs that can promote youth leadership development and civic engagement such as Career Smart 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, Eckerd Connects 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 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 these activities is the key to their future economic stability.

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

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

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling: Youth who are transitioning into young adulthood or to the world of work and post-secondary 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 SCVR. 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. Eckerd Connects 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

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 work 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 § 3(5)(B), describe the LWDA’s policy that further defines how to determine if a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. (If the LWDA 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 LWDB will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.*

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) aims to create a seamless integration between secondary and post-secondary education programs and workforce investment activities. Here’s how they coordinate these efforts:

Coordination Strategies:

1. Collaborative Planning: The LWDB engages in regular meetings with representatives from local secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, and workforce investment partners. These meetings facilitate the sharing of information regarding curriculum alignment, emerging job market trends, and new program developments.
2. Workforce Development Partnerships: Establishing partnerships with educational institutions, local businesses, and community organizations enables the LWDB to align educational programs with the skills needed in the workforce. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive relevant training that meets employer demands.
3. Integrated Program Design: The LWDB works with educational institutions to design dual-enrollment programs that allow high school students to earn credits toward post-secondary education while also gaining relevant work experience. This integration helps students transition smoothly from secondary to post-secondary education.
4. Curriculum Alignment: The board facilitates discussions between educators and industry representatives to align academic curricula with workforce needs. This includes tailoring vocational training programs to meet specific industry requirements and swiftly adapting to changes in the job market.
5. Resource Sharing: To avoid duplicating services, the LWDB coordinates resources among partners. They share information about workshops, training sessions, and job fairs to ensure all stakeholders are aware of available services and can direct participants accordingly.

Enhancing Services:

1. Career Pathways Development: The LWDB promotes the development of clear career pathways that guide students from classroom education to careers. This encompasses establishing defined pathways that illustrate educational progression and related employment opportunities, making it easier for educators and students to navigate their choices.
2. Student Support Services: The LWDB helps connect students and job seekers with comprehensive support services, including counseling, mentoring, and financial aid information. By centralizing these services, the LWDB enhances the support network available to students transitioning between education and employment.
3. Skills Training Workshops: Organizing joint workshops and training sessions that include participants from secondary and post-secondary levels increases exposure to skill development opportunities. These sessions can include soft skills training, resume-building workshops, and interview preparation.

Avoiding Duplication of Services:

1. Data Sharing and Communication: The LWDB utilizes a shared data system among its partners to track participant progress and outcomes. This facilitates communication and ensures that services are coordinated effectively, preventing overlaps in programming and ensuring comprehensive support.
2. Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing feedback loops allows educators, employers, and participants to communicate their needs and experiences. This information helps the LWDB adjust services and strategies, ensuring that efforts are complementary rather than duplicative.
3. Joint Marketing and Outreach: The LWDB collaborates with educational institutions and partners to market available services and programs collectively, ensuring that students are aware of various resources without redundant messages or solicitations.

By implementing these coordination strategies, the Upper Savannah LWDB enhances the connection between education and workforce investment activities, ensuring that services are aligned, efficient, and targeted towards the needs of students and the local labor market.

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

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of essential supportive services, such as transportation, childcare, and other relevant services, through a structured and collaborative approach. Here are the key components of this coordination:

Coordination Strategies:

1. **Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping:** The LWDB conducts assessments to identify the transportation and childcare needs of participants in the workforce investment programs. By mapping available resources within the community, they can effectively identify gaps and enhance support services. Greenwood and Laurens County Chambers of Commerce have completed needs assessment studies on Housing, Transportation and Childcare to include the impact on the community and workforce. Upper Savannah Workforce Board participated in these studies.
2. **Partnerships with Local Agencies:** The LWDB collaborates with local agencies and organizations that provide supportive services. This includes partnerships with transportation services, childcare providers, social service agencies, and community organizations that can offer additional resources or funding. Upper Savannah partners with McCormick County MAT Transit and has grown their route coverage over the past two years.
3. **Integrated Service Delivery:** The LWDB ensures that supportive services are integrated into the overall service delivery model. Case managers work closely with participants to identify their specific needs for transportation and childcare as part of the initial assessment process. This ensures a holistic approach to support.
4. **Co-location of Services:** Whenever possible, the LWDB strives to co-locate workforce services with supportive services. By having transportation, childcare, and workforce services available within the same physical space, participants can access multiple resources efficiently. It is a stretch in our rural community, but our recent relocation of our comprehensive center in Greenwood to the United Way Center demonstrates how embedding our services with other community partners has a tremendous positive impact for all agencies.

Providing Supportive Services:

1. **Transportation Assistance:** The LWDB coordinates with local transportation providers to offer solutions such as bus passes, transit vouchers, or ride-sharing options. They ensure that participants have the means to attend training sessions, interviews, and job placements without transportation barriers.
2. **Childcare Support:** Collaborating with childcare providers, the LWDB can assist in connecting participants to affordable childcare solutions or subsidies. They may also provide information on local programs that support childcare availability, enabling participants to engage in workforce activities without worry about their children's care.
3. **Financial Assistance:** The LWDB may offer financial assistance for other supportive services as needed, such as uniforms, tools, or certification costs. By identifying essential resources and funding streams, they help alleviate financial burdens that could impede participation in workforce programs.

Monitoring and Follow-Up:

1. **Tracking Service Utilization:** The LWDB monitors the utilization of supportive services by participants to assess the effectiveness of the coordinated services. This tracking ensures that assistance is being adequately provided and identifies areas for improvement or additional support.
2. **Participant Feedback:** The LWDB encourages participant feedback on the supportive services received and their impact on overall success in workforce investment activities. Feedback mechanisms are established to continuously refine services and address any emerging needs.
3. **Regular Stakeholder Meetings:** The LWDB holds regular meetings with all stakeholders, including service providers and partner organizations, to review service delivery effectiveness, address challenges, and adapt strategies. These meetings foster communication and collaboration among all parties involved.

Through these collaborative approaches, the Upper Savannah SC LWDB effectively coordinates WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with supportive services like transportation and childcare. This ensures that participants receive comprehensive support, enabling them to overcome barriers, enhance their employability, and achieve long-term success in their career pathways

A further example of some of the collaborative resources we offer as supportive services.

- Transportation - **The transportation needs for the region exceed the area's** capabilities. Greenwood and Laurens Counties are 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. Upper Savannah WIOA Program offers transportation assistance to eligible participants in accordance with our local policy.
- 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.
- Housing Assistance - 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.
- Referrals to Health Care - Upper Savannah can pay 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.
- 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.

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.*

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) has established plans, assurances, and strategies aimed at maximizing coordination and improving service delivery across all programs, including Wagner-**Peyser Act services**. **Here's** an outline of those efforts:

Plans for Coordination and Service Improvement

1. Unified Service Model: The LWDB promotes a unified service delivery model integrating Wagner-Peyser services with other programs within the SC Works system. This model provides a one-stop approach where individuals can access a broad range of services in one location, enhancing accessibility and convenience.
2. Common Intake and Assessment Processes: Implementing a standardized intake and assessment process **allows for the efficient gathering of participant information across all services. This ensures that individuals' needs** are identified early and addressed through appropriate programs, reducing the chances of duplication and enabling a tailored service delivery approach.
3. Cross-Training Staff: Regular cross-training sessions for SC Works staff ensure all team members are knowledgeable about Wagner-Peyser services and other programs available. This training improves staff capacity to refer participants appropriately and provide comprehensive support based on individual needs.

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

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) recognizes the importance of coordinating WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This coordination is essential to create a seamless pathway for individuals seeking employment and skill development.

Local adult education providers in the Upper Savannah Workforce Area are equipped to strengthen the workforce pipeline. Adult education providers provide workforce preparation activities in adult education classes and provide career readiness skills training and services to individuals based on local and regional workforce needs.

Adult education programs use a state-standardized registration/intake form to collect student information upon entry into the adult education program. Student information including attendance hours, assessment scores, and other pertinent data is entered into **LiteracyPro System (LACES), the state adult education programs' student data management system.**

A College and Career Navigator (CCN) is located at the SC Works Comprehensive to assist with partner coordination, referrals, and collaboration. Each local adult education program has a College and Career Navigator who provides personalized guidance and support to adult education students, helping them navigate the process of choosing a career path, selecting appropriate educational programs, and ultimately achieving their goals by assisting with college applications, financial aid, job search strategies, and other related services.

The following WIOA adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II are offered by adult education programs in the Upper Savannah region: Adult Education, Literacy, Workplace Adult Education and Literacy, Workforce Preparation, Family Literacy, English Language Acquisition, Integrated Education and Training, and Digital Literacy.

Here's how the Upper Savannah LWDB plans to achieve this integration and carry out the review of Title II local applications:

Coordination of WIOA Title I and Title II Activities

1. Collaborative Partnerships: The LWDB will establish strong partnerships with adult education providers, including community colleges, literacy organizations, and local schools. Regular meetings and collaboration will ensure that workforce training programs are aligned with the skills taught in adult education and literacy programs.
2. Integrated Service Delivery: The LWDB will develop an integrated service delivery model that allows individuals to access both workforce investment and adult education services in a one-stop environment. This model fosters a holistic approach to skill development, where educational services complement occupational training and employment services.
3. Cross-Referral Systems: The LWDB will implement a cross-referral system between the WIOA Title I and Title II programs. This system allows case managers and service providers to refer individuals to appropriate educational services based on their skill gaps and employment goals, thus ensuring comprehensive support.
4. Shared Resources and Curriculum Alignment: By collaborating with adult education providers, the LWDB will work to develop curriculum that aligns literacy instruction with the skills required for local in-demand jobs. This alignment helps participants acquire the necessary competencies for successful employment.

Review of Local Applications Under Title II

1. Application Submission Process: The LWDB will establish clear guidelines for local entities applying for Title II funding. Applications will include objectives aligned with the local workforce development goals and strategies that address both educational attainment and workforce needs.
2. Local Application Review Committee: The LWDB will form a review committee composed of LWDB members and relevant stakeholders, including representatives from adult education, workforce programs, and industry. This committee will evaluate applications based on predetermined criteria that encompass both educational effectiveness and alignment with workforce priorities.

3. Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation will consider factors such as:
 - Alignment with local labor market needs and workforce development strategies.
 - Evidence of program effectiveness, including previous performance outcomes.
 - Plans for collaboration with workforce agencies and other educational providers.
 - Strategies for participant recruitment, retention, and outcomes.
4. Feedback and Recommendations: After the review process, the committee will provide constructive feedback to applicants regarding their proposals. Recommendations for improvement may be offered to ensure that programs meet WIOA requirements and effectively serve the target population.
5. Ongoing Monitoring and Support: The LWDB will establish a monitoring system to review the performance of **funded adult education programs regularly. This monitoring will include assessing the programs' success in facilitating** transitions to further education, training, and employment, as well as providing support to address any issues that arise.

Through these coordinated efforts, the Upper Savannah LWDB will effectively integrate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This comprehensive approach ensures participants receive the support they need to enhance their skills, achieve educational milestones, and successfully transition into the workforce, while also adhering to WIOA requirements during the application review process.

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

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to conducting affirmative outreach to ensure that all individuals, particularly those from groups protected by the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188, have equitable access to workforce development services. To achieve this, the LWDB will implement a comprehensive strategy that includes the following components:

1. Partnership Development

- Engagement with Community Organizations: The LWDB will collaborate with local organizations that serve diverse populations, including those focused on racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and other protected groups. These partnerships will aid in identifying outreach strategies and disseminating information about available services.
- Coalition Building: Establishing coalitions with advocacy groups representing various communities (e.g., organizations for people with disabilities, faith-based groups, and immigrant support organizations) will enhance outreach efforts and foster trust within the communities served.

2. Targeted Outreach Campaigns

- Culturally Relevant Marketing: The LWDB will develop marketing materials and outreach campaigns that resonate with diverse communities. This includes translating materials into multiple languages and using appropriate cultural symbols, images, and messaging that reflect the target populations.
- Public Information Events: Hosting workshops and informational sessions in community centers, places of worship, and other local venues popular with underrepresented groups will provide direct access to information about available workforce services and programs.

3. Program Accessibility

- **Universal Design Principles:** Services will be designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities and other protected groups. This includes ensuring physical accessibility to buildings and providing necessary accommodations, such as assistive technologies, sign language interpreters, and materials in accessible formats.
- **Flexible Program Scheduling:** The LWDB will ensure that programs are scheduled at various times to accommodate different working hours and responsibilities of participants, such as childcare or part-time jobs.

4. Training and Capacity Building

- **Cultural Competency Training:** Staff and partners will receive training in cultural competency, sensitivity, and respect to enhance their ability to effectively engage and serve diverse populations. This training will emphasize the importance of understanding the unique barriers faced by different groups.
- **Awareness of Legal Protections:** The LWDB will educate staff and partners on the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188 to guarantee compliance and understanding when reaching out to and serving protected groups.

5. Engagement with Participants

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** The LWDB will establish feedback systems, such as surveys and focus groups, targeted at participants from diverse backgrounds. This feedback will be used to assess outreach effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement in service delivery.
- **Advocacy and Support Services:** The LWDB will connect individuals from protected groups to advocacy and support services that can assist them with navigation through workforce systems, particularly individuals facing language barriers or other challenges.

6. Metrics and Monitoring

- **Data Collection:** The LWDB will collect and analyze demographic data to monitor the participation rates of various groups protected under WIOA. This data will be crucial for understanding outreach effectiveness and for making necessary adjustments to strategies.
- **Regular Assessments:** Ongoing evaluations of outreach efforts will be conducted to ensure that strategies are yielding desired results and that all protected groups have equitable access to services.

The Upper Savannah LWDB is dedicated to ensuring that its outreach efforts are inclusive and effective in reaching individuals from various backgrounds, including those protected by the Equal Opportunity provisions of WIOA § 188. By implementing these strategies, the LWDB aims to create an equitable workforce system that provides all individuals with access to the resources necessary for success in their career development journey.

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 LWDB 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 CEO(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 provide, along with any specifications. The procurement is advertised, **and an offeror's conference is held. Staff** review submissions to ensure they meet minimum standards. The executive committee reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the full board.

4. A description of agreed upon local performance goals.

Upper Savannah Program Year 2024 and 2025 WIOA Negotiated Performance Goals

WIOA TITLE I – ADULT	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	78.0%	78.1%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	81.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,832	\$6,832
Credential Attainment Rate	67.0%	67.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	63.5%	65.0%

WIOA TITLE I – DISLOCATED WORKER	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	85.4%	85.4%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	84.5%	85.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,400	\$8,600
Credential Attainment Rate	78.1%	78.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.7%	67.7%
WIOA TITLE I – YOUTH	Program Year 2024 Goal	Program Year 2025 Goal
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2 nd Quarter After Exit	74.5%	75.0%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4 th Quarter After Exit	75.0%	75.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,200	\$4,500
Credential Attainment Rate	69.0%	69.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	61.5%	62.5%

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

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

Upper Savannah has developed and implemented a SC Works Monthly Dashboard that includes overall service delivery to Job Seekers and Employers across the seven-county region. The Monthly Report includes Federal, State, and Local programmatic and financial performance. The Board gets the report via e-mail monthly and a Quarterly Roll-up Report in our Board meetings. The SC Works Operations Committee of the Board reviews the customer service and satisfaction surveys bi-annually.

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

The Upper Savannah LWDB has instituted numerous monthly metrics that are being tracked and reported. Below is an example of the report elements being tracked by county or the region.

Job Seekers Services	Employer Services	WIOA Career Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center Traffic Job Seekers Registered WP New Job Search Services Hiring Events Job Seeker Attendance SC Works Orientation Workshop Attendance Partner Referrals in SCWOS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Job Orders Created Services Provided to Employers Employers Receiving Services Hiring Events Hosted Rapid Response Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollments Active & Follow-up (Adult, DW, & Youth) Priority of Services Training Services Soft Skills Recorded
Federal Performance	Financial Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ Rate 2nd Qtr. After Exit (Adult, DW, & Youth) Employ Rate 4th Qtr. After Exit (Adult, DW, & Youth) Median Earnings in 2nd Qtr. After Exit (Adult, DW, & Youth) Credential Attainment (Adult, DW, & Youth) Measurable Skills Gain (Adult, DW, & Youth) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation Obligation Rate Participant Cost Rate (PCR) Fund Utilization Youth Work Experience Contractor Budget vs. Actual SC Works IFA Budget vs. Actual US Board Budget vs. Actual 	

- A description of the methodology used by the LWDB to allocate SC Works center infrastructure funds; and (NEW)*

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) employs a systematic and transparent FTE methodology for allocating infrastructure funds to SC Works centers. This methodology ensures that funding decisions are equitable, aligned with community needs, and compliant with federal and state regulations. The following outlines the key components of the methodology used for infrastructure fund allocation:

1. Needs Assessment

- Data-Driven Analysis:** The LWDB conducts a thorough needs assessment to evaluate the operational requirements of each SC Works center. This assessment looks at factors such as service delivery effectiveness, client volume, community demographics, and existing facility conditions.
- Stakeholder Input:** Input from local partners, including education providers, employers, and community organizations, is gathered to identify specific infrastructure needs and enhancements that would improve service delivery.

2. Budget Development

- Cost Analysis:** A detailed cost analysis is performed to estimate the funds required for various infrastructure components, such as facility maintenance, technology upgrades, and necessary equipment. This includes assessing long-term costs associated with facilities to ensure sustainability.
- Funding Sources:** The LWDB reviews available funding sources and potential matching funds from other programs or local initiatives to maximize resources allocated for infrastructure.
- Allocation Methodology:** See below.
 - Cost Allocation and Proportionate Share - WIOA and its related regulations and guidance establish, as a starting point, the expectation that Parties will share proportionately in the infrastructure and shared services cost of the SC Works system. Therefore, the Parties agree that costs will be shared based on the Full-time Equivalency (FTE) model. **Shared costs will be allocated on the basis of a partner's number of staff assigned**

to work in a facility (enjoying the benefits of being in the building) on a weekly basis and counted proportionately by day as defined below:

- One Day - .20 (20% of a work week);
- Two Days - .40 (40% of a work week);
- Three Days - .60 (60% of a work week);
- Four Days - .80 (80% of a work week); and
- Five Days - 1 (100% of a work week).

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

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

3. Priority Setting

- **Criteria Development:** Clear criteria are established for prioritizing funding requests, which may include factors such as the center's capacity to serve job seekers, alignment with local labor market needs, accessibility, and technological advancement.
- **Weighted Scoring System:** A weighted scoring system may be utilized to quantitatively evaluate each center's needs against the established criteria. This systematic approach ensures that funding decisions are data-driven and transparent.

4. Collaboration with Partner Programs

- **Partner Meetings:** The LWDB holds regular partner meetings with partner organizations involved in the SC Works system to discuss infrastructure needs, share funding proposals, and promote collaborative solutions.
- **Integrated Funding Requests:** Joint funding requests are encouraged, allowing partners to leverage resources for common infrastructure improvements, facilitating a more collaborative approach to funding allocation.

5. Decision-Making Process

- **SC Works Committee:** The SC Works Committee of LWDB members and key stakeholders is formed to review infrastructure funding requests based on the established criteria and assessment outcomes.
- **Transparent Approval Process:** The committee makes recommendations for funding allocations, which are then presented to the full LWDB for approval. This transparent process ensures that funding decisions are held accountable and aligned with strategic goals.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Performance Metrics:** Infrastructure investments are monitored through performance metrics that assess outcomes such as service delivery improvements, participant satisfaction, and increased accessibility.
- **Annual Review:** An annual review of funded projects is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the allocated funds, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments for future funding cycles.

7. Flexibility and Adaptation

- **Responsive Allocations:** The LWDB ensures flexibility in fund allocation to respond to emerging needs or changes in the workforce landscape. The methodology allows for adjustments based on new data or shifts in priorities as they arise.

By employing this comprehensive and systematic methodology, the Upper Savannah LWDB ensures that SC Works center infrastructure funds are allocated effectively and equitably, thereby enhancing service delivery capabilities and improving outcomes for job seekers in the region. This approach promotes accountability, collaboration, and responsiveness to community needs while maximizing the impact of infrastructure investments

• **A description of the roles and contributions of SC Works partners, including cost allocation. (NEW)**

The Upper Savannah LWDB has multiple partners offering an array of services across numerous locations throughout the seven counties as shown in the chart below.

Locations:

- Greenwood SC Works Center, Comprehensive
929 Phoenix Street, Greenwood, SC
- Abbeville SC Works Center
903 West Greenwood St, Abbeville, SC
- Edgefield SC Works Center
21 Star Road, Edgefield, SC
- Laurens SC Works Center
1029 West Main Street, Laurens, SC
- McCormick SC Works Center
109 W. Augusta Street, McCormick, SC
- Newberry SC Works Center
1840 Wilson Rd, Newberry, SC
- Saluda SC Works Center
407 West Butler Avenue, Saluda, SC

	Eligibility Deters.	Outreach & Orientation	Skills Assessments	Labor Exchange	Partner Referrals	Provision of LMI	Provision of Performance Information	Supportive Services	UI Filing	Financial Aid Assistance	Individual Career Services	Access to Training Services	Business Services	Allocation
REQUIRED PARTNERS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	29.90%
Adult, DW, and Youth		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	1.25%
Adult Education/Family Literacy		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	28.50%
Wagner-Peyser		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			1.49%
Rehab. Programs for Indiv. w/Disabilities		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	0.00%
Post-Sec. Career & Tech. Ed. (Perkins)		x	x		x	x		x		x	x	x	x	9.13%
CSBG Employment and Training		x			x			x				x		
Native American Programs														
HUD Employment and Training														
Job Corps		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	0.60%
Veterans Employment and Training		x		x	x	x					x		x	7.38%
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker		x		x	x	x		x						1.56%
Senior Community Svc. Employment		x		x	x	x		x			x		x	0.00%
Trade Adjustment Assistance		x	x	x	x	x					x	x		1.56%
Unemployment Compensation		x		x	x	x			x					3.12%
YouthBuild														
TANF & SNAP		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	15.51%
Second Chance Act														
														100.00%
<p>Eligibility Determinations: Determination if an individual is eligible for WIOA Adult, DW, or Youth programs.</p> <p>Outreach & Orientation: Information on and access to services in the SC Works system.</p> <p>Skills Assessments: Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, and aptitudes and abilities (including skills gaps).</p> <p>Labor Exchange: Job search and placement assistance, career counseling, and non-traditional employment information.</p> <p>Partner Referrals: Referrals to and coordination with programs and services within the SC Works system and other workforce programs.</p> <p>Provision of LMI: Local, regional, and national labor market statistics including: job vacancy listings, skills needed to obtain those jobs, in-demand occupations and earnings, and advancement opportunities available.</p> <p>Provision of Performance Information: Partner specific data on how local areas are performing on accountability measures relating to the area's overall SC Works system.</p> <p>Supportive Services: Information relating to the availability of supportive services, such as child care and transportation, and referrals to supportive service programs, as needed.</p> <p>Unemployment Insurance Filing: Information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation.</p> <p>Financial Aid Assistance: Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid programs not provided under WIOA.</p> <p>Individualized Career Services: Individualized services provided to eligible customers, such as counseling and career planning, to help the customer obtain or retain employment.</p> <p>Access to Training Services: Access to training services such as On-the-Job training, entrepreneurial, adult education and literacy, and customized training.</p> <p>Business Services: Employer services, such as job fairs, recruitment assistance, and incumbent worker training, are made available to local employers.</p>														

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;**

Yes, training services contracts are used in addition to the ETPL. The Upper Savannah WDB is implementing a Customized Training Policy to outline use of these local training services.

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

Upper Savannah has utilized the free tuition scholarships via SC WINS which has reduced the number of customers seeking WIOA training. Additionally, the performance reporting requirements are burdensome for training providers, especially our State Technical College system who have chosen not to participate in the ETPL process. Therefore, Upper Savannah will implement an alternative solution via State Instruction 21-02 – Training or Contract Exceptions to ITA Funding. A list of in-demand training programs has been created. Upper Savannah is not able to identify qualified training providers to fulfill our in-demand sector needs therefore will seek to procure training services by contracting directly with a provider.

• How the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to ensuring informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, providing individuals with the necessary information and support in making their training decisions. The following outlines the strategies that LWDB has implemented to facilitate informed customer choice, regardless of how the training services are delivered:

1. Comprehensive Information Resources

- **Training Program Listings:** The LWDB utilizes the SC PATH system maintained by SC DEW a comprehensive database of training programs available in the region, including details about program content, duration, costs, and outcomes. This information will be accessible through the SC Works centers and online platforms.
- **Performance Metrics:** Information on training program outcomes, such as completion rates, job placement rates, and earnings after training, will be made available to help participants assess and compare different options.

2. Individualized Assessment and Counseling

- **Career Assessments:** Staff at SC Works centers will provide individualized career assessments to help participants understand their skills, interests, and goals. These assessments will inform recommendations for appropriate training programs that align with their career aspirations.
- **Career Coaches:** Trained career coaches will be available to provide one-on-one counseling sessions, guiding individuals in exploring their training options, discussing potential career paths, and identifying the most suitable programs based on labor market information and personal interests.

3. Workshops and Informational Sessions

- **Regular Workshops:** The LWDB offers workshops and informational sessions where participants can learn about various training programs, available funding opportunities, and the benefits of specific training paths. These workshops will include insights from training providers and employer representatives.
- **Panel Discussions:** Featuring success stories and experiences from program alumni, panel discussions can provide first-hand insights into the efficacy of training programs, which will empower potential participants to make informed decisions.

4. Access to Labor Market Information

- **Labor Market Data:** The LWDB provides participants with access to up-to-date labor market information, including trends in job growth, in-demand occupations, and required skills. This information allows individuals to make informed choices about training that leads to viable career opportunities.
- **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborations with local employers and industry leaders will facilitate a better understanding of labor market needs and training requirements, further enabling LWDB to provide relevant guidance.

5. Diverse Training Delivery Options

- **Multiple Training Delivery Models:** The LWDB supports a variety of training delivery methods, including classroom training, online courses, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships. Providing diverse options allows individuals to choose the format that best suits their learning style and personal circumstances.

- Flexibility in Training Financing: Information on funding opportunities, such as scholarships, grants, and WIOA training funds, will be readily available, enabling participants to consider different financing options relevant to their training choices.
6. Encouragement of Consideration of Multiple Options
- Encouraging Exploration: Individuals are encouraged to explore different training programs and not feel constrained to only one option. Support staff will emphasize the importance of researching various paths and attending multiple orientations if available.
 - Trial and Evaluation Opportunities: Providing opportunities for participants to trial training programs or attend introductory sessions can help them gain insight into the program culture and content before making a commitment.
7. Feedback Mechanism
- Customer Feedback: The LWDB established mechanisms for participants to provide feedback on their experiences with training programs. This feedback will be used to inform future program development and outreach efforts.
 - Success Stories and Testimonials: Sharing success stories from previous participants about their training outcomes will help build trust and confidence in the available options and encourage new participants to engage in the process.

The strategies above empower individuals to make informed choices about training programs, ensuring they have access to the resources, information, and support necessary for successful career development. This approach fosters a customer-centered system that values individual needs and aspirations in navigating education and workforce pathways

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

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to transparency and stakeholder engagement in the development of its local plan. To ensure a robust public comment period and facilitate input from key stakeholders, including representatives from local businesses, labor organizations, and educational institutions, the LWDB follows a structured process, which includes the following steps:

1. Drafting of the Local Plan
 - Initial Draft Development: The LWDB prepares a draft of the local plan, drawing on data, stakeholder feedback, and strategic goals for the region as well as the State Unified Plan. This document serves as the foundation for public review and input.
2. Public Notification
 - Announcement of Comment Period: The LWDB will publicly announce the upcoming 10 business day public comment period through various channels. This includes:
 - Posting on the LWDB and SC Works websites.
 - Sharing through local newspapers, newsletters, and community bulletin boards.
 - Distributing press releases to local media outlets to reach a broader audience.
3. Stakeholder Engagement
 - Invitation for Input: The LWDB explicitly invites representatives from local businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, County Councils, and other stakeholders to participate in the comment period. This invitation highlights the importance of their perspectives in shaping the local plan.
 - Pre-Comment Input Sessions: Prior to the official comment period, the LWDB offers informational sessions or workshops to present the draft plan to stakeholders and encourage preliminary feedback. This provides an opportunity for discussion, questions, and clarification on the plan's content.
4. Public Comment Period

- Duration and Process: The public comment period lasts a minimum of 10 business days, during which stakeholders can review the draft plan and provide feedback. Comments can be submitted through various methods, including:
 - Email or direct correspondence with designated LWDB contacts.

5. Collection and Review of Comments

- Documentation of Feedback: All comments received during the public comment period are documented. The LWDB will categorize feedback to identify common themes and specific suggestions made by stakeholders.
- Review and Consideration: The LWDB will review all feedback carefully and consider how to incorporate valid concerns and suggestions into the final local plan. This review process demonstrates the LWDB's commitment to stakeholder engagement.

6. Finalization of the Local Plan

- Incorporation of Feedback: After reviewing the comments, the LWDB makes adjustments to the draft plan as appropriate. The final plan reflects stakeholder input and is positioned to better meet the needs of the local workforce.

7. Publication of the Final Plan

- Final Announcement: Once the plan is finalized, the LWDB will make it publicly available through the same channels used for the initial notification, ensuring transparency regarding the changes made based on public input.
- Follow-Up Communication: The LWDB may also follow up with stakeholders to inform them of how their feedback influenced the final plan and to maintain ongoing communication about workforce initiatives.

The Upper Savannah LWDB ensures that it actively engages local businesses, labor organizations, County Councils, and educational institutions in the development of its local plan. This inclusive approach fosters collaboration and enhances the overall effectiveness of workforce initiatives in the region

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

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) in South Carolina utilizes the mandatory SCWOS system for case management of workforce programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the SC Works partner network. The system aligns with federal and state directives to modernize service delivery and improve access to workforce development resources for job seekers and employers.

1. Technology-Driven Efficiency:

By leveraging advanced technology, the system streamlines processes such as intake, eligibility determination, case management, and reporting. The platform incorporates user-friendly features, including automated workflows, real-time data updates, and mobile accessibility, to support both staff and clients.

2. Enhanced Case Management:

The case management functionality ensures a holistic approach to service delivery. It enables caseworkers to track participants' progress across multiple programs, document milestones, and collaborate with other providers to address barriers to employment comprehensively.

3. Improved Client Experience:

Job seekers benefit from an intuitive interface where they can access resources, complete applications, and communicate with case managers online. The system also uses data analytics to recommend tailored services based on individual needs and employment goals.

4. Data Security and Compliance:

The system adheres to strict data security protocols and compliance standards, ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive client information. It also facilitates accurate reporting for WIOA performance metrics and compliance audits.

5. Staff Training and Support:

SC Works centers provide extensive training to staff and partners to ensure effective utilization of the new system. SC DEW is launching a Learning Management System with staff supported training to provide technical support and training. There are user feedback mechanisms in place to address challenges and refine the system's functionality.

System Benefits:

- Increased collaboration among SC Works partners.
- Faster service delivery and reduced administrative burden.
- Improved accuracy and consistency in client data and reporting.
- Enhanced ability to meet the needs of job seekers and employers through data-driven decision-making.

Upper Savannah LWDA SC Works centers aim to transform how workforce services are delivered, ensuring greater accessibility, efficiency, and impact for the communities they serve. Our region is working with SC DEW to pilot the use of the SC Works Virtual Engagement Center so that job seekers in rural communities can access live chat and/or video support from a local staff member from home or a Connection Point.

9. *A description of how the LWDB 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 monthly and the Board receives quarterly reports as part of the Board Packet.

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

Upper Savannah is focused on serving individuals most in need and 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 employment more challenging.

Upper Savannah has been successful with this strategy in serving individuals most in need. Upper Savannah has the second **highest percentage of adults meeting the state’s priority of service definition.** WIOA collects data on TANF 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 LWDA’s fiscal, programmatic, and equal opportunity/ nondiscrimination monitoring process. (UPDATED)***

The Upper Savannah Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) employs a comprehensive monitoring process to ensure compliance, efficiency, and equity in the administration of its workforce programs. This process includes fiscal, programmatic, and equal opportunity/nondiscrimination monitoring, which collectively uphold the integrity of services delivered under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Fiscal Monitoring

The fiscal monitoring process ensures the accurate and responsible management of funds allocated to WIOA programs and SC Works operations. Key elements include:

1. **Budget Review and Reconciliation:**
Regular reviews of budgets, expenditures, and financial records are conducted to verify that funds are used for allowable and allocable purposes, adhering to federal, state, and local regulations.
2. **Internal Controls Assessment:**
Monitoring includes evaluating internal controls to safeguard assets, prevent fraud, and ensure the integrity of financial reporting.
3. **Cost Allocation:**
Audits are conducted to confirm that costs are appropriately allocated across funding streams in compliance with WIOA cost allocation principles.
4. **Reporting Accuracy:**
Fiscal reports are cross-checked for accuracy and timeliness to ensure compliance with reporting requirements to state and federal entities.
5. **On-Site Audits:**
Periodic on-site reviews are conducted to verify documentation and compliance with fiscal policies and procedures.

Programmatic Monitoring

Programmatic monitoring ensures that WIOA services are delivered effectively, align with strategic goals, and comply with applicable laws and regulations. Components include:

1. **Participant File Reviews:**
Random sampling of participant files ensures proper documentation of eligibility, service provision, and progress tracking.
2. **Performance Metrics Evaluation:**
Monitoring involves assessing program outcomes against WIOA performance indicators, such as employment placement rates, earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains.
3. **Service Delivery Observation:**
On-site visits and observations of SC Works centers evaluate the quality and accessibility of services offered to job seekers and employers.
4. **Contractor Oversight:**
Subrecipient and contractor activities are reviewed to ensure compliance with contractual agreements and programmatic expectations.
5. **Continuous Improvement:**
Findings from monitoring activities inform corrective action plans and training initiatives to improve service delivery.

Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination Monitoring

The equal opportunity and nondiscrimination monitoring process ensures compliance with WIOA Section 188 and other civil rights laws, promoting equitable access to services and protecting against discrimination. Elements include:

1. **Policy and Procedure Reviews:**
Policies are reviewed to confirm alignment with federal and state equal opportunity mandates.
2. **Accessibility Audits:**
SC Works centers are assessed for physical and technological accessibility to individuals with disabilities and other underserved populations.
3. **Participant Feedback:**
Surveys and focus groups gather input on participants' experiences to identify and address potential barriers to service.
4. **Staff Training:**
Staff and partners receive training on nondiscrimination policies and inclusive practices to foster equity.
5. **Complaint Resolution:**
Procedures for handling grievances and discrimination complaints are monitored to ensure timely and fair resolution.
6. **Data Analysis:**
Demographic data on program participants is analyzed to identify disparities and implement strategies for equity.

Reporting and Follow-Up

Monitoring findings are documented in comprehensive reports provided to stakeholders, including corrective actions and timelines for resolution. Follow-up reviews ensure that identified issues are addressed and improvements are sustained. Through this rigorous fiscal, programmatic, and equal opportunity monitoring process, the Upper Savannah LWDA maintains high standards of accountability, efficiency, and fairness in the delivery of workforce services.

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

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

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

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

Local Plan Signatures

Local Workforce Development Board:

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board

Scott Coleman , Chair
Name

Scott Coleman 01/08/2024
Scott Coleman (Jan 8, 2025 11:01 EST)
Signature Date

Local Grant Recipient Signatory Official:

Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area

Patricia C. Hartung Executive Director, Upper Savannah COG
Name Title

Patricia C. Hartung 01/07/2025
Patricia C. Hartung (Jan 7, 2025 14:12 EST)
Signature Date









US 4 Yrs. Local Plan 2024-28 Signature Page

Final Audit Report

2025-01-08

Created:	2025-01-07
By:	Kal Kunkel (kkunkel@uppersavannah.com)
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"US 4 Yrs. Local Plan 2024-28 Signature Page" History

-  Document created by Kal Kunkel (kkunkel@uppersavannah.com)
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WIOA Local Workforce Development Board Membership

Total Seats 20

Seats Occupied 20

Seats Vacant

Business (per Section 107(b)(2)(A))					
No.	Name	Affiliation and Title	Contact Phone and Email	Address	County
1	Scott Coleman	Sage Automotive Interiors, HR Manager	Scott.Coleman@sageai.com	27104 Cobb Way, Anderson SC 29825	Abbeville
2	Theresa Stover	Edgefield Health Care, HR Director and Volunteer Services Director	tstover@mytech.org	300 Ridge Medical Plaza, Edgefield SC 29824	Edgefield
3	Taiese Kidd	Flexible Technologies, HR Supervisor	taiese.kidd@flexibletechnologies.com	211 Puckett Ferry Road, Greenwood SC 29649	Greenwood
4	Daniel Grove	Lonza, Head of HR	daniel.grove@lonza.com	535 Emerald Road North, Greenwood SC 29646	Greenwood
5	Julie Bagwell	CCL Label Industries, HR Manager	jbagwell@cclind.com	29485 Highway 76 East, Clinton, SC 29825	Laurens
6	Jean McCallum	Fibertex Nonwovens, Inc., HR Director	jeannie@wctel.net	100 ISO Pkwy, Gray Court, SC 29645	Laurens
7	Betty Carol Jones	Director of Administration and Human Services, Savannah Lakes Village	bcjones@slv-sc.com	5812 US Highway 378W, McCormick, SC 29835	McCormick
8	Catrina Ross	HR Manager SC Pet Food	cross@3dsolutions.com	1299 Duncan Road, Ward, SC 29166	Saluda
9	Stephen Taylor	Community Affairs Western Carolina Tel Co	stephen.taylor@wctel.com	P.O. Box 610, 229 Hwy 28 Bypass Abbeville, SC 29620	Newberry
10	Darron Wilson	Indian Creek Resort, trainer	Darronwilson46@yahoo.com	361 Butler Road, Saluda SC 29138	Saluda
11	Mashonda Ashton	Sr. HR Business Partner, SWM	mashton@swmintl.com	214 Mid Carolina Court Prosperity SC 29127	Newberry
12					

Not Less Than 20% (per Section 107(b)(2)(B))					
No.	Name	Affiliation and Title	Contact Phone and Email	Address	County
1	John Calhoun	International Brotherhood of Teamsters	Jcalhoun62@gmail.com	480 Flatwood Road Calhoun Falls SC 29628	Abbeville
2	Candi Lalonde	Edgefield First Steps, Executive Director	candi@edgefieldfirststeps.org	PO Box 295, Edgefield SC 29824	Edgefield
3	Dale Cullum	Heat and Frost Insulators, Local 92, Business Manager, Apprenticeship Coordinator	Da1cul@aol.com	211 Wade Morgan Road, McCormick SC 29835	McCormick
4	Chad Ulmer	SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Area Director	CUlmer@scvrd.net	22861 Highway 76 East Clinton SC 29825	Regional Partner
5					

Education & Training (per Section 107(b)(2)(C))					
No.	Name	Affiliation and Title	Contact Phone and Email	Address	County
1	Kelli Fewox	VP for Academic Affairs	fewox.k@ptc.edu	PO Box 1467, Greenwood SC 29648	Greenwood
2	Roberta Kinard	Newberry County Adult Education, Director	Rkinard1@newberry.k.12.sc.us	161 Werts Road, Silverstreet, SC 29145	Newberry
3					
4					
5					

Governmental, Economic, and Community Development (per Section 107(b)(2)(D))					
No.	Name	Affiliation and Title	Contact Phone and Email	Address	County
1	Shelby Reed	SC Department of Commerce, Upper Savannah Regional Workforce Advisor	sreed@sccommerce.com	103 Northwoods Road, Greenwood SC 29649	Greenwood

2	Roy Lowe	Workforce and Economic Development Director	rlowe@dew.sc.gov	927 East Cambridge Street, Greenwood SC 29646	Regional Partner
3	Billy Morgan	Greenwood County Economic Development	bmorgan@greenwoodsc.gov	600 Monument Street, P-103, Greenwood, SC 29649	Greenwood
4					
5					

Others as Chief-Elected Officials Determine Appropriate (per Section 107(b)(2)(E))

No.	Name	Affiliation and Title	Contact Phone and Email	Address
1				
2				
3				

Denote multiple representation with an asterisk (*).

Total Number of Seats Filled	20
Number of Seats Filled Representing Business	11
Percentage of Seats Filled Representing Business	55%
Number of Seats Filled Representing Not Less than 20%	4
Percentage of Seats Filled Representing Not Less than 20%	20%
Number of Seats Filled Representing Education & Training	2
Number of Seats Filled Representing Gov't, Economic & Comm. Dev.	3
Number of Seats Filled Representing Others by Chief Elected Officials	0

Local Administrative Entity
Roster of Workforce Staff
(Non-operational staff)

Name	Job Title	Workforce Job Duties/Responsibilities
Kalen J. Kunkel (FT)	Workforce Development Director	Manage WIOA programs Negotiate Memorandum of Understanding with partners Contact point for economic development Labor market information Procurement & Contracts oversight
Willie Matthews (FT)	Deputy Director	EO Officer Business services lead Operational Oversight Customer service surveys Internal Monitoring Rapid response contact
Windy Graham, (PT-Contract with WorkLink) 16 Hrs/Wk	SCWOS Coordinator	WIOA Performance Reporting Contractor Progress Reports Analyzes performance and creates reports
Ashley Guy Shaffer, (PT – WIOA Finance) 25 Hrs/Wk	Financial Analyst	Manages WIOA Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll • Contractor invoices • MOU/IFA Expenses & Invoicing of Partners • FSR's submissions to SC DEW
Amber Bearden, (PT) 26 Hrs/Wk	Workforce Board Coordinator	Workforce Board Communications & Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board & Committee Meeting Schedules • Board & Committee Meeting minutes • Board Composition Tracking • CLEO Communications for signatures • Website and social media updates
Toni Belton, (PT) 10-15 Hrs/Wk	Partner Engagement Coordinator	Coordinates Job Fairs & Community Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with Business Services Team • Coordinates venues & sets up for events • Tracks all stats from events

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Abbeville SC Works Center (Affiliate)
Address:	903 W. Greenwood St. Abbeville, SC 29620
Phone Number:	864.366.6690 Ext 2291
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Tuesday 9am-12pm
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	SCDEW, WIOA (Eckerd and GLEAMNS)

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Edgefield Center
Address:	21 Star Rd. Edgefield, SC 29824
Phone Number:	803.637.4029
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Tuesday 9am – 12pm
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	Voc. Rehab, DSS, WIOA (Eckerd), & CSBG

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Greenwood Comprehensive Center
Address:	929 Phoenix Street, Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone Number:	864.265.8299
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm (Closed 12pm-1pm daily)
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	Voc. Rehab, DSS, SCDEW, WIOA (Eckerd), CSBG, Goodwill (SCSEP), & Adult Ed.

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Laurens Center
Address:	1029 W. Main St., Laurens, SC 29360
Phone Number:	864.681.1605
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Monday-Thursday, 9am-4pm (Closed 12pm-1pm)
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	SCDEW, WIOA (Eckerd), Adult Ed., First Steps

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	McCormick Center
Address:	109 W. Augusta St., McCormick, SC 29835
Phone Number:	864.852.3649
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Monday 9am-12pm
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	WIOA (Eckerd) & CSBG (GLEAMNS)

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Newberry Center
Address:	1840 Wilson Rd., Newberry, SC 29108
Phone Number:	803.276.2110
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Monday-Friday 9am-4pm (Closed 12pm-1pm)
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	SCDEW & WIOA (Eckerd)

Comprehensive/Satellite SC Works Center

(Use one form for each Center)

Name:	Saluda Center
Address:	407 W. Butler Ave., Saluda, SC 29138
Phone Number:	864.445.2047
Fax Number:	N/A
Website:	www.upperscworks.com
Hours of Operation:	Thursday 9am-12pm
List all Co-located Partners and available Center Services	WIOA (Eckerd) & CSBG (GLEAMNS)

SC Works Access Point(s)

Host Name (E.g. Goodwill, Library, etc.)	Address	Phone Number	Fax Number	Days and Hours of Operation (for workforce services)	Workforce Services Available
Abbeville Public Library (Access Point)	1407 N. Main St. Abbeville, SC 29620	864.459.4009	864.459.0891	Monday- Friday, 9:00am-5:30pm	Computers/Internet Access
Edgefield Public Library (Access Point)	105 Court House Sq. Edgefield, SC 29824	803.637.4025	N/A	Monday-Friday 10:00am-6:00pm	Computers/Internet Access
Greenwood Public Library (Access Point)	600 S. Main St., Greenwood, SC 29646	864.941.4650	864.941.4651	Monday- Friday, 9:00am-5:30pm	Computers/Internet Access
Laurens Public Library (Access Point)	1017 W. Main St. Laurens, SC 29360	864.681.7323	864.681.0598	Monday- Friday, 9:00am-5:30pm	Computers/Internet Access
McCormick Public Library (Access Point)	201 Railroad Ave. McCormick, SC 29835	864.852.2821	N/A	Tuesday-Friday 10:00am-6:00pm	Computers/Internet Access
Newberry Public Library (Access Point)	1100 Friend St. Newberry, SC 29108	803.276.0854	803.276.7478	Monday- Friday, 9:00am-5:30pm	Computers/Internet Access
Saluda Public Library (Access Point)	101 S. Main St. Saluda, SC 29138	864.445.4500 Ext. 2264	864.445.2725	Monday- Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm	Computers/Internet Access
United Way of Laurens County (Connection Point)	16 Peachtree St, Clinton, SC 29325	864.833.3623		Monday-Thursday, 9:00am-5:00pm	Computers/Internet Access

Local Plan Public Comments

Comment 1
<p>Originating Entity: Abbeville Adult Education (Brandi Sears, Director)</p>
<p>Comment(s): Thank you, Kal, for your consideration. Some suggestions include:</p> <p>Page 13 under Strengths of Workforce Development in the Upper Savannah Region #3 - Lack of a high school diploma is also a barrier to employment for some individuals. Partnerships with Adult Education programs allow for high school diploma and/or equivalency (GED) completion.</p> <p>Page 14 under Education and Training Opportunities - Adult Education Programs: An adult education program is available in each county of our region. These programs provide classes for high school diploma, GED completion, English proficiency, digital literacy, and career planning.</p> <p>Page 16 under #5 Expand Access to Career Services and Digital Resources - add Adult Education Centers to the list of partnerships in the last sentence.</p> <p>Adult Education programs share the vision of supporting community members in pursuit of meaningful employment and removing barriers that may hinder them. We are grateful to partner with SC Works as you do the same.</p>
Comment 2
<p>Originating Entity: Newberry Adult Education (Roberta Kinard, Director)</p>
<p>Comment(s): Kal, today was my first day back to work. Please see the following comments and questions below regarding the local workforce plan. Please see the highlighted comments. There was a quick turnaround to submitting comments or questions especially during the Christmas holiday, but I noticed the announcement was still up seeking feedback. Please let me know if you have any questions. Roberta Kinard, Adult Education Director Newberry County</p> <p>Strengths of Workforce Development in the Upper Savannah Region</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education programs are responsive to the needs of the workforce and offer workforce preparation training and Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs in collaboration with technical colleges and other training providers to assist individuals in attaining employment and industry recognized credentials. <p>Weaknesses of Workforce Development in the Upper Savannah Region A weakness in our LWDB is limited program alignment, collaboration, coordination, and streamlining of core programs under WIOA.</p> <p>Education and Training Opportunities I am not sure why adult education is not listed in this section even though we are a core partner. Adult Education providers deliver adult education and literacy activities, including High School Diploma,</p>

GED preparation and GED Exam testing, English as a Second Language, Career readiness, Workplace Literacy, workforce preparation activities, IET, basic computers to earn the SC Digital Literacy Certificate. Adult Education also provides TABE testing, College and Career Services, WIN preparation and assessment, and reading/math skill refresher classes. Adult Education teachers are trained, state certified educators with valid SC teacher licenses. Additionally, programs are flexible in meeting the demands of individuals seeking services. Through Workplace Literacy, Adult Education seeks to serve employers directly by providing customized academic and workforce preparation instruction as determined by specific employer needs. These services can be delivered on-site at an employer's location or off-site at the Adult Education program site. Adult education programs are located in Greenwood, Laurens, Edgefield, Abbeville, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties.

Recommendations for Improvement

4. Utilize adult education programs to provide soft skills training. All adult education programs in the Upper Savannah Region provide soft skills training and a state recognized soft skills credential-SC Essential Soft Skills Certificate. The credential informs employers that individuals possess important skills such as time management, professionalism, motivation and attitude, as well as more complex skills such as digital literacy and problem-solving.

Section II: Strategic Vision and Goals

1. Strengthen Career Pathways and Skills Training (Page 15)

Actions: There is no need to develop bridge programs for adults lacking basic skills or those with disabilities to support their entry into career pathways. Adult education programs serve individuals sixteen (16) years of age and older who need to improve their basic skills with an emphasis on literacy, mathematics, and English language proficiency. Additionally, vocational rehabilitation programs (core partner) provide support to individuals including youth with disabilities to support their entry into career pathways. Developing a separate bridge program to provide these services already offered by adult education programs and Vocational Rehabilitation is a duplication of services.

4. Enhance Employer Engagement and Collaboration (Page 16)

Action: Strengthen the collaboration between providers of adult education programs and employers to support the needs of businesses and industries in the region. Market the resources that are available to employers who need basic skills advancement, career readiness/workforce preparation training, soft skills/digital literacy skills, and/or high school credentials.

5. Utilize adult education providers to provide access to career services and digital resources in rural and underserved areas. Adult education providers provide career services and digital literacy skills training and already have multiple satellite sites or have access to additional sites in our region including rural areas.

Section III: Location Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Involvement of Required Partners and Collaborative Planning Process (Page 18): There was no representation from adult education in the planning process for the local planning process.

How the LWDB will support strategies for service alignment among the entities carrying out workforce development programs in the LWDA. (Page 19)

-Include adult education program providers as education partners

1. Outreach and Accessibility

Enhanced Access Points (Page 20): Adult education programs in all counties in region can be used as satellite sites to increase accessibility for individuals in rural and remote areas. This would eliminate the need to establish additional satellite offices and will make it easier for individuals to receive one stop-services and allow for further collaboration among core

partners.

Expanding Training and Education Options (Page 20):

Industry-Recognized Credentials: Adult education programs offer Integrated Education Training (IET) programs that provide short-term certifications. Currently, adult education programs in the Upper Savannah region have South Carolina Department of Education approved industry-recognized credentials in Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Commercial Driver’s License through a collaborative effort with Piedmont Technical College and other training providers.

Support for Upskilling and Reskilling: Adult education provide training opportunities for adults to either enhance their existing skills (upskilling) or acquire new skillsets (reskilling) to adapt to changing job markets.

1. **Comprehensive Supportive Services:** Strengthening collaboration, coordination, and communication among all core partners is crucial for building a skilled workforce. Collective goals for all partners should include clear and consistent communication, clear understanding of each’s partnering organization roles and responsibilities, and processes.

Some of the information in Expanding Access and Improving Access sections seem to be duplicated. (Page 20 and 21) For example collaboration with technical colleges are mentioned under expanding training and education options and again under expanded partnerships with education and training providers but adult education programs are not.

Increasing the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials (Page 25-26)

2. Partnerships with Employers and Educational Institutions:

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

Upper Savannah Adult Education programs in collaboration with technical colleges and other approved training providers offer Integrated Education and Training (IET) Healthcare, Manufacturing, and CDL programs leading to an industry recognized credential to meet local and regional area needs.

Increasing access to education and training is necessary for individuals to use Broadband to advance their personal goals and increase South Carolina’s technology workforce competitiveness (Page 26)

3. **Leveraging Partnerships for Targeted Workforce Training**

Adult education programs provide digital literacy instruction and assessments through NorthStar Digital Literacy and WIN Learning Digital Literacy to certify that individuals have core digital literacy skills needed for life and the workplace. All adult education

6. A description of the Adult, DW, and Youth assessment processes of soft-skills and subsequent provision of soft-skills training, including descriptions of formal tools or resources utilized (Pages 32 and 33)

Adult education programs offer soft-skills training and assessments utilizing the essential soft skills courses in WIN. Individuals can earn a state-recognized Soft Skills Assessment that measures entry-level work tasks and behaviors, including communicating effectively; conveying professionalism; promoting teamwork and collaboration; and thinking critically and solving problems.

Section IV

- 4. Page 42: A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the LWDA, including activities for youth with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities**

Please add high school diploma preparation, **Paragraph 2 on page 43**

- 5. A description of how the fourteen youth program elements are integrated in program design, including a description of partnerships which identifies the entities involved and the function(s) they are providing, and a description of formalized agreements in place for the provision of program elements not provided by the local program. (UPDATED) Page 43**

- 1. Tutoring, study skills, dropout prevent and recovery:**

Adult education programs per WIOA provide academic instruction, tutoring, remediation, computer training, basic reading and math instruction that are necessary for youth to obtain employment, post-secondary education, and for those who do not have a high school credential with a priority given to those who are low income, with disabilities, on public assistance, or lack basic work skills.

- 2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery service:** Adult education programs serve out-of-school youth to promote the achievement of a high school diploma, GED, or increase basic skills to become qualified for job training, work experience or employment. School District alternative schools serve in-school youth in an alternative setting.

- 10. (Pages 49-50) A description of how the LWDB will coordinate the WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II, including how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA requirements**

Local adult education providers in the Upper Savannah Workforce Area are equipped to strengthen the workforce pipeline. Adult education providers provide workforce preparation activities in adult education classes and provide career readiness skills training and services to individuals based on local and regional workforce needs.

Adult education programs use a state-standardized registration/intake form to collect student information upon entry into the adult education program. Student information including attendance hours, assessment scores, and other pertinent data is entered into LiteracyPro System (LACES), the state adult education programs' student data management system.

A College and Career Navigator (CCN) is located at the SC Works Comprehensive to assist with partner coordination, referrals, and collaboration. Each local adult education program has a College and Career Navigator who provides personalized guidance and support to adult education students, helping them navigate the process of choosing a career path, selecting appropriate educational programs, and ultimately achieving their goals by assisting with college applications, financial aid, job search strategies, and other related services.

The following WIOA adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II are offered by adult education programs in the Upper Savannah region: Adult Education, Literacy, Workplace Adult Education and Literacy, Workforce Preparation, Family Literacy, English Language Acquisition, Integrated Education and Training, and Digital Literacy.

Coordination of WIOA Title I and Title II Activities

- 1. Collaborative Partnerships**

Clarification Needed: In our region, community colleges, literacy organizations, and local schools are not considered adult education providers per WIOA's definition of adult education providers. However, adult education providers in our region collaborate with community colleges, literacy organizations, and local schools.

Comment 3

Originating Entity:

Comment:

Comment 4

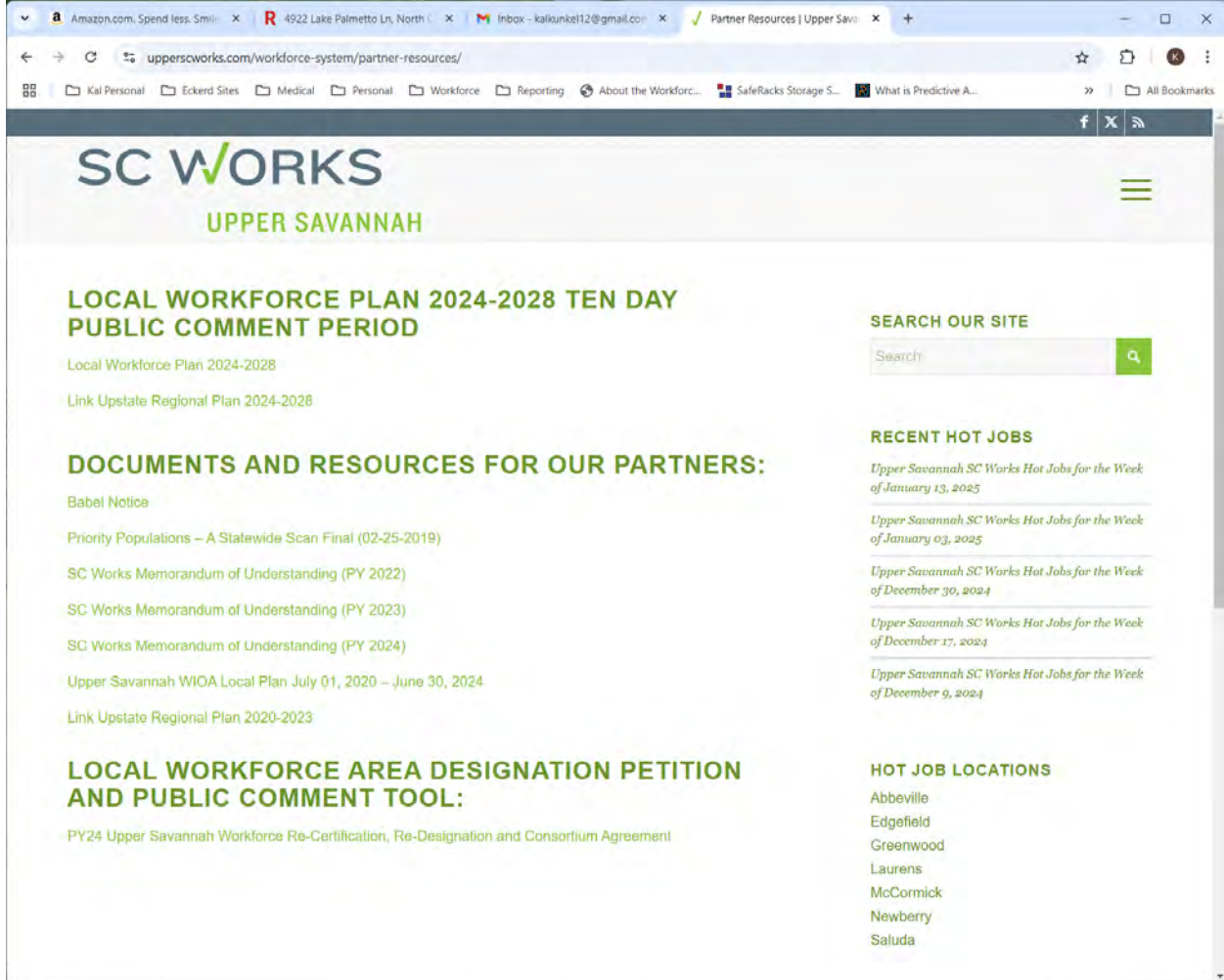
Originating Entity:

Comment:

PROOF OF PUBLIC COMMENT POSTING

Local Plan was posted 12/10/24 to 12/31/24

Region Plan was posted 12/18/24 to 1/10/25



**Local Workforce Development Area
Service Providers**

Entity Name	Contract Period	Program/Function
Eckerd Connects	Original (Year 1) 3/13/23 – 6/30/24 Year 2 Extension 7/1/24 to 6/30/25	Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA Case Management One-Stop Operator
Eckerd Connects	Original (Year 1-2) 6/23/23 – 6/30/25	Youth Case Management Services

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Upper Savannah Workforce Region SC Works Combined Operations and Business Engagement Plan

1/9/2025



Prepared by: ***Upper Savannah Staff, Eckerd Workforce Development (SC Works Operator) & our Partners***

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Executive Summary

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) requires all Workforce Boards to submit a Center Operations and Business Engagement plan. It is also required as a part of the SC Works Certification Standards (SI 24-01). The plan focuses on the daily operations of the comprehensive center and the plan for business engagement. This Plan has been prepared with the involvement of several partners and staff that worked to provide input into the center operations and business engagement plan for the Greenwood Comprehensive Center. Partners such as SCDEW, Eckerd Connects (the contracted operator for the Upper Savannah Workforce Board), Upper Savannah, Adult Education and Piedmont Technical College, all contributed to the formation of the Center Operations and Business Engagement plan.

Objective: The objective is to effectively and efficiently manage the Upper Savannah SC Works System and Comprehensive Center within the Vision, Mission, and Core Values established by the Upper Savannah Workforce Investment Board and in accordance with all Federal, State, and Local Regulations and Policies. This is accomplished with a fully coordinated and integrated customer service strategy that is local market driven and offers accessibility, convenience, and customer choice.

Management Philosophy: Our management philosophy is (1) our employees and our partner employees are our greatest assets, and (2) quality job performance builds our business and credibility in the community. When we perform at or above our customers’ expectations, we are usually rewarded with more opportunity to serve more Businesses and Job Seekers alike.

WorkLink System Customers: Our customers are in three primary groups (1) job-seeking customers, (2) employer customers, and (3) the Upper Savannah Workforce Development System Partners. We define quality service to these customers as a focused, integrated, seamless delivery process and excellent customer service, quality career management, and effective job placement to ensure their long-term success.

Performance Management: The Upper Savannah SC Works System understands that the term quality assurance requires collective action and accountability. True continuous improvement is a result of systematic planning, execution, coordination, and verification. The SC Works System Management Team has a central role in developing processes and mechanisms to stimulate consistent, proactive dialogue with the Upper Savannah Board staff throughout the relationship. In addition, the Management Team focuses on internal communications, coordination of various partnering organizations, and benchmarking to identify and apply organization-wide Best Practices. We motivate staff from different organizations and backgrounds through our efficient delivery design structure and our ability to track and report progress. Through this process, we collectively become as strong as our strongest practice. Upper Savannah SC Works and our customers reap the benefits.

Staff Development: Training is a vital part of our continuous improvement program. We believe that exceptional supervision and systematic accountability mechanisms are crucial to performance. Continuous staff development through training, job related certifications, and ongoing meetings to communicate customer service expectations are crucial to the long-term success of the system. We emphasize to staff that every customer is different and our ability to customize solutions in response

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to unique requirements is key to each individual’s success. Training also occurs within Business Services meetings with the promotion of passing referrals between team members. In summary, every customer should expect nothing less than best-in-class service from every staff member and partner.

Strategic Plan Goals of the WDB:

1. Know & understand the skill level of the workforce.
2. Involve business & industry in the WDB and WDB planning.
3. Integrate the workforce development system.
4. Measure the common KPI’s to drive outcomes.

Management & Organizational Structure

1. SC Works Centers

The Board has developed an SC Works system that has a comprehensive center near the geographic center of the Upper Savannah area and placed affiliate centers in each of the six other counties within the region. The comprehensive center is located at 929 Phoenix Street, Greenwood, SC 29646. The comprehensive center consists of all mandated (by WIOA legislation) partners, co-located or technologically linked. The satellite sites consist of two or more partners co-located in the same facility. The satellite locations are:

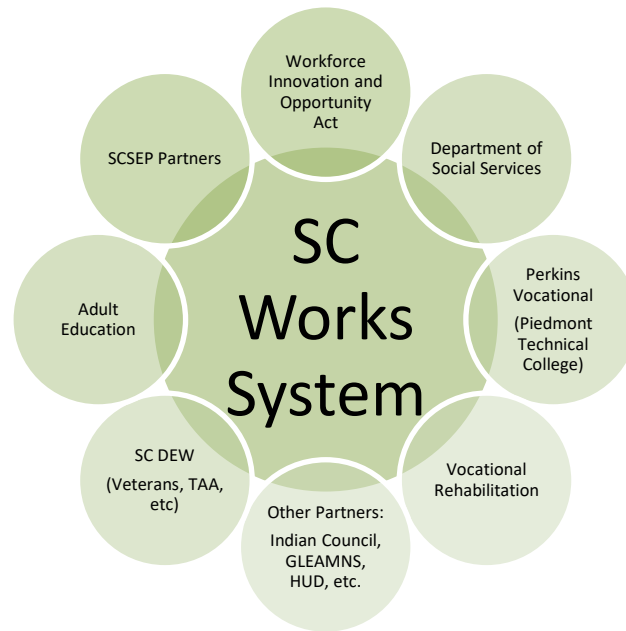
<p>SC Works Abbeville 903 West Greenwood St. Abbeville, SC 29620 (864) 366-6690 Ext. 2291 Tuesday 9am-12pm</p>	<p>SC Works Edgefield 21 Star Road Edgefield, SC 29824 803-637-4029 Tuesday 9am-12pm</p>	<p>SC Works Greenwood 929 Phoenix Street Greenwood, SC 29646 (864) 265-8299 Mon-Fri 8:30am-5pm</p>	<p>SC Works Laurens 1029 W. Main St. Laurens, SC 29360 (864) 681-1605 Mon-Fri 9am-4pm</p>
<p>SC Works McCormick 109 W. Augusta St. McCormick, SC 29835 (864) 852-3649 Monday 9am-12pm</p>	<p>SC Works Newberry 1840 Wilson Road. Newberry, SC 29108 (803) 276-2110 Mon-Fri 9am-4pm</p>	<p>SC Works Saluda 407 W. Butler Ave. Saluda, SC 29138 (864) 445-2047 Thursday 9am-12pm</p>	

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2. System Organizational Chart

Current System
(Organizational Chart)

The overall workforce development system organizational structure is a “Referral” system with the idea of moving toward a “Co-Located” system that would be functionally driven. Ideally, we will strive to be an “Integrated” system which the Department of Labor (DOL) has intended since the inception of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.



3. Business Services Team Organizational Structure

The Upper Savannah Business Services Team consists of members representing the following agencies: Department of Social Services, Economic Development, Local Chamber of Commerce, Eckerd Connects, ReadySC, SCDEW (state level, TAA/Trade, Veteran Services, Wagner-Peyser), Piedmont Technical College, Vocational Rehabilitation, and several additional community partner agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each partner plays a vital role in the Business Service Team, working collaboratively to provide businesses with seamless solutions to address their hiring needs. The Business Services Team Lead is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the partnering agencies, ensuring continuous updates. The outreach timeline will be determined based on the availability and schedules of both the partnering agencies and the Business Services Team Lead. The team convenes quarterly, during which documentation, contact information, and referrals are shared both in meetings and through email correspondence.

The following chart outlines the roles, responsibilities, and primary deliverables of each partner in providing the Common Menu of basic business services as well as any fee-based services.

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Partners	Job Postings	Applicant Screening/Referrals	Customized Recruitment	Job Fairs	Federal Bonding	Tax Credits	Community Resources	ADA	Veterans Services	Unemployment Insurance	Incumbent Worker Training	On-the-Job-Training	Customized Training	Rapid Response	TAA Services	Veteran Employment Services
DSS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
Economic Development			x			x										
Eckerd Connects												x	x			
SCDEW										x				x		
SCDEW - TAA Services		x		x	x		x	x				x	x	x	x	x
SCDEW - Veteran Services		x		x	x		x		x							x
SCDEW - Wagner Peysen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								x
Piedmont Technical College			x	x							x	x	x	x	x	x
Vocational Rehabilitation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			
Upper Savannah				x							x			x		

4. Outreach Methods

SC Works will conduct outreach to both employers and job seekers. The center will focus on reaching out to employers who are hiring, expanding, or experiencing layoffs, ensuring they can meet their specific needs. A key component of business outreach will be the efforts of the Business Services Team, utilizing brochures and flyers. For job seekers, we will use simple and clear flyers that provide general information on center locations, available services, and job search resources.

Outreach Methodology
1. Traditional Marketing
a. Newspaper – Ad in Classifieds about new locations with basic services list
b. Billboards – with locations throughout the three county region (In place)
c. Print Material – SC Works Brochures & Flyers announcing location changes, orientation today's & times, and services for disbursement in the community
d. Identify low cost and free Internet Advertisement opportunities
e. Radio – Identify free or cost efficient modes to advertise
f. Pop-up/Moveable Signage – Ability to mobilize advertised events
2. Presentations
a. Develop new PowerPoint Presentation Materials
b. Develop an Elevator Speech for staff to use in Community Presentations and meetings
c. Engage more Business & Industry involvement in Core Workshops
d. Develop new Rapid Response Packages

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3. Internet Presence
a. Review the WorkLink Website to see if we can make any updates
b. Look at the use of Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, etc.
c. Integrated links on Partner Websites to drive traffic

a. Partners Role in Outreach

All mandated partners will be given information on job seeker services. SC Works WIOA staff will do presentations informing partners about available services. All Business Service staff will be trained on all employer & industry workforce development services and will work with employers to identify needs. Each partner will be responsible for sharing labor exchange information. Partners will attend partner meetings to inform other partners about the center and its products and services.

b. Measuring Results

As a part of the Outreach Plan and strategies each of the areas identified above will be measured through Customer Feedback. Part of our customer satisfaction survey in the next section will ask about how they heard about us and our services. For internet-based outreach we are able to quantify the traffic based on the number of visits and actions taken by individual users that visit the sites. In the case that we receive negative feedback as a result of specific outreach strategies we will re-evaluate the measurable data and determine whether or not to continue with that strategy or element within our plan.

5. Management Structure & Decision-Making Process

Overall System

The Workforce Investment Board (WDB) has selected the OneStop Operations Committee to oversee the Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA grant and hired the Operator to manage the SC Works Centers.

SC Works Comprehensive Center

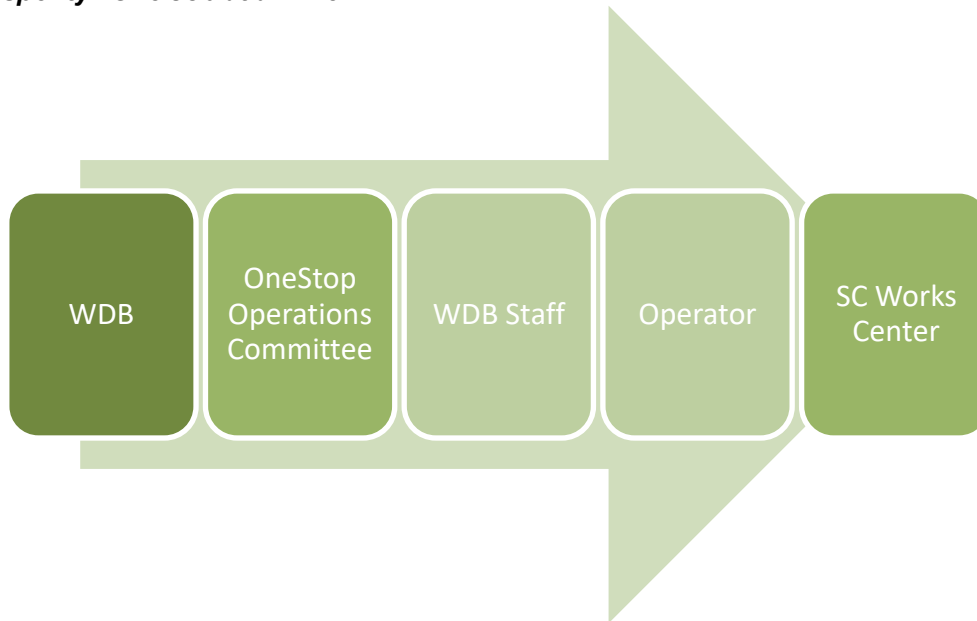
Eckerd Connects Workforce Development was hired by the WDB as the Center’s Operator and Center Manager. SCDEW Regional Manager is also part of the Center Management team. Since SCDEW provides many pieces of the job seeker services their management must communicate with the operator, center manager, and WDB.

In the current management structure, the SC Works Comprehensive Center Operator also plays the role of the Center Manager. The Center Operator is responsible for building the partnerships and maintaining the referral processes within the system. The Center Manager oversees the physical locations of the SC Works Centers.

a. Communication Processes

The Board communicates to the centers through the Operator in the following communication flow:

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Most of the communication is done via email. The Board communicates to the operator through the One Stop Operations Committee through meetings and emails. The operator passes the Board’s instruction to the partners through emails, instruction, and partner meetings.

b. Decision Making Process

Some of the decisions being made by various management positions throughout the system include:

The SC Works Comprehensive Center Operator – the Operator will call meetings; ensure Partners are there, promote good communication, etc.

Center Manager – the Manager will secure the meeting room and ensure all materials are available for the meeting.

Center staff collectively – Referrals; decide where customers should go as a procedural issue.

Single Partner agency – Staffing; ensure each site is staffed adequately; and manage their staff.

Standard Operating Procedures: - Standard operating procedures at the centers are typically developed based on requests or recommendations from Board Staff, Management and center staff. Any proposed procedures are submitted for approval to management and/or the Board Staff. Guidance from the Department of Labor (DOL) and the state is shared by the Board Staff and/or issuing agency with the One Stop Operator, who then communicates it to the relevant staff, partners, and other stakeholders.

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6. Upper Savannah’s Communication Plan

Frontline Staff Issue Resolution

As outlined in the MOU signed by each partner there is a conflict resolution process that is to be followed by all the participating partners. Frontline staff should always seek guidance from their immediate supervisor of their agency and/or the Center Operator on general facilities or system questions.

State Guidance Dissemination

All state guidance received from SC DEW is distributed according to the partners it impacts. Most correspondence is shared across all partners via e-mail from the Center Operator and/or Upper Savannah WDB Staff.

Partner Correspondence & Standard Operating Procedures

Partners receive e-mails with updates from the Center Operator and/or Upper Savannah WDB Staff with links to communication on our Partner Resource Page at upperscworks.com website. The Upper Savannah Workforce Board has implemented a quarterly newsletter that we have encourage partners to subscribe that includes valuable SC Works System informational updates.

7. Staff Development & Cross Training

Staff Training

It is important that all staff are knowledgeable about all facets of business and job-seeker services. Staff must know what is available and how to refer individuals to other agencies and programs to assist them.

The SC Works system requires:

- WIOA and Wagner Peyser staff dealing with job seekers to obtain a Career Development Facilitator credential within 18 months of hire.
- All WIOA and partner staff working in the SC Works Center must attend the SC Works Information Session
- Attendance at monthly staff meetings.

The SC Works Center Manager reviews training needs and develops a training plan. Training needs are also assessed during yearly monitoring visits by the Upper Savannah WDB Staff. Individual agencies also have established training times and resources are shared. All staff have been cross trained to be able to give information on all core services.

8. Integrated Business Services Team

In the Upper Savannah Region SCDEW staff serve as the primary point of contact to establish a more customer service friendly single point of contact for employers. The SCDEW team has devised a plan that splits up the area businesses alphabetically by county. The Business Services Team will be cross-trained and have a general working knowledge of the programs available through the SC Works System and will make referrals to partner programs which best suit the needs of the business. Services will be

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entered in SCWOS along with case notes defining the nature of the visit or referral. The Business Services Team will be trained and given a copy of this plan to ensure that it is carried out properly. Visits made by partner entities who do not have access to SCWOS may share information with Business Services Team Members who do (i.e. SC DEW Staff), so that relevant case notes may be added to the employer account.

Target Sectors and Outreach

While we strive to help all businesses the three target areas are:

1. Advanced Manufacturing – We serve companies engaged in high tech production. Such jobs have the highest wages. Our assistance is needed because there is a shortage of skilled technicians. Supporting advanced manufacturing is in line with strategic plans of the economic development agencies.
2. Health Care and Bio Tech – Health care is a major employer with high wages. Bio technology is expected to be a growing field and has related skill sets.
3. Small Businesses – Small businesses are a growth opportunity. They also need our services the most because they often do not have a human resources director.

Employer Assignments

A. Office Area of Responsibility

- The Greenwood office will be responsible for job orders originating from the following counties: Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood and McCormick.
- The Laurens office will be responsible for job orders originating from Laurens County.
- The Newberry Office will be responsible for job orders originating from Newberry and Saluda counties.

Our Lead Business Services Representative along with SC DEW will serve as the primary conduit to communicate with our businesses in coordination with our partners.

- Employer contacts are assigned to Wagner-Peyser (SCDEW) staff alphabetically by county. Wagner-Peyser Staff will manage the job orders in the (SCWOS) system.
- The SC LMI database will be used to identify employers in the Upper Savannah area that need to be served. A Business Services Team consisting of the Greenwood SC Works Business Services Staff, the Center Manager, Staff from Upper Savannah and other Core Partners will meet quarterly to continually improve the service delivery to the businesses in the Upper Savannah Region.
- Employer visits will be planned by reviewing SCWOS activities and case notes to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our business community but are not frequenting them in a manner that makes them feel burdened.

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- Each Business Services team member will be responsible for contacting five (5) employers (either an employer who has not been contacted in ninety (90) days or a new employer contact) per week. Planned visits (for the next week) will be documented in the Wufoo database by 4:00PM on Thursday. The Business Lead will send the compiled planned visit list to the team by Friday at 10:00AM. Each team member should review the list for duplications. If visits are planned for the same employer by two different team members, they should contact each other to discuss further (in most cases one visit, by one team member is appropriate; as they can share information that may need to be delivered to the employer).
- Business Services Team members will enter appropriate activities under the employer account in SCWOS. In most cases, a case note will be entered which explains in detail the nature of the visit or outcome. This allows for others team members to know what happened on the last visit and address any follow-up items on subsequent meetings. Viewing the last visit and case note is required by our model, prior to scheduling a next visit.
- Businesses not currently in the South Carolina Works On-line System (SCWOS) will need to be added. It is essential that the business provides their unique FEIN number, along with their contact information so that they can be added to SCWOS. After doing so, staff must enter the appropriate service code and a verifying case note when applicable. Note, encouraging a business to set-up their own account can expedite the process and lead to an account becoming enabled sooner. This will give them access to resumes in a shorter time.
- Business who have yet to have an account set up in the SCWOS database will be entered into the system through the Client Relationship Management (CRM) module as a method of recording the contact and the services rendered.
- Client Relationship Management module: The training presentation is available via SCWOS under staff online resources and will guide you through the process of creating such an employer in the SCWOS database.
- Please note that these accounts are not fully enabled, and the services provided to these employers are limited. Employers without enabled accounts do not qualify for IWT Grant-funded Training, OJT’s, Work Experiences, Job Fairs, etc. When in question, please contact a member of management for more direction.

Service Strategy

Description of Products & Services

The center offers many different products and services geared toward employers and job seekers. A list has been provided for both groups. The list contains services that may be provided to both sets of customers from the center.

Section I – Common menu of basic employer services to be offered:

1. Job Postings – Online, phone call, fax, in-person
2. Applicant screening and referral to employer specifications

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3. Referral to Professional Testing (Typing, Basic Skills, Microsoft Office)
4. Customized Recruitment (Hiring Events)
5. Job Fairs
6. Provision of Labor Market Information
7. Interviewing Space, Scheduling
8. Provision of information and referral related to:
 - a. Tax Credits
 - b. Community Resources
 - c. Federal Bonding
 - d. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - e. Veterans services
9. Incumbent Worker Grants
10. OJT
11. Referral to Customized Training
12. Information on Unemployment Insurance (UI)
13. Rapid Response services
14. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) information and services
15. Veterans Employment Services

Section II – Expanded List of Employer Services:

1. Customized services for significant company or industry dislocations
2. Referral to WIN[®] testing
3. Referral to WIN[®] profiling services – May be free-for-service
4. Referral to Database of WIN[®] tested applicants
5. Access to Work Ready Basics, and Courseware to upgrade employee skills
6. Labor Market Information packets and brochures

Section I – Common menu of basic job seeker services to be offered to all job seekers:

1. Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling and rapid re-employment services)
2. Initial assessment
3. Eligibility and service information for all partner workforce development and support programs (e.g. education, public assistance, childcare)
4. Job search assistance, career information and career guidance
5. Resume development services
6. Job matching and referral
7. Local, regional, and statewide labor market information
8. Information on financial aid, including unemployment insurance (UI)
9. Instructions on filing an unemployment insurance claims or unemployment insurance issues
Information on:
 - a. Certified education and training providers
 - b. Local performance outcomes of training providers
 - c. Job fairs and supportive services

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10. Orientation to use of personal computers for utilizing virtual tools available through the One-Stop system, including resume software, and enabling job seekers to perform job search activities, secure an email address and use email, and conduct research on employers.
11. Job search/self-marketing skills training (workshops).
12. Information about Entrepreneurship development skills.
13. Access to free virtual tools for job search, self-assessment and career development

Section II – Common menu of services for those enrolled in WIOA or partner programs:

1. Comprehensive assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interest by use of various assessment tools
2. Development of individual employment plans
3. Individual career planning
4. Case management
5. Occupational skills training
6. On-the-job training
7. Referrals to programs or programs that combine workplace training with related instruction
8. Referrals to Adult education and literacy activities
9. Referrals to customized training

The Center can also provide special services to accommodate those customers who may have special needs.

For example:

- **Disabled** – Special Accommodations
- **ESL** – LEP (Limited English Plan)
- **Veterans** – Priority of Services
- **Older Workers** – SCSEP Program

The center can also help businesses with special needs or in special circumstances such as:

- **Employers that are Hiring** – Hiring Events & OJT
- **Employers that are Expanding** – Referral to ReadySC™
- **Employers that are experiencing Layoffs** – Referral to Rapid Response

Competitors

In the SC Works Center most of the would-be-competitors are in fact partners. Learning to work together is vital to serving the customer. The competition that the Upper Savannah SC Works Center staff must keep on the radar is the customer’s perception. The customer has high expectations for what the staff can do for them, and the SC Works Center must strive to live up to those expectations.

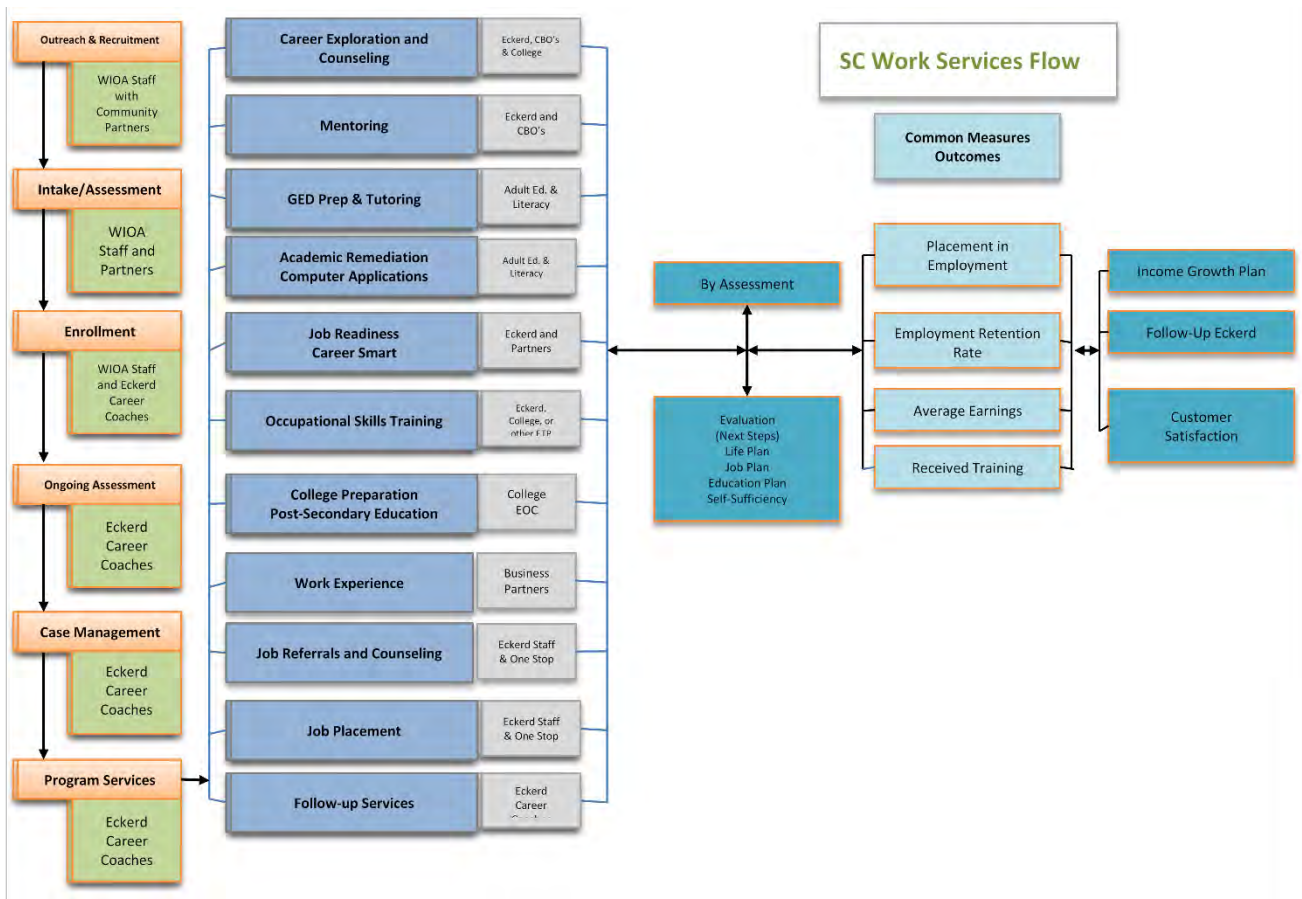
1. Flow of Services & Customer Access

Below is a Customer Flowchart of the Comprehensive Center and below that is a Customer Flowchart of the System to show how customers can move through the center and the system. Upon entering SC

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Works, customers are entered into the VOS Greeter system where they are routed/referred to the services/staff/agencies they need.

Referrals are generated through the SCWOS system, word of mouth, email, meetings, and various events. Staff and partners are granted access to the SCWOS system and receive training on how to effectively use it to refer customers to the appropriate services. To support continuous improvement, a plan will be developed in 2025 to revitalize and enhance the referral process, as well as streamline application and eligibility procedures across the partners.



2. Referral Process

Upper Savannah Workforce Region has focused on training and supporting the use of SCWOS for referrals in this current year. Partner staff has received training and ongoing support by WDB Staff to make all referrals in SCWOS. The process and challenges are discussed at our partner meetings.

3. Menu of Business Services

The components of the Common Menu of basic business services are defined as follows:

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Self-Service Options

- **Job Postings** – Arrangement in which an organization posts a list of open positions (with their descriptions and requirements) so that job seekers who wish to move to another job may apply. *In the case SC DEW, a management information system open to all job seekers has been provided for this purpose.
- **Provision of Labor Market** - the market in which workers find paying work, employers find willing workers, and wage rates are determined
- **Information on Community Resources** - Any agency, company, facility, or service in the community that provides assistance in supporting independence to those at risk.

Staff-Assisted Options for Recruitment

- **Applicant Screening and Referral** – A preliminary assessment of job candidates based on specified criteria which may result in information about an employer being shared with a jobseeker for the purpose of applying for the open job listing.
- **Customized Recruitment** – A process specifically tailored to an individual company in order to match qualified candidates with an employer. Typical customized recruitment efforts include:
 - **Direct Placement** – Assessment and referral of job seekers to employers; assistance to employers on writing and posting job openings for job seekers;
 - **Facilitation of Hiring** – Coordination of screening, testing, interviewing on an employer’s behalf; and
 - **Workforce Knowledge** - In-depth, industry-specific knowledge and expertise.
- **Job Fairs** – A career fair (also known as a job fair) is a recruiting event where job seekers meet with multiple employers. Attending a career fair allows job seekers to meet with a variety of employers at one convenient location. The company representatives will provide information about general career opportunities as well as specific details on current openings.
- **Veteran Employment Services** – Veteran programs provide intensive, priority employment services to all veterans, including group and individual career coaching, job referrals, resume preparation help, career fairs and job search workshops, job training programs, and referrals to training services.

Staff-Assisted Options for Hiring and Retention

- **Federal Bonding** - The Federal Bonding Program was established to provide Fidelity Bonds that guarantee honesty for “at-risk,” hard-to-place job seekers. The bonds cover the first six months of employment. There is no cost to the job applicant or the employer. Bonds are made available through SC DEW.
- **Tax Credits** - An amount of money that a taxpayer is able to subtract from the amount of tax that they owe to the government. The value of a tax credit depends on what the credit is being provided for, and certain types of tax credits are granted to individuals or businesses in specific locations, classifications or industries. For this purpose, tax credits are for employers that are

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hiring, retaining, or retraining employees.

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – The ADA prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin – and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 -- the ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities. For this purpose, information may be provided to an employer upon request in order to meet ADA requirements.
- **Job Profiling** - the process of deciding exactly what tasks are involved in a particular job, and what skills, experience, and personality a person would need in order to do the job, particularly as it relates to a career assessment, such as WorkKeys. *(Fees are determined by the organization responsible.)*

Staff-Assisted Options for Temporary and Permanent Layoffs

- **Unemployment Insurance** - Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a nationwide program created to financially help eligible workers, who are unemployed through no fault of their own, while they actively search for new work. The program allows UI recipients to maintain purchasing power therefore easing the serious effects of unemployment on individual households, the community and the state. Employers finance the UI program through tax contributions and in South Carolina, the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) administers the UI program according to guidelines established by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 41, and South Carolina Code of Regulations, Chapter 47. In South Carolina, the maximum potential to receive state benefits is 20 weeks.
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance Services** – The federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA), administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), provides comprehensive assistance for workers, like Neal, who have lost their job due to foreign trade. This assistance is at no cost to employers or employees. TAA provides trade-affected workers with opportunities to gain skills and resources needed to become reemployed in a suitable job as quickly as possible.
- **Rapid Response Services** – Rapid Response, an information-sharing service for employees and employers, expedites access to SC’s public workforce system and services. Its goal is to help workers get new jobs as quickly as possible. When plant closings and layoffs affect 50 or more workers, the Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU) goes into action for these reasons: Trade Impact; Company Downsizing/Restructuring; Natural Disaster; Plant Relocation; Bankruptcy; and other Factors.

Staff-Assisted Options for Training the Employer’s Workforce

- **New Hire Training** – funds the cost of instructors to train potential and existing employees in needed new skills as it relates to new technology, restructuring, new product lines, and other factors.

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- **Incumbent Worker Training** –training funds for employees needing new skills due to new technology, restructuring, new product lines, and other factors. Funding that significantly upgrades employee skills/wages, helps avert layoffs, and improves retention opportunities receives priority. Employers are reimbursed a portion of the training cost based on the size of the company or the type of funding that is being utilized.
- **On-the-Job-Training** – Employee training at the place of work while he or she is doing the actual job. Usually a professional trainer (or sometimes an experienced employee) serves as the course instructor using hands-on training. Employers are reimbursed a portion of the new employee’s time based on the size of the company.
- **Customized Training** – Training (A) that is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (including a group of employers); (B) that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual on successful completion of the training; and (C) for which the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of the training."

All employer services are offered free of charge unless otherwise noted.

4. Process of provision of business services

The process for providing business services involves several steps to ensure effective service delivery and coordination between core and extended partners. Here’s how it typically works:

1. **Initial Engagement:** The business service process begins when a business expresses interest in receiving services, such as workforce development, recruitment support, or other related services. This could happen through direct outreach, referrals, or during events like job fairs or hiring events.
2. **Assessment and Service Planning:** The Business Services Team (BST) conducts an assessment to understand the business’ needs, goals, and challenges. This includes identifying any specific workforce requirements, training needs, or other support that may be necessary. The service plan is developed collaboratively, ensuring input from both core partners (such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) staff) and extended partners (such as local economic development organizations, community colleges, etc.).
3. **Coordination of Services:** Once the service plan is developed, the core and extended partners coordinate the delivery of services. This may include connecting the business to resources like candidate referrals, training programs, recruitment events, or other workforce-related services. Each partner's role and the specific services they provide are clarified to avoid duplication and ensure that all areas of need are addressed.
4. **Documenting the Process:** Documentation is key to tracking service delivery and ensuring accountability. A shared system (such as SCWOS) is often used to record all interactions, plans, referrals, and follow-ups. Both core and extended partners input relevant data into the system

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to document the services provided, any progress made, and the outcomes achieved. This helps to maintain a record of all activities and ensures transparency in the service delivery process.

5. **Follow-Up and Monitoring:** Regular follow-up meetings or check-ins are scheduled to assess the effectiveness of the services provided. This allows partners to make any necessary adjustments to the service plan or offer additional support. Partners communicate regularly to share updates, challenges, and successes. This ensures the business’s needs are being met and any issues are addressed in a timely manner.
6. **Review and Continuous Improvement:** After the service delivery process is completed, the partners evaluate the outcomes and identify areas for improvement. Feedback from the business is also considered to refine future service delivery. This process is documented, and any lessons learned are used to improve service delivery for future businesses.

In summary, the process for providing business services is a collaborative effort between core and extended partners, ensuring that service planning, delivery, and documentation are seamless and transparent. This allows for efficient tracking of the services provided and enables continuous improvement in meeting the needs of local businesses.

Target Sectors & Outreach

1. Targeted Industries

Focus by Industry

In order to receive input on critical success factors, businesses are consulted during focus groups, one-on-one consultations, and employer surveys. The Business Service team members have been actively involved in SHRM, plant manager, and other industry focused groups in the seven-county region.

Based on employer feedback described above, the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board has chosen to focus on the following industries (plus one occupation) regarding providing training for the WIOA participants in our workforce region. Employer Service efforts will be focused on these key industries. Should there be existing industries outside of these that request our services, those needs will be addressed as they arise.

Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services

The Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services sector comprises establishments performing routine support activities for the day-to-day operations of other organizations. These essential activities are often undertaken in-house by establishments in many sectors of the economy. The establishments in this sector specialize in one or more of these support activities and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, document preparation and similar clerical services, solicitation, collection, security and surveillance services, cleaning, and waste disposal services.

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Construction

The construction sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects (e.g., highways and utility systems). Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction and establishments primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites also are included in this sector. Construction work done may include new work, additions, alterations, or maintenance and repairs. Activities of these establishments generally are managed at a fixed place of business, but they usually perform construction activities at multiple project sites. Production responsibilities for establishments in this sector are usually specified in (1) contracts with the owners of construction projects (prime contracts) or (2) contracts with other construction establishments (subcontracts). Occupations may include: Carpenters, Construction laborers, Construction managers, Electricians, and Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators. *(North American Industry Classification System)*

Health Care and Social Assistance

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector comprises establishments providing health care and social assistance for individuals. The sector includes both health care and social assistance because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities. The industries in this sector are arranged on a continuum starting with those establishments providing medical care exclusively, continuing with those providing health care and social assistance, and finally finishing with those providing only social assistance. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process, namely, labor inputs of health practitioners or social workers with the requisite expertise. Many of the industries in the sector are defined based on the educational degree held by the practitioners included in the industry.

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products.

Establishments in the Manufacturing sector are often described as plants, factories, or mills and characteristically use power-driven machines and materials-handling equipment. However, establishments that transform materials or substances into new products by hand or in the worker's home and those engaged in selling to the general public products made on the same premises from which they are sold, such as bakeries, candy stores, and custom tailors, may also be included in this sector. Manufacturing establishments may process materials or may contract with other establishments to process their materials for them. Both types of establishments are included in manufacturing.

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Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector comprises establishments that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. The establishments in this sector specialize according to expertise and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; translation and interpretation services; veterinary services; and other professional, scientific, and technical services

Upper Savannah has adopted one occupational exception: CDL Truck Driving. Although categorized as part of the Transportation and Warehousing industry, CDL truck driving is an occupation that supports ongoing business across all industries.

Industry Experts

Business Service Team members will be knowledgeable of all labor and industry workforce development programs for employers and will make appropriate referrals to partner staff to follow-up regarding specific program offerings.

The WorkLink Business Services team members that represent SC DEW will primarily target the manufacturing (including advanced manufacturing as well as entry level and various textile positions) and healthcare industries. The Corporate and Community Education Division (CCE) at Tri-County Technical College offers focused training programs to promote and support individual success, as well as support community and economic development. They partner with businesses to develop their workforce by providing advanced, specialized, and often tailored training programs.

Industries supported by Tri-County Technical College with education and training include: Manufacturing, Transportation, Healthcare, Business/Office/Computer IT, and Construction. The primary business engagement strategies for Vocational Rehabilitation include Manufacturing/Warehouse, Customer Service, Food/Restaurant, Janitorial/Custodial, and Retail.

2. Business Engagement Strategy

Upper Savannah has adopted an Account Management System to focus our Business Engagement Strategy.

Existing Employer Relationships

- Those partners with existing, positive relationships will continue to serve these employers’ per the employers’ wishes.

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New Employer Relationships

- Each employer should be assessed for any needed business solutions regardless of the partner program having the contact. The business team member will represent the array of available services to the employer.
- The appropriate Partner to provide the service will be contacted by the team member that reached out to the employer for follow-up on the employer’s need or interest in the specified service.
- SC DEW will be responsible for facilitating new employer accounts in SCWOS.

Business Service Team members will only provide outreach services to those employers who reside in the WorkLink region. For those employers seeking employer services outside the WorkLink region, the Business Service Team will work with the appropriate region’s Business Service Representative to provide services. If an employer from outside our region requests a job posting, the Business Service team will refer the employer to the appropriate region’s Business Representative.

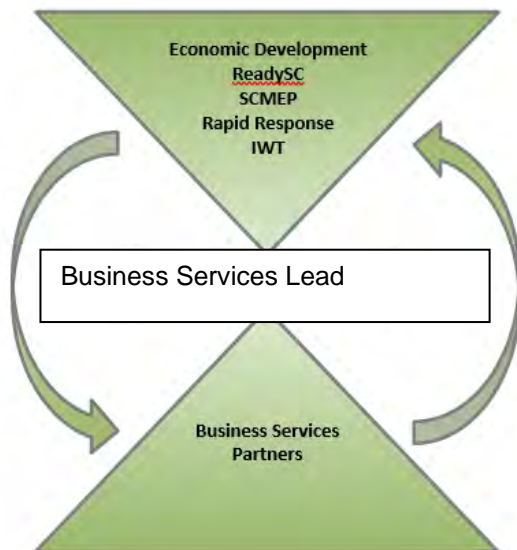
An informal or formal assessment of the business’ needs must be conducted at the initial visit. The goal of the assessment is to determine what support they need in hiring or retaining their workforce, rather than selling a specific program or service. The intent is to build an effective and positive relationship with the employer. The assessment should determine which solutions may work best and provide either contact information to appropriate resources or make the connection with the appropriate business service team member for follow-up.

Business Services Team Lead

The team is managed as a unified entity by the Business Services Lead. The Business Services lead is appointed by the WorkLink Board and serves as the convener of partner agencies to discuss employer services. This is a quarterly meeting but may be convened on an ad hoc basis or at the request of an employer or partner. The Business Services lead serves as a central point of contact for communication about employer needs.

The appointed Business Services Lead will serve as the primary point of contact for Economic Development, ReadySC, SCMEP, Rapid Response, and IWT. This individual will funnel all leads to the appropriate Business Service Team member.

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Single Point of Contact



The appointed Business Service Lead will also coordinate job fairs and hiring events ensuring that the events are well coordinated, advertised, and appropriately staffed. Any event may be led by another partner agency at the partner’s discretion but should be communicated with the team.

Communication

Communication will be documented through SCWOS under the employer’s SCWOS account and will be immediately relayed via email (or telephone) to all appropriate parties.

Each Business Service team member will give appropriate updates at quarterly team meetings.

3. Overview of the Expected Performance Outcomes

Each member of the Upper Savannah Business Services Team has an overall goal of assisting the local employers with their recruitment and hiring needs as well upskilling and retention of their workforce.

Individual Partner Goals:

- SCDEW has goals for the Recruiter and Virtual Recruiter. They each have a goal of 10 employer contacts and 6 Job Development Attempts per month.
- Piedmont Technical College’s Corporate and Community Education Division has a performance goal of 80% completion rate for programs of study and job placement upon graduation of students.
- Vocational Rehabilitation has a goal of attaining five placements per year through their apprenticeship program, hosting a minimum of three Business Partnership Network meetings per year, hosting at least one job fair per year at each office, and attending at least two

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external job fairs per year.

- Upper Savannah Business Services Lead has a goal of making at least ten employer contacts per week and attending the monthly Society for Human Resource Management meetings (SHRM) in the region. The Business Services Lead is also required to support all three Economic Development teams as needed.

The Upper Savannah Workforce Development Board reviews employer services and business services activities on a bi-monthly basis and will evaluate and determine if there are any goals above and beyond the state Business Services Metrics goals.

Each team members’ activities, which will be shared monthly with the Business Services Team, will encourage more communication as well as better partnerships. With this increased communication and sharing of information, the partners will be able to better collaborate to assist each other with meeting their individual goals.

The center needs to measure success. To measure success, center statistics need to be looked at over time and in context. The Usage Report measures the following data:

Job Seekers Services

- Center Traffic - Total Customer Count & by Center location
- Individuals that Registered – Total & by Center location
- Unduplicated Customer Count – Total & by Center location
- Job Search Services – Total & by Center location
- Workshop Attendance - Total

Employer Services

- Internal Job Orders/Employer Job Openings – Total & by Center location
- Services Provided Employers – Total & by Center location
- Hiring Events - Total & by Center location
- Entered Employments - Total & by Center location
- Rapid Response Events – Total

Customer Feedback

1. Customer Satisfaction Metrics

Upper Savannah utilizes an app named WuFoo to generate customized surveys that can be sent via e-mail or text and/or via a link from our website. Our center staff asks for all Employers and Job Seekers alike to complete a survey on their experience at various intervals of the process.

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2. Customer Satisfaction Results for Change

Upper Savannah analyzes the data collected each month to identify gaps in services and challenges being experienced by customers and then we review our processes to identify improvement. Our results are discussed at Partner Meetings so that everyone is aware of the feedback and can assist in being part of the improvement process.